THE WORKPLACE MAGAZINE

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MYUNION NEWS

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EDITORIAL EDITION



WORKPLACE RIGHTS / 37

The perils of Christmas parties

What two decisions reveal about workplace harassment, responsibilities and a fair response.

QPOA / MUSTERUP!!!
The shift you worked

NATSIC-AS
Before saying yes

WORK & SAFETY
Make the hazard visible

Original editorial illustration

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Make the hazard visible



Workshop context. Photo: Nenad Stojković (Shixart1985) / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0; cropped. Photo source Licence

01 / COVER STORY

STORY BEGINS HERE

Dust, fumes and repeated abuse can all be hard to see from a manager’s desk. Different hazards need different controls, but the people who work the shift are often the first to notice where those controls fall short.

At handover, there’s rarely time to explain everything that made the last shift difficult. The urgent jobs get passed on. The extractor that works poorly during a particular task, the missed check-in or the pattern of abusive calls might get a sentence, if they get mentioned at all. When the next shift has the same experience, it can look like another isolated problem. That’s how a recurring hazard can stay invisible to the people deciding what to change.

Two November developments bring this problem into focus. On 12 November, Safe Work Australia announced updates to 15 model codes ahead of the transition from workplace exposure standards to workplace exposure limits for airborne contaminants on 1 December. Then, on 23 November, the NSW Auditor-General reported on how five selected state government agencies manage psychosocial hazards. One concerns what people breathe; the other concerns how work is designed and managed, and how people are treated while doing it. The evidence differs. The shared question is who notices a problem early enough to act.

What the NSW audit found

In most of the audited agencies, arrangements for responsibility and oversight were not clearly defined. The audit also found gaps in reporting or in deciding when a problem should reach senior leaders. The agencies often relied on complaints and incident reports to detect hazards. Some did not consult all their workers or had limited ways to record and respond to what workers told them.

A formal complaint can bring a serious issue to light. But a count of complaints cannot tell a supervisor whether an evening shift repeatedly operates short-staffed, or whether casual staff know how to report abuse. A team might

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learn more by asking when the pressure peaks, where workers can disengage safely, and whether backup comes when called. The audit looked at five agencies; it does not establish how every NSW agency or private workplace performs. Its recommendations for NSW government agencies include checking their arrangements and addressing deficiencies by 30 June 2027. That is a recommendation timeframe, not a new deadline for workers to report harm.

What changes on 1 December

Airborne exposure needs evidence suited to the substance and task. What is used or generated? For how long? Does extraction work while the job is actually done? Where monitoring is needed, a measurement during a quiet period may not answer what happens during the busiest part of a shift. A concentration limit is a boundary, not a target. Ask what can be eliminated and what can be controlled at the source before treating a respirator as the whole answer.

The national transition date does not mean every entry changes identically at every site. Model codes need local approval to have legal effect. WorkSafe Victoria lists 15 substances with different implementation arrangements and provides a table for December 2026 and December 2029. WorkSafe WA’s statement notes deferred implementation for phosphine and diesel particulate matter. Neither point is a reason to wait before addressing a hazard. Check the local regulator and the specific contaminant before using a limit.



Workshop context. Photo: Shixart1985 / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0; cropped. Licence

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Make the hazard visible

One thing to take into the next shift

Pick a recurring problem and describe it in terms someone can act on: the task or situation, when it happens, who may be exposed, the control that is meant to work and what you observed. Raise it through the appropriate workplace safety channel or with your health and safety representative. Ask who will follow up and when the control will be checked again. Keep the records in the authorised system, without circulating patient, client or colleague information.

A shift can end without a recorded injury and still reveal something important. The point of listening to the people who worked it is to act on that information before the next shift.

Source desk: NSW Auditor-General, report 433 · Safe Work Australia, 15 model code updates · Local approval of model codes · WorkSafe Victoria's transition table · WorkSafe WA's regulator statement.

Audit report

THE TAKEAWAY

At your next safety meeting: ask which control should work, what workers observed and who will check it.



Editorial illustration: airborne hazards are not always visible.

02 / PUBLIC POLICY

When Parliament passes a bill, what changes on your shift?

A passed bill, a scheduled committee report and a rule starting today are three different things. Here’s how to tell them apart.



