

Summary of the QPSU Council meeting **25 November 2008**

QPSU Council met on Tuesday 25 November 2008, the final meeting for 2008. 130 delegates were in attendance, plus observers. Council met at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Brisbane.

Significant changes to federal legislation

Council delegates discussed the implications to our union of the federal government's legislation to replace the WorkChoices federal IR regime.

The new laws will represent the biggest change to the conduct of industrial relations in Australia in over 100 years. The biggest source of change is the bi-partisan political consensus that there should be a single national system of industrial relations covering all Australian workers.

The new federal system will be a considerable improvement on the WorkChoices regime of the previous government, and will go much further to guarantee workers the right to improve their conditions through collective bargaining.

The transfer of workers from state-based to federal systems, begun under the old laws, is certain to be accelerated under the new laws. State sector workers are likely to be the only people represented by state industrial relations systems. In this situation, it is possible that state governments will reach agreement with the federal government to hand over their powers, and all employees in Australia will be covered by the federal IR jurisdiction and its new administering agency, Fair Work Australia.

Wage Balance campaign – memorandum of understanding

Council heard reports from staff and the General Secretary about the government's revised offer following the success of our union's Wage Balance campaign. The offer from the government takes the form of a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) that includes all unions in the public sector. The new offer is 4.5% for the first year and 4.0% for the next two years (cumulative) or a \$34/week increase, whichever is greater. This offer represents the highest increase ever achieved in the core government departments through enterprise bargaining.

Core Enterprise Bargaining campaign in 2009

Council delegates had previously been briefed on the plans for the new collective bargaining agreements during 2009. A conference of delegates in affected core agencies will be held in March 2009. This conference will determine a formal log of claims but will also develop union strategy and a plan to win, building on the knowledge gained from the operations of the wages campaign.

Delegates will be involved in agency-based planning, so that they can work out the key issues for their agency and plan appropriate

Superannuation

Council discussed the recent unilateral changes to government superannuation – namely the announced closure of QSuper's defined benefits scheme. QPSU members will receive information relating to superannuation shortly.

Consultation policy

Council delegates discussed and adopted a new motion that sets out what the union would generally consider an acceptable model of workplace consultation. To view a copy of the motion, please email alex@qpsu.org. This policy is designed to be descriptive rather than normative and in some workplaces there may be opportunities to develop different consultative models.

Reconciliation policy

Council delegates also discussed and endorsed a policy in support of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, and a Reconciliation Action Plan. Copies of the resolution are available by emailing alex@qpsu.org.

Fees for 2009

In line with the wages increase offer as embodied in the government's memorandum of understanding (see above), Council delegates voted that a new fee schedule in 2009 be approved, based around the 4.5% increase to wages. This continues Council policy of linking rises in fees with wage increases achieved through collective bargaining.