

Effect of Terms: Operation and Wages provisions

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the effect of the following provisions of the proposed *Queensland Fire Department Certified Agreement 2025* (the proposed agreement):

- Operation of the agreement; and
- Wages.

This document is intended to support the provisions mentioned above and should be read subject to them. A suite of frequently asked questions will also be provided in general terms to further aid in understanding the provisions.

Operation of the agreement

The proposed agreement includes a provision specifying that it will operate on and from the date that it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and will terminate on 31 July 2028.

It also provides that the proposed agreement will only be terminated once an agreement is certified or an arbitration determination is made in relation to the group of employees covered by this agreement, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.

Wages

The proposed agreement will provide for wage increases of up to a maximum of 3.5 percent available in each year of the three-year agreement.

The wage increase available for each year consists of two components:

- A guaranteed wage increase; and
- A Consumer Price Index ('CPI') Uplift Adjustment ('CUA').

The two components that make up the wage increases will apply as follows:

- the guaranteed wage increase will be automatically payable to an employee provided they are employed under the proposed agreement on or after its certification;
- the CUA is only payable where certain criteria are met and tops up the guaranteed wage increase for each year of the agreement where CPI exceeds the guaranteed increase.

These two components of the wage increases are discussed in greater detail below.

Guaranteed Wage Increases

The guaranteed wage increases under the proposed agreement will be as follows:

Agreement year	Effective date of guaranteed increase	Guaranteed wage increase	What rate will it apply to
Year 1	1 August 2025	3%	The rate of pay paid to an employee at the nominal expiry date of 30 June 2025 of the <i>Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Certified Agreement 2022</i> . This means either <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the final rate under the <i>Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Certified Agreement 2022</i>, or- the relevant parent award rate (whichever was higher at the nominal expiry date).
Year 2	1 August 2026	2.5%	The relevant agreement rate of pay for Agreement Year 1 reflecting the guaranteed increase of 3% and the CUA if applicable.
Year 3	1 August 2027	2.5%	The relevant agreement rate of pay for Agreement Year 2 reflecting the guaranteed increase of 2.5% and any CUA if applicable.

A person will be eligible for the guaranteed wage increases provided they were employed under the proposed agreement on or after the date it was certified.

The guaranteed wage increases are reflected in the salary schedules of the proposed replacement agreement.

The guaranteed wage increases will also be applied to any relevant allowances and/or other financial elements as outlined in the agreement.

CPI Uplift adjustment (CUA)

The CUA component of the wage increases is designed to respond to inflationary conditions by 'topping up' the guaranteed wage increases (discussed above) to provide up to a maximum overall increase of 3.5% in each year of the proposed agreement.

This 'top up' will crystallise, (i.e. be payable) where:

- ✓ The CUA is triggered for a CUA period; and
- ✓ Either:
 - The employee eligibility requirements are met; or
 - The information required by Payroll is provided that verifies an exception applies such that the employee becomes eligible.

When payable the CUA will be considered a wage increase for all intents and purposes and will apply as if it had been paid with the relevant guaranteed wage increase.

1. The CUA Trigger

In order for the CUA to 'top up' the guaranteed wage increases, it must first be 'triggered'.

The CUA will be triggered as outlined below:

What period under the agreement?		What needs to happen?	How much will the CUA top up the guaranteed wage increase if this happens?
CUA period 1	1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026	The through the year March quarter 2026 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics ('ABS') needs to be greater than the 3% guaranteed wage increase provided for agreement year 1.	The amount of CUA that will be triggered will be the percentage difference between the March 2026 Brisbane CPI figure and the 3% guaranteed wage increase, to a cap of 0.5%.
CUA period 2	1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027	The through the year March quarter 2027 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS needs to be greater than the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase provided for agreement year 2.	The amount of CUA that will be triggered will be the percentage difference between the March 2027 Brisbane CPI figure and the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase, to a cap of 1%.
CUA period 3	1 August 2027 to 31 July 2028	The through the year March quarter 2028 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS needs to be greater than the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase provided for agreement year 3.	The amount of the CUA that will be triggered will be the percentage difference between the March 2028 Brisbane CPI figure and the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase, to a cap of 1%.

2. CUA eligibility

The CUA will 'top up' the guaranteed wage increase when the CUA has been triggered (as outlined above), and an employee meets the eligibility requirements (or where an exception applies). The eligibility requirements will depend on an employee's employment type, that is whether they are full-

time and part-time or casual. It should be noted that where a person does not meet the eligibility requirements, an exception may apply as outlined in section 3 below.

