

RTBU



PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

RALLY FAQ

Who is in the Public Sector Alliance?

The Public Sector Alliance is a group of unions affiliated with Unions WA, who represent public sector workers and are currently negotiating with the McGowan Government to improve your wages and conditions. The Alliance includes:

- UnionsWA
- RTBU WA PTA
- CPSU/CSA (Civil Service Association)
- UPFU (United Professional Firefighters Union)
- UWU (United Workers Union)
- Professionals Australia
- HSUWA (Health Services Union of Western Australia)
- SSTUWA (State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia)
- WA Police Union
- WAPOU (Western Australian Prison Officers' Union)

The Alliance has come together to put collective pressure on the McGowan Government to change its Wages Policy. The Wages Policy dictates what pay increases public sector employees can get. Even the recently improved version is well below Perth's current CPI and does not keep up with the cost of living.

The rally on 17 August 2022 is the Alliance's biggest action to date; large numbers of public sector employees attending are critical to demonstrating our member power at this action.

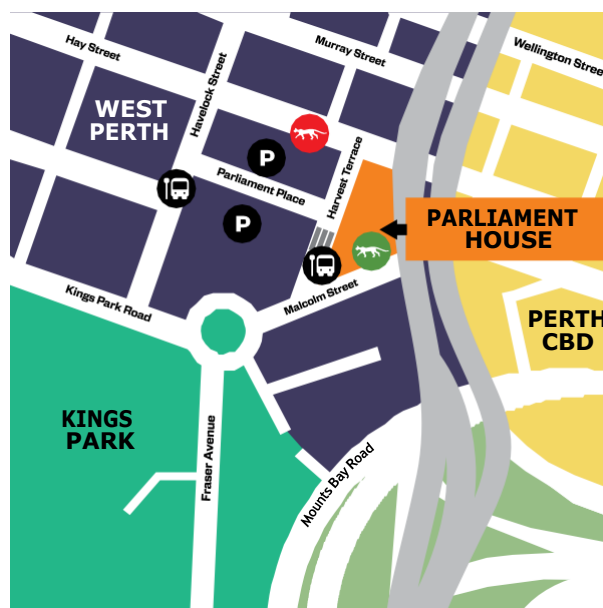
What is the rally for?

For members to demonstrate member power in solidarity with each other and support the Alliance in our campaign to get wage increases that keep up with the cost of living over the next two years. The revised Wages Policy of 3% and a one-off payment of \$2500 in the first year and 3% in the second year does not deliver these outcomes. The McGowan Government sought to revise its Wages Policy in a manner that indicated they are not listening to our genuine concerns that public sector workers wages are going backwards.

Where and when is the rally taking place?

The rally is scheduled for lunchtime on 17 August 2022, so it is easier to attend. RTBU Members are encouraged to arrive from 12:00pm for a 12:30pm start. Staff from the PSA unions will be circulating throughout the crowd from 12pm with masks and sanitisers, should you need them.

The rally will be held on the steps of Parliament House located at 4 Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005. See parking and public transport below.



Bus Bay



Parking



Green CAT
29 | Harvest Terrace



Red CAT
90 | Parliament

How do I get to Parliament House?

Walking - Parliament House is located on the outskirts of the city centre, though still in the central business district. The most direct route is to walk west along St Georges Terrace or west along Hay Street. It takes approximately fifteen minutes to walk the two kilometres from the city centre. RTBU members are invited to meet at Forrest Chase from 1140am for a 12pm march up.

Driving - Limited visitor parking is available and can be accessed via the southern driveway from Harvest Terrace. Metered parking is available in Parliament Place.



Public transport - The free CAT bus service is available to and from Parliament. The Red CAT travels to Parliament House along Hay Street and the Green CAT travels along St Georges Terrace to Malcolm Street.

Returning buses can be accessed from Murray Street for the Red CAT bus and Malcolm Street for the Green CAT bus.

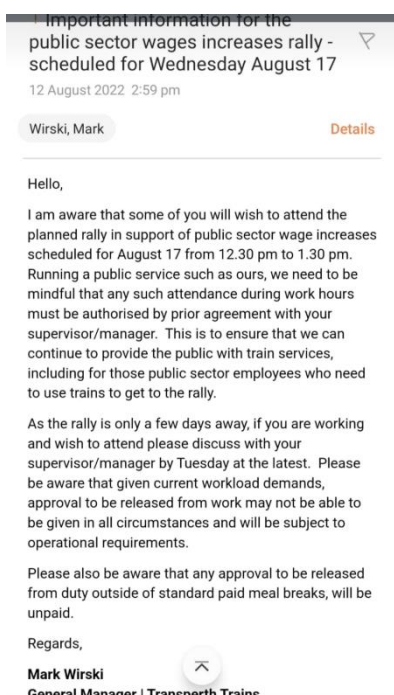
[Click here for CAT timetables](#) | [Transperth Journey Planner](#)

Private bus transport - There are two bus layover bays adjacent to Parliament House at the southern end of Harvest Terrace. Additional layover bays are available at the Constitutional Centre on the corner of Havelock St and Parliament Place (350 metres from Parliament House). Bus parking is available in Kings Park.

