

Building a stronger union without raising fees

The creation of a new union, Unite Queensland, bringing together members of the QPSU and ASU, gives union members the opportunity to build a stronger and better resourced union without an increase in fees.

Under the plan for Unite Queensland, former QPSU members will retain their existing fee rates, with future increases linked to outcomes in collective bargaining as currently happens. Some members may be eligible for a reduction in fees as a result of the creation of Unite Queensland.

The creation of Unite Queensland means that more services and more resources exist for QPSU members on the basis of the same fee structure that exists currently.

Health workers to win better lives

Queensland Health is a large area of union membership for both the ASU and the QPSU. The outcomes that are won in Queensland Health collective bargaining are often the basis for other agreements across the public sector.

In the *Wage Balance: It's Only Fair* campaign, it was the strength of Queensland Health workers that allowed union members across the sector to run a strong collective campaign that forced the state government to move from a 3.25% to a 4.5% wage offer.

Queensland Health workers face major new collective agreements coming up now. Health workers are facing an aggressive government bureaucracy that wants to claw back conditions and implement a wage increase below the cost of living at 2.5% per year.

It's not so much that QPSU members and ASU workers in Health can't work together – we know that they can work quite well together at a workplace level. However for too long it has been their two separate union organisations that have obstructed this process.

Having a strong, united union in Queensland Health means that existing members will receive more effective services. It means that potential members no longer face confusion over which union they should join. It means there are additional resources to help recruitment in all areas, giving us a stronger voice as we confront aggressive industrial policies from government.

Universities will benefit from our new union

Workers and their unions have been in the firing line in universities for a long time.

Universities are an area where the federal government has a substantial funding power. Under the Howard government and its WorkChoices agenda, that funding power was used to force universities to put their staff onto individual contracts and de-unionise their workforce.

All union members in universities have felt the force of this attack, and even though the WorkChoices laws have gone, we are still recovering and still struggling to get decent collective agreements that restore basic rights across the sector.

We need to grow stronger in universities if we are to have any chance of ensuring that all university staff have access to good pay and good working conditions.

At the moment there are three separate unions that represent general staff in universities. This has made it difficult to co-ordinate and organise, not to mention recruit members when it has not been clear which union they should join.

Unite Queensland is simply what we need to build our strength at unis. The fact is we are never going to have an employer that listens to us in collective bargaining as long as we are divided and under-resourced. University workers want to make sure they can do it with good pay and good conditions. It's what students deserve, it's what our higher education system deserves. And those good pay and conditions depend on having a strong, well-resourced and effective union like Unite Queensland.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Making our union stronger without raising fees



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Working together – we win

A chance to create a new stronger union

Delegates from the QPSU and the ASU have voted to ask members to endorse a proposal for a new union, Unite Queensland.

The Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) will be holding a postal ballot of all members of the ASU and the QPSU so that you can decide whether to endorse the creation of this new union.

This new organisation offers the chance to create a stronger, more effective and better resourced union for all workers. It will mean more services, more support and more resources for workers in all areas of the public sector.

To see the full details of the proposal to create Unite Queensland, you can visit www.qpsu.org.au/unite



Unite Queensland means better support for everyone

It's important that as a member of a union you have access to high-quality industrial advice and support, when you need it.

Unite Queensland will mean union members will have access to a broader range of experience and skills.

It will also mean a better and more efficient allocation of resources across the membership – instead of having resources tied up in areas that are currently taking up the attention of two unions.

Best of all, QPSU members will be paying the same amount of fees as they were pre-amalgamation. In some cases, thanks to the introduction of an under-21 rate, members may end up paying less money on fees.

Under Unite Queensland, your union fee dollar will deliver more value for money. With the increased resources and greater opportunities for growth and recruitment that Unite Queensland will have, union staff will be able to deliver increased levels of service and support for the same amount in membership fees.

With the combined experience and skill of QPSU and ASU staff, a greater opportunity to grow and recruit members, and more resources that can be used to service all areas of membership more efficiently, Unite Queensland represents a big step forward in the efforts of workers to build better lives in all areas of the public sector.

What will it mean for me?

So what would the creation of Unite Queensland mean for members who are outside of areas where the ASU and the QPSU share coverage?

Perhaps what is most noticeable is the things that won't change:

- Membership fees will stay at the same level for most people. In the case of members who are under 21, you may be paying lower fees. The fee structure will continue to base itself on the pay rises that are won through collective bargaining. Those workers who currently receive professional indemnity insurance cover will still be covered.
- Workplace delegates and contacts will remain the same. Your elected Council representative(s) will still have a position on the new union's Council.
- Local workplace structures, such as consultative forums, will continue to operate.



- There will be no change in political affiliations – Unite Queensland will not be affiliated to the Labor Party. Any potential future change in affiliation arrangements would need to be supported by a ballot of all members of Unite Queensland.
- You will still have access to industrial advice and support through the Union Office. The free call 1800 number will remain available.
- Our union will remain affiliated with the peak bodies, the Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).
- Access to the Union Shopper discount service, and to discounted legal services through our recommended legal providers, will still exist for union members.

Here are the main things that will change:

- Our union will have more financial resources. This will mean more industrial staff to service inquiries, and more opportunities for campaigns to recruit new members and improve working conditions.
- Our union will have more organising resources. We will be able to call on the industrial expertise and experience of existing QPSU and ASU staff. In addition, because of the efficiencies that result from having one union in Queensland Health rather than two competing unions, we will have more opportunity to assign organisers to areas throughout the membership. A larger union will also find it easier to recruit and train more industrial staff.
- Our union will be able to allocate resources more efficiently across the whole of the public sector. With two unions competing in Queensland Health, our efforts to recruit and retain members have been more difficult. A reduction in that problem gives us more opportunities to organise and recruit across the sector and particularly in Health and Universities.
- Our union will be affiliated to a new national office. The matter of which national office we are affiliated to makes little difference in terms of day-to-day operations in our union, but becoming a large affiliate of a large national union means that we become more visible nationally and more likely to gain the support we currently need at a national level.