2A. Full-time and part-time employees

The following requirements must be met for a full-time or part-time employee to be eligible for the CUA, if it is triggered:

- ✓ The person must be employed under the agreement on or after the date it is certified; and
- ✓ The person must be employed during a CUA period provided for under this agreement; and
- ✓ The CUA is triggered for the CUA period; and
- ✓ The person must remain employed under the agreement at the date the CUA entitlement becomes payable (i.e. they are a 'current employee' when the above requirements are met).

When these requirements are met, an employee will be eligible for a CUA.

The eligibility requirements above are illustrated in the table on the following page.

Eligibility requirements for full-time and part-time employees

CUA period	The employment occurred on or after the date of certification	Employment during the CUA period	The CUA was triggered for the CUA period	Current employee under the agreement when the CUA is payable
1	The employee was employed under the agreement on or after the day it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and	The employee was employed between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 under the agreement; and	The through the year March quarter 2026 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS is greater than the 3% guaranteed wage increase provided for in agreement year 1; and	The employee remains under the agreement when the CUA is payable. This will be where the following requirements are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. certification has occurred; and 2. the employee was employed in a CUA period under the agreement; and 3. the CUA was triggered for the CUA period.
2	The employee was employed under the agreement on or after the day it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and	The employee was employed between 1 August 2026 and 31 July 2027 under the agreement; and	The through the year March quarter 2027 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS is greater than the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase provided for in agreement year 2; and	The employee remains under the agreement when the CUA is payable. This will be where the following requirements are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. certification has occurred; and 2. the employee was employed in a CUA period under the agreement; and 3. the CUA was triggered for the CUA period.
3	The employee was employed under the agreement on or after the day it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and	The employee was employed between 1 August 2027 to 30 July 2028 under the agreement; and	The through the year March quarter 2028 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS is greater than the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase provided for in agreement year 3; and	The employee remains under the agreement when the CUA is payable. This will be where the following requirements are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. certification has occurred; and 2. the employee was employed in a CUA period under the agreement; 3. the CUA was triggered for the CUA period.

2B. Casual employees

The following requirements must be met for a casual employee to be eligible for the CUA:

- ✓ The person must be employed under the proposed agreement on or after the date it is certified; and
- ✓ The person must be employed during a CUA period provided for under the agreement; and
- ✓ The CUA is triggered for the CUA period; and
- ✓ The person must be employed under the agreement at the date the CUA entitlement is payable; and
- ✓ The person must have performed work under the agreement in the 12-week payroll period immediately prior to the date the CUA entitlement is payable. (i.e. they are a 'current employee' on that date).

The date the CUA entitlement is payable will be the latest of the following dates:

- The agreement being certified;
- The employee was employed during a CUA period provided for under the agreement;
- The CUA being triggered for the CUA period.

The eligibility requirements above are illustrated in the table on the following page.

Eligibility requirements for casual employees					
CUA period	The employment occurred on or after the date of certification	Employment during the CUA period	The CUA was triggered for the CUA period	Current employee under the agreement when the CUA is payable	Employee performed work in the 12 week payroll processing period prior to the CUA is payable
1	The employee was employed under the agreement on or after the day it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and	The employee was employed between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 under the agreement; and	The through the year March quarter 2026 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS is greater than the 3% guaranteed wage increase provided for agreement year 1; and	<p>The employee was employed under the agreement at the date the CUA entitlement is payable; and</p> <p>The date the CUA entitlement is payable is the latter of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the certification date; 2. the date the employee became employed during a CUA period under this agreement; and 3. the date the CUA is triggered for the CUA period. 	<p>The employee performed work under the agreement in the 12-week payroll period immediately prior to the date the CUA became payable.</p> <p>The date the CUA entitlement is payable is the latter of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the certification date; 2. the date the CUA became employed during a CUA period under this agreement; and 3. the date the CUA was triggered for the CUA period.

