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Award modernisation and state wage case

Award modernisation drags on

QIRC is progressing very slowly on modernising the first few Queensland public sector awards.

The process seems to be experiencing difficulties with government agencies demanding that existing conditions be stripped out without any justification, and QIRC staff fiddling around with existing documents for no obvious benefit.

Timetables are blowing out and the process is evolving into another industrial mess initiated by government and continued on by the QIRC.

What is the fire service hiding?

As we have previously advised our two awards have not been listed for “modernisation” yet, but your union sent new drafts to the fire service in April 2014 and asked them to meet and discuss our documents. In over four months since we sent them our documents the fire service have not met with us and have not provided us with any comments on the drafts we provided them. If they do have any comments or opinions about the documents we have sent to them they may be keeping them secret or discussing them with others behind closed doors.

The fire service secrecy also seems to extend to their award modernisation proposals which they say they are “keen to present” to the QIRC. We have written on more than one occasion to the fire service and asked them to provide your union with their “version” that they are referring to. The fire service have not provided us with their “version” and seem to be either keeping that secret ,or perhaps discussing it with others who have a vested interest.

Award wage rates likely to be frozen

It is likely that once our awards are “modernised” the wage rates will be frozen and regular annual state wage case increases will no longer be applied to the minimum rates. The state government amended the industrial laws last November to prescribe that the QIRC can only make “general rulings” affecting “pre modernisation” awards. The government also legislated to prohibit the QIRC from increasing minimum wage rates in so called “modern awards”, except under “work value” cases.

The government and the fire service have tried to use the “award modernisation” process as another excuse to obstruct and delay the auxiliary award case.

QAFA support "award modernisation" process

Unfortunately, QAFA's apparently naïve opportunism in openly supporting and celebrating the state government actions has emerged with statements from them expressing support for the award modernisation processes despite them not being party to any award affected.

We can all do without ill-informed statements being made about our employment rights and conditions when we are all working around the clock to protect the community, our professional standards, rights at work and now our awards.

Allowance increases

The 2014 state wage case increased the award based allowances and minimum wage rates by 3%.

The state wage increase will increase our minimum award rates but as we are already being paid higher under our certified agreement rates plus the December 2013 wage increase, the award rates will still sit below our actual pay rates as per usual.

The telescopic pumper and aerial allowance will increase by 3% from 1 September 2014, so if you are in receipt of this allowance check that it has increased.

Your union has written to the fire service and asked them to confirm to us that they have adjusted the allowance.

John Oliver – State Secretary

Authorised by John Oliver State Secretary
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