Australian Parliament House, Canberra, 2008. Photo: Ryan Wick / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0; cropped. Licence

A retail worker facing repeat abuse may hear that Parliament has passed a workplace protection law and reasonably ask: can we use it now? A young worker watching a Senate inquiry into superannuation might make the same leap. Neither headline tells you whether a remedy exists today. The question worth asking is which rule applies now, to whom, and from what date.

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Parliament & the states

Put three dates on the same page

New South Wales is a useful example. Its Parliament passed the Workplace Protection Orders Bill on 12 November, and the resulting Act received assent on 18 November. The passed text sets a separate start rule: 12 months after assent, or an earlier day or days appointed by proclamation. That puts the default at 18 November 2027 if the relevant provisions are not proclaimed earlier. This edition did not verify an earlier proclamation. Workers should not rely on a new order being available already, and employers have no reason to put off dealing with abuse while they wait. NSW parliamentary history and passed text, section 2.

For someone working a shop floor or security desk, that distinction matters before the next roster. Record repeated incidents using the approved channel. Ask what is changing now: staff coverage at busy times, who can call for backup, and how repeat incidents are escalated. A new legal pathway might eventually add a tool; it will not answer whether someone is alone when an aggressive customer returns. Safe Work Australia: violence and aggression.

A committee report is a different kind of event

The Senate's published schedule listed a 24 November committee report on the *Fair Super for Young Workers Bill 2026*. That was parliamentary business expected in the sitting week; we did not verify tabling by the issue's research cutoff. Even a tabled report would be a step in the process, not a change to a pay run. If you're checking super now, use the ATO's current Payday Super information and compare your pay records with your fund's contributions. Keep the proposal separate from the rules that currently apply to you. Senate sitting-week programme.

South Australia shows why it is worth checking the specific part of an Act. The official legislation bulletin records that Part 3 of the Industrial Relations Portfolio (No 2) Act 2026, amending the state Fair Work Act 1994, commenced on 18 November. That does not make it a change to the federal Fair Work Act or tell

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Parliament & the states

you which individual provisions affect your workplace. South Australian legislation bulletin, 20 November.

What to save: the actual legislation or instrument, the section, the relevant start date and the source that confirms coverage. If a job or complaint has a deadline, work from the rules in force and the notice you received rather than waiting for a policy item to be settled.

Jurisdiction desk | What to check locally

- **Commonwealth:** Check whether the Fair Super bill's scheduled committee report was tabled. **NSW:** Check commencement of the protection-order provisions separately from assent.
- **Queensland:** Current psychosocial code and variations. **Victoria:** Local exposure-limit schedule, with separate 2026 and 2029 columns.
- **WA:** November regulatory intent on exposure limits. **SA:** The bulletin above gives section-by-section commencement.
- **Tasmania:** Exposure-limit readiness. **ACT:** 23 November asbestos-awareness advice. **NT:** Existing silica code; no new territory item verified for this edition.

Status checked 24 November 2026, Queensland time. Local regulator references are not all newly commenced laws.



Editorial illustration: checking a briefing against the rules actually in force.



Two deadlines, one inbox

Editorial illustration: a fictional workplace meeting. No real people or dispute depicted.

03 / YOUR RIGHTS

STORY BEGINS HERE

An internal reply, a tribunal application and an insurer review can all run on different clocks. Start by working out what the letter actually does.

BEFORE YOU REPLY

Reply to employer **Commission filing** **Insurer review**

Imagine an employee opens an email on Friday afternoon. The subject says “confidential”; the attachment proposes disciplinary action and asks for a written response by Tuesday. The employee is already waiting for an insurer to explain a decision about their injury. It is tempting to send one long reply about everything. It is more useful to separate the decisions, the people who can change them and the dates by which anything must be done. This is a hypothetical, not a reader’s case.

What has actually happened?

A proposal, a final decision and a notice that a decision will take effect later are not the same thing. Keep the covering email, original attachment and any later notice, using authorised systems. Write down the date each arrived, the response date stated in the letter and, separately, any effective date. If wording is ambiguous, ask the sender to identify what has and hasn’t yet been decided and to confirm the next step in writing. Don’t assume asking pauses the process.