2	The employee was employed under the agreement on or after the day it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and	The employee was employed between 1 August 2026 and 31 July 2027 under the agreement; and	The through the year March quarter 2027 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS is greater than the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase provided for agreement year 2; and	<p>The employee was employed under the agreement at the date the CUA entitlement is payable and performed work under the agreement in the 12-week payroll period immediately prior to that date; and</p> <p>The date the CUA entitlement is payable is the latter of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the certification date; 2. the date the employee became employed during a CUA period under this agreement; and 3. the date the CUA is triggered. 	<p>The employee performed work under the agreement in the 12-week payroll period immediately prior to the date the CUA became payable.</p> <p>The date the CUA entitlement is payable is the latter of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the certification date; 2. the date the CUA became employed during a CUA period under this agreement; and 3. the date the CUA was triggered for the CUA period.
3	The employee was employed under the agreement on or after the day it is certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and	The employee was employed between 1 August 2027 to 31 July 2028 under the agreement; and	The through the year March quarter 2028 Brisbane (All Groups) CPI figure published by the ABS is greater than the 2.5% guaranteed wage increase provided for agreement year 3; and	<p>The employee was employed under the agreement at the date the CUA entitlement is payable and performed work under the agreement in the 12-week payroll period immediately prior to that date; and</p> <p>The date the CUA entitlement is payable is the latter of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the certification date; 2. the date the employee became employed during a CUA period under this agreement; and 3. the date the CUA is triggered. 	<p>The employee performed work under the agreement in the 12-week payroll period immediately prior to the date the CUA became payable.</p> <p>The date the CUA entitlement is payable is the latter of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the certification date; 2. the date the CUA became employed during a CUA period under this agreement; and 3. the date the CUA was triggered for the CUA period.

3. Exceptions to eligibility for the CUA

An exception to the eligibility requirements for CUA may apply where:

- a person has worked under an agreement on or after the date it was certified; and
- they have worked under that agreement during a CUA period; and
- the CUA is triggered for the CUA period; but
- they were not a current employee at the date the CUA became payable; or
- in the case of a casual, they did not work in the 12 weeks prior to the date the CUA became payable.

This means they would have otherwise been eligible for a CUA but for the fact that:

- They were not employed under the agreement at the date the CUA entitlement was payable; or
- In the case of a casual, they did not perform work under the agreement within the 12 -week payroll period immediately prior to the date the CUA was payable.

In this circumstance a person will need to submit relevant information required by Payroll to confirm that an exception applies. Payroll will advise of the relevant information required but it will be limited to:

- Information which shows that the person was employed under the agreement during a CUA period when the CUA was triggered; and
- Information necessary to ensure appropriate payment can be made by payroll (e.g. tax file number, bank account and/or superannuation details).

The requirement to provide information to payroll is not intended to place an unnecessary burden on employees. The type of information required will be limited to what payroll needs to assess and process the payment.

Once payroll confirms based on the relevant information that an exception applies, the person will become eligible for a CUA.

This exception does not extend to a person who has left the proposed agreement before it was certified. Persons who have ceased employment before the proposed agreement was certified, will not be eligible for the guaranteed increases or the CUA.

4. Payment of the CUA

Where the CUA entitlement is payable, it will be treated as a 'top up' of the guaranteed wage increase under the agreement. For all intents and purposes, the CUA is considered a wage increase under the proposed agreement.

This means it will take effect from the same date as the relevant guaranteed wage increase and be treated as if it had been applied from that date. It also means that where the CUA entitlement is payable, the salary schedule rates will increase to include the CUA, as will any allowances and/or other financial elements that usually increase in accordance with wage increase rates under the agreement.

Where the CUA entitlement is payable it will also have a compounding effect for the purposes of subsequent guaranteed wage increases and CUA. This means that all subsequent wage increases

(years 2 and 3) will be applied to the adjusted salary schedule rate that reflects both the guaranteed wage increase and the CUA entitlement when applicable. The same will occur for any allowances and/or other financial elements that would usually increase in accordance with the wage increases under the agreement.

The Queensland Fire Department has committed to publishing updated rates to reflect the CUA entitlement where it is payable on their public facing website.

The provision refers to the fact that where an employee receives an award rate of pay during a CUA period, this is taken to be absorbed by the CUA. This means that the CUA will not be paid on top of any award rate of pay should the award rate become payable during the life of the agreement. This is because the CUA is part of the agreement wage increases. In this circumstance, a person will still receive the full CUA when payable in accordance with their relevant industrial instruments.

Payment of the CUA will be made no later than the pay period that is 3 months after the CUA becomes payable. If a CUA is payable to an employee but they leave the agreement prior to payment being made, they will retain eligibility.



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