

Question on Notice

No. 907

Asked on 13 October 2015

MR RICKUSS asked the Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland (HON C O'ROURKE)—

QUESTION

With reference to the government's union encouragement policy will the Minister detail:

- (a) A list of industrial instruments covering employees administered in the Disability Services and Seniors sections of the portfolio
- (b) The current number of employees covered by each instrument detailed in (a)
- (c) If the industrial instruments outlined in (a) are required to report 'new starters' quarterly, or on another timeframe (specify timeframe); and if so
- (d) To which union are 'new starters' covered in (a) required to be reported under the union encouragement policy?

ANSWER

I thank the member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government made a commitment to restore fairness for government workers.

Union encouragement was one of the many conditions of employment rendered unenforceable during the former government's term.

The *Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015* (the Act) is one of the ways the Palaszczuk Government has delivered on its commitments. From June 2015, the Act restored the ability for union members to organise and protect workers' employment conditions, including re-enlivening any provisions within industrial instruments requiring new employee details to be passed onto relevant unions.

These amendments were important because the former government went further than any Queensland government in history in attacking workers' rights.

The union encouragement policy was introduced in 2000 and worked well for twelve years before the former LNP government abolished it.

The union encouragement policy re-released in May 2015 provides for union members to meet with their representative in the workplace and new employees to have ready access to a union representative so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to join a union. The policy operates subject to relevant legislation.

The implementation of the Policy is an agency responsibility, with the Policy applicable to all government workers.

Lists of industrial instruments, including those with application to the Minister's portfolio can be located at:

http://www.qirc.qld.gov.au/qirc/agreement_award/certified_agreements/public_sector.htm.

The manner regarding release, timing and reporting of new employee details will vary depending on the specific clause in the industrial instrument. Not all industrial instruments require standard reporting.

Where a specific reporting obligation does not exist under the industrial instrument the Union Encouragement Policy applies. The first full quarter of reporting will be July – September 2015.

In relation to the number of employees employed within the Minister's portfolio as at 30 June 2015, please refer to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disabilities Services Annual Report 2014–15 and the Queensland Public Service Quarterly Workforce Profile.

The relevant union to which new starter details are released under the union encouragement policy depends on the rules of coverage for a particular union and the roles and responsibilities of the new starter.