At the investigation stage, answer the particulars rather than the tone of the letter. For each allegation, identify what you accept, what you dispute and what you cannot answer without further information. If a particular document is relied on but you haven’t seen it, name it and explain why it matters. If you need more time, a support person or an accessibility adjustment, ask promptly and suggest a workable arrangement. In a national-system unfair dismissal case, an unreasonable refusal to allow a support person for relevant discussions is one

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Your workplace rights

factor the Commission considers; that is not the same as an automatic right to representation at every meeting. Fair Work Act, s 387.

If the decision ends your employment

For eligible workers in the national system, the Fair Work Commission must generally receive an unfair dismissal or general protections dismissal application within **21 days after the dismissal takes effect**. One pathway asks whether the dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable; the other asks whether dismissal involved a prohibited reason, such as exercising a workplace right. Extensions require exceptional circumstances. There are restrictions on taking multiple actions about the same dismissal, so filing both does not safely preserve both options. Get the forum and pathway checked promptly, especially if any other complaint is in progress. FWC deadlines · General protections dismissal · Multiple actions.

Keep the parallel matters separate

For Queensland workers' compensation, a reviewable insurer decision has its own route. WorkSafe Queensland says an applicant may ask the insurer for written reasons within 20 business days of being advised of the decision and generally has three months from receiving the written decision to apply for independent review. Those are different steps and do not replace any response required by the employer. Likewise, if the facts involve sexual harassment, identify what needs to stop now and what outcome you seek for past conduct. The federal Commission distinguishes stop orders from resolving a dispute in



Editorial illustration: keep separate dates for separate processes.

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Your workplace rights

other ways; timing, connection to the workplace and coverage affect which route is open. Queensland insurer reviews · FWC harassment pathways.

The first thing to put on paper is not your entire case. It is the earliest date that matters, what is due, who must receive it and where you will keep proof that they did. For a Queensland public-sector employment decision, check the QIRC public-sector appeals guide rather than importing a federal rule. General information as at 24 November 2026; requesting help or an internal extension is not lodging an application.

THE TAKEAWAY

Put the decision, due date, forum and next action on a separate line for each problem.



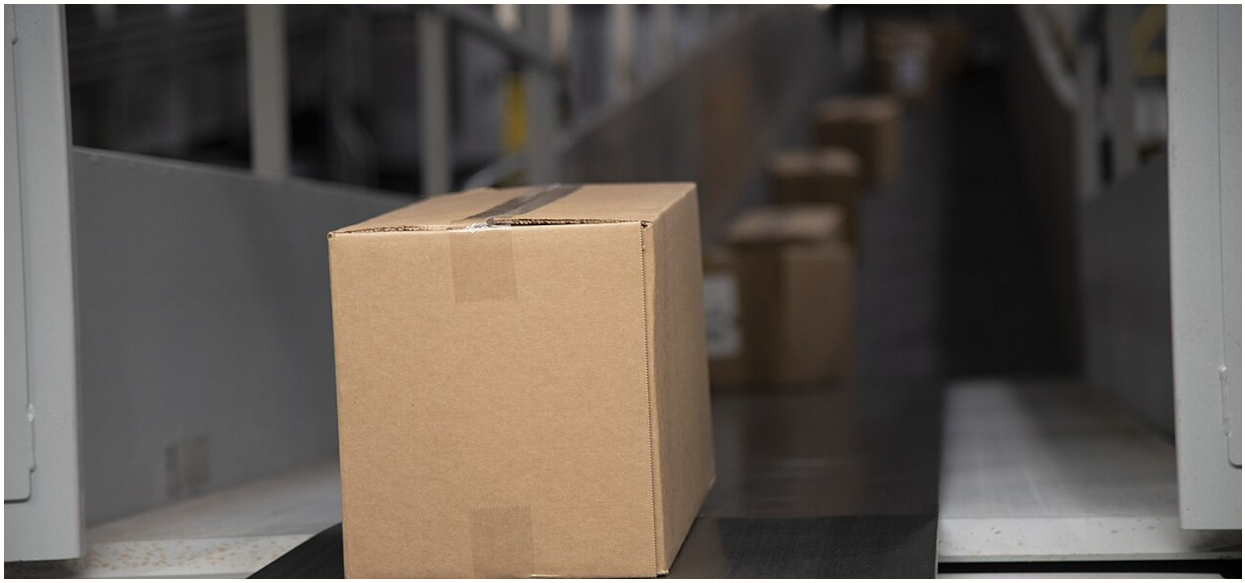
Editorial illustration: keep each workplace decision in its own record.

CONTINUE ON MYUNION
Unfair dismissal guide Workplace sexual harassment guide

04 / FAIR WORK ANALYSIS

A new pay floor for parcel drivers?

What Fair Work has proposed, and what parcel and app-based food delivery workers can rely on today.



Texas, US: parcel-conveyor context, not an Australian site or the reported proceedings. Photo: Lance Cheung / USDA, public domain; cropped. Licence

Two drivers can make similar deliveries and be covered by different rules. One picks up takeaway meals through an app; the other collects a vanload of parcels from a depot. A Fair Work Commission statement on 18 November 2026 moved the parcel cases forward. It did not give either driver a new rate overnight.

What the Commission actually did

The Transport Workers' Union asked the Commission to set minimum standards in two related cases. **MS2024/1** concerns eligible employee-like workers who get small-vehicle delivery work through digital labour platforms. **MS2024/2** concerns regulated road transport contractors performing small-vehicle delivery

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Parcel delivery pay

work. The panel released its own provisional drafts because they differed significantly from what parties had put forward at the hearing. It asked for comments on the wording before taking the formal step of issuing notices of intent and draft orders. Neither November draft is an operative order, and neither sets a new entitlement you can claim now. Fair Work Commission, [2026] FWCFB 308, [1]–[2]

Why the detail matters

In the platform draft, the proposed floor is measured across an earnings period of up to 28 days, not job by job. It is calculated on **engaged time**, not simply the entire time a driver is logged on. The proposed definition includes time worked from the first pickup to the last delivery of an engagement, less breaks and time lost to accidents or breakdowns. If total payment fell below the proposed floor, the platform would have to make up the difference. The panel used an award benchmark plus modelled vehicle costs for the platform draft; it used different cost models for the contractor draft and dealt with superannuation separately there. These are proposals, not rates to put on an invoice. [2026] FWCFB 308, [3]–[4]; Attachment 1, cls 3(g), 10.1–10.3

The order that already applies

The separate **Interim On-Demand Delivery Employee-like Worker Minimum Standards Order** has operated since **17 August 2026**. It covers specified app-based employee-like workers mainly delivering food, drinks, liquor or supermarket groceries on demand, and the platforms engaging them. It includes provisions about minimum rates, records and insurance. The November platform draft expressly excludes workers already covered by that interim order. If you do mixed work, read the coverage clause rather than assuming that every job offered by the same app attracts the same protection. Commission's August decision and operative order · Current orders register · November statement, Attachment 1, cl 2.2

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Parcel delivery pay

What to save, and what happens next

Keep your agreement, offer and acceptance records, pickup and drop-off times, earnings statements, deductions and receipts for vehicle costs. For mixed work, record the kind of delivery as well as the app or contractor. The panel set **5 pm AEDT Friday 27 November** (**4 pm Queensland time**) for parties' comments on the proposed terms and scheduled a Sydney conference for **10 am AEDT Monday 7 December**. That is a timetable for the rule-making process, not a deadline to claim individual pay. [2026] FWCFB 308, [5]–[6]

The ILO's Platform Economy Convention No. 193 is a separate international development. As checked on 23 November, Australia had not ratified it and it was not in force; it did not create an Australian delivery rate. For independent workplace advocacy information, explore MYUNION membership and check what's covered. General information, not legal advice.



Archive: Wagga Wagga mail sorting centre, separate from the reported proceedings. Photo: Bidgee / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0; cropped. Licence

05 / INDUSTRY REPORT

What does that line on your payslip mean?

Five checks for pharmacy, retail, security, medical and prison work. Start with the employer and instrument; finish with one line payroll can explain.



Editorial illustration: payroll and shift records. No actual employer or worker depicted.

A community pharmacist who stays available through lunch and a retail employee who works past an agreed finish might both find the extra time missing from their pay. But the reason it should have been counted is different. An employer’s trading name, job title or payroll code is not enough to identify the rule. Start with the employer named on the contract or payslip, your employment status and classification, the state and site where you worked, and whether an award or agreement applied on the date of the shift. For national-system employees, the Fair Work Ombudsman explains the pay and time records employers keep.

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On the job

Pharmacy: an interrupted lunch is not the only question

Under clause 19.4 of the Pharmacy Industry Award, a covered pharmacist required to stay on the premises during a meal break to attend to urgent pharmacist matters is paid for that period at 150% of the minimum hourly rate. That is distinct from the overtime meal allowance, which has different conditions under clause 19.3. Ask what the pharmacy expected of you during the break, rather than relying only on how many customers you actually served. A locum's offer should also identify who is engaging them and on what basis: having an ABN or issuing invoices is not conclusive under the applicable federal employment-status test.

Security: ask whether it was really one continuous shift

A morning booking and a second period of duty later that day can look like two short blocks in a payroll app. If they constituted a rostered broken shift under the Security Services Industry Award, clauses 13.3(h)–(i) and 17.4 provide a three-hour pay minimum for each period of duty and a separate broken shift allowance. An ordinary rest break is not a second period of duty. Keep the roster showing how the work was arranged, and check the applicable agreement if there is one.

Retail: find the agreed hours before counting the extra

For a part-time employee covered by the General Retail Industry Award, clause 10 distinguishes guaranteed hours from valid changes to the agreed pattern and provides for overtime above the guarantee as properly varied. Keep the original agreement, the request to stay and any written agreement to change the hours. Clocking off late does not by itself show that a variation was agreed; equally, a properly agreed variation can change the overtime calculation.

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On the job

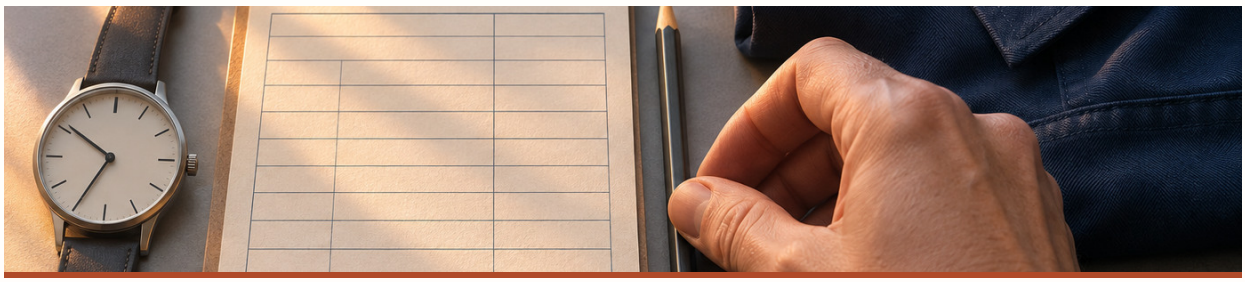
Medical: on call and called back are different entries

Queensland Health lists MOCA7 and the state Medical Officers Award for specified medical officer groups, and separately lists a visiting medical officer agreement. A private employer may instead fall under the national Medical Practitioners Award or an enterprise agreement; a genuine practice contractor is different again. If you are questioning a payment, distinguish being available on call from returning to duty. Keep authorised times and approvals, not any patient material.

Prison Officers: check the classification, not just the facility

For covered Queensland Corrective Services staff, compare the state Correctional Employees Award and the certified agreement listed by the QIRC. A private operator's staff should check their own instrument. If you were directed into a different role, ask what classification and, if relevant, what higher-duties provision was assessed. A job title alone won't answer it. Don't export secure rosters or incident reports to prove an ordinary pay query.

For any of the five, give payroll the date, the disputed entry and the instrument you think applies. Ask them to identify the clause and show the calculation. Coverage and sources checked to 24 November 2026; examples are general information, not an individual pay ruling.



Editorial illustration: keeping a private record of an ordinary pay query.

CONTINUE ON MYUNION
Locum pharmacist resources



Original QPOA ad illustration

Someone in your corner

QPOA membership for Queensland Prison Officers and eligible corrective services employees.

Start with free life membership, or compare QPOA General at $30 a month with up to 10 hours of eligible employment advocacy support per membership year. Read the current plan before you need it.

Eligibility and