How do I arrange to attend the rally?

There are a number of options:

1. **Attend in your own time**
2. **Attend before or after your shift**
3. **Use your annual leave, long service leave, day in lieu (DIL) or similar**
 - If you want to take annual leave, long service leave or TOIL on the day of the rally you need the prior approval of your employer.
4. **Attend during your break or shift with prior approval from your Employer**
 - The PTA has written to employees advising they can attend, where possible, and with prior approval during shift.
 - Any time, outside of a paid break, will be without pay.
 - We encourage members to apply for recreational leave types they may have to cover any wage shortfall.



Would the rally be considered industrial action?

The rally is a form of industrial action to secure better terms of employment.

Unlike the *Fair Work Act 2009* there are no elaborate controls under Western Australia's *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (IR Act) with respect to the conduct of industrial action.

The IR Act defines industrial action, and the definition is very broad. It includes:

- Strikes;
- Lockouts;
- Overtime bans;
- Go slows;
- Partial work bans (i.e. Where workers refuse to perform some but not all of their normal duties); and
- Other action if the *purpose is to compel an employer or employee or an organisation [union] to accept any terms of employment or to enforce any compliance with any demand relating to employment*;

The IR Act would cover action taken over claims for our replacement PTA/ARTBIU Agreements.

Can my manager stop me from attending the rally?

Stop work meetings are not sanctioned by the McGowan Government or Agencies and are considered a form of industrial action. Agencies are required to act when industrial action is threatened or taken by employees.

However, if you make prior arrangements to take a longer lunch break or have approved leave (including LWOP) and a skeleton crew will remain on duty, where necessary, your manager should have no concerns.

You can advise your manager that the RTBU is a responsible and moderate union and members do not take action lightly, but we deserve a pay increase that keeps up with the cost of living as do they. The impact to the public will not be significant because a skeleton crew will remain at the workplace if it is operationally necessary.

If you believe your manager is unreasonably attempting to prevent you from attending the rally you should contact Branch Secretary Joshua Dekuyer or Industrial Organiser George Johnston.



Can my employer take action against me for attending the rally?

If you have made the arrangements set out above and return to work within agreed timeframes your employer should not take any action against you. If you choose to leave the workplace without authorisation or properly utilising your leave provisions, your employer could take action, but any action would need to be proportional and related to the impact on operational requirements, and not simply because you chose to participate in a union rally.

The way an Agency deals with threatened or actual industrial action can include:

- Stopping your pay - This cannot occur if you are taking a period of approved leave and can only extend for the duration you remain away from the workplace without approved leave.
- Disciplinary action - Any disciplinary investigation into the employee will have to take into account that the conduct was part of recognised industrial action.

Can the Government stop the Alliance from holding this rally?

As the industrial action is to be conducted reasonably and is approved by the Alliance, if Government or Agencies do try to interfere, such factors will support us to argue the action can and should go ahead.

The Government or Agencies may seek the assistance of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) to resolve the dispute with the Alliance members.

Once industrial action is occurring or likely to occur, the WAIRC can require the union and the employer to attend a conciliation conference. It may order the action to stop or to not go ahead.

Why are we bargaining for more than is included in the current Policy?

In this current round of bargaining your union and your delegates are seeking to improve your wages and conditions. You have told us that a pay rise that keeps up with the cost of living is essential.

You deserve a pay rise that keeps up with the cost of living. You have endured years of pay increases of only \$1000 and ensured the Government achieved effective budget repair. You have continued to provide effective services to the public during the pandemic. The McGowan Government can afford to pay you in line with Perth CPI, but it will not. We need to take action to show the Government that we remain committed to a pay increase that keeps up with the cost of living.

This is your opportunity to send a clear message to the Government – 3% and \$2,500 in the first year and 3% in the second is not a pay increase that keeps up with the cost of living.

How will the lump sum payment affect my tax and Centrelink payments when it goes into my bank account? Will I even get \$2,500 or will I lose most of it to tax?

The union cannot answer these questions as we are not certified to provide tax/financial advice, and everyone's individual financial circumstances will be different. The McGowan Government has not provided detail as to how the \$2,500 will be paid and the circumstances of that payment in relation to tax or Centrelink. You would therefore need to contact the Australian Tax Office, Centrelink or a qualified financial advisor to determine what would apply in your particular circumstances.

Whilst the \$2,500 one-off payment will no doubt assist workers who are struggling to keep up with the cost of living this year, it will not pay your future bills which will continue to arrive next year and may potentially be higher. Under the recent Wages Policy you will be attempting to pay next year's bills with less annual income than you received in the first year.

I am a part time worker - would I get the \$2,500 too?

Whilst the McGowan Government has not given our union the full details of their latest Wages Policy, it appears from their press release that part-time and casual employees will receive the same 3% increases but will only receive a pro-rata amount of the one-off \$2,500. For example, if you work 0.5FTE then you will only receive \$1,250. Payments to casuals are likely to be calculated on average weekly hours.

If this is a so-called 'cost of living payment' (as it is labelled by the McGowan Government in its press release) then your union questions why part-time and casual workers will be penalised for working fewer hours.

