

The Public Sector

You, as a Government employee, are a 'public sector' employee. Public sector employees are employed at all levels of Government. In WA, public sector employees include a wide variety of workgroups comprising of, but not limited to, railcar drivers, police officers, teachers, nurses, firefighters, transit officers and prison officers.

There are numerous external stakeholders within the public sector. A brief breakdown of each is provided below.

Public Sector Labour Relations:

The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety – Public Sector Labour Relations (**PSLR**) plays a quasi-central agency role as coordinator of labour relations in the WA public sector.

PSLR has a role in updating awards where there are a number of agencies party to those awards (e.g. the *Public Service Award 1992* has around 50 employer parties) or conducting negotiations with unions. In negotiations they sit in while the relevant department or organisation takes the lead in negotiations. PSLR ensures the integrity of the Government's wages policy is upheld during bargaining.

Premier's Circular 2017/03 – Coordination and Governance of Public Sector Labour Relations outlines PSLR's role:

The Minister responsible for Industrial Relations and the Executive Director Public Sector Labour Relations (EDPSLR) have responsibility for the coordination, governance and consistent management of public sector labour relations.

You may hear PSLR referred to by some of its former names, such as DOCEP, DOPLR, Commerce or PSD.

Department of Treasury:

Most of the contact between Labour Relations and Treasury occurs during negotiations for industrial agreements. Treasury approval is required to sign off on proposed changes to the agreement and to determine whether there are any cost implications.

Public Sector Commission:

The functions of the Public Sector Commission (PSC) arises from the Public Sector Management Act 1994, with the PSC describing its role as strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and capability of the public sector to meet existing and emerging needs, and deliver high quality services.

Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission:

The Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (**WAIRC**) is the independent tribunal responsible for conciliating and arbitrating disputes between employers, employees, and unions. There is also the Industrial Magistrate's Court, which shares a registry with the WAIRC. Both bodies are creatures of statute, enabled by the provisions of the *Industrial Relations Act 1979*.

Unions:

Employers of public sector employees deal with a variety of unions. Which ones is dependent on their area of Government. The Public Transport Authority deals with a number of unions, each of which has coverage of different staff within the PTA. The four major ones are the:

- Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Union (**RTBU**)
- Australian Services Union (**ASU**)
- Electrical Trades Union (**ETU**)
- Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (**AMWU**)

The scope of coverage of unions (i.e. the occupational groups they have a right to represent and negotiate on behalf of) is governed by each union's individual union rules.

RTBU

IN UNITY!