

Pay rise for 125,000 Queensland public sector workers

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Working together with their unions, Queensland public sector employees have gained inflation-busting pay rises from the State Government.

The state Premier Anna Bligh intervened directly to settle on the agreement after a concerted campaign by the Queensland Public Sector Union, alongside the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union and other unions representing state employees.

As a result of the union's organising and negotiating skills, the final agreement of 4.5% in the first year and 4% in the following two years was a vast improvement on the government's initial offer of 3.25%.

No trade-offs were required for the final agreement, which is the highest wage increase for the core public service ever achieved through collective bargaining.

"This amazing victory is proof that it is union members who make the difference when it comes to improving pay and conditions," said the QPSU secretary, Alex Scott.

About 125,000 state employees will benefit from the new agreement, with Queensland Health staff, teacher's aides, and Main Roads workers the first to get pay rises under the new deal.

Under a memorandum of understanding, another 22 sections of the public service will receive increases when their agreements expire, although unions will still develop logs of claims

Mr Scott said the deal was a great example of how strategic planning, organisation and professional negotiation by unions, backed by a committed and determined membership, can yield positive results.

"We made the decision to challenge the government's wages policy not just in a single department or as part of a single collective agreement, but across the entire public sector.

"Our campaign succeeded because thousands of union members became involved.

"The industrial activity was backed by a media campaign to spread our message across Queensland.

"Before our wage balance campaign, the state government had a firm policy of wage increases of no more than 3.25% a year.

"Union members decided this offer was unacceptable and ran a campaign across the entire public sector to overturn it in favour of fair wages."

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Mr Scott said the successful wages campaign demonstrated the value of collective bargaining.