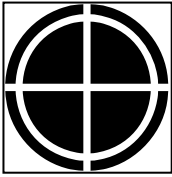




**Employer
Services**



RELATIONS

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NEWSLETTER

Information and comments published by Employer Services Pty. Ltd., Human Resources, Workplace Relations & Award Supply Services,
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Queensland State Wage Increase

On 7 August 2008, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission granted the annual State Wage Increase as follows: -

1. This increase is \$23.60 per week for adult full time employees.
2. This increase is effective from 1 September 2008
3. Increases in allowances other than expense related allowances of 3.8%.
4. The State Minimum Wage for Full Time adults is \$552.00 per week.
5. Casuals, Part Timers and Juniors will receive proportional increases based upon their hours of work and specific Award conditions. Please check your applicable Award terms.

Employer Services will issue updated Wage Schedules/Ready Reckoners as soon as possible.

Please note that this State Wage Increase does not apply to Federal Industrial Relations system employers.

Federal system employers are subject to decisions of the Fair Pay Commission which has already issued a decision increasing wages in Federal Pre-Reform Awards and NAPSAs by \$21.66 per week. Please refer to our Relations Newsletter of July 2008 for a full briefing.

If in doubt please call us.

Federal Labor's Substantive IR Bill

Federal Labor already had passed into Law a Transitional Act amending some aspects of the Coalition's WorkChoices Legislation. If passed by Federal Parliament the substantive IR Bill will completely rewrite the balance of the WorkChoices Laws.

The Labor platform is described as "Forward with Fairness" and is supplemented by an Implementation Plan. 1 January 2010 is the anticipated start date of the new Laws. There has been much urging recently by the union movement for change to occur before 1 January 2010 but statements by the Deputy Prime Minister throw "cold water" on this idea.

On 11 August the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, in a published speech said a substantial workplace relations reform Bill will be introduced into Parliament later this year and the new arrangements will be fully operational by 1 January 2010.

Unions have been anxious to have the unfair dismissal laws changed well before 2010 and have been lobbying hard for the abolition of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, or at least a reduction in its current powers.

She explained that collective agreements will only be approved by the independent umpire, Fair Work Australia, if they meet or exceed the National Employment Standards and leave the employees under the agreement 'better off overall' when compared with the modern award.

And common law contracts will also be available but only if they build on the safety net rather than undermine it.

Bargain Collectively

'Employees will be free to bargain collectively with their employer, in good faith, without excessive rules and regulations to tilt the balance in favour of one side or the other,' she said.

'Importantly, if the majority of employees in the enterprise determine to collectively bargain, their employer will have to sit at the bargaining table and negotiate in good faith.'

However, in previous statements Gillard has emphasized that while employers must bargain in good faith, they don't have to agree to anything.

Anti-strike Regime

She also warned the trade union movement there would be little, if any, softening of the previous Government's harsh anti-strike regime.

'The final component of the new workplace relations system is strong compliance measures to ensure all participants comply with their obligations under the law and to ensure stability of operations at the workplace,' she said. 'If they don't, they will face stiff penalties.'

'It is in everyone's interests that employers, unions and employees work together cooperatively and abide by the rules.'

She went on to explain that when the draft of the new IR legislation was released later this year the Government will 'meet with as many people as it takes; talk for as long as it takes and iron out as many unintended consequences as it needs'.

"But, whatever happens, the unions will have to cop the outcome," she is reported as stating.

ES is Moving

After 12 years in the Brisbane CBD we are moving on 29 August 2008 to a purpose built facility at **Unit 4, 8 Finsbury Street, Newmarket**. It is 3 kilometres from the CBD and adjacent to 2 train stations (on the Ferny Grove line).

All phone numbers remain unchanged. There may be disruption to our phones/emails on 29 August but we hope this will be minimal.

Please note the following numbers should you need to call on the 29th:

- 0412 181 507
- 3830 5537 (24-hr pager service)

We look forward to responding to your needs from our new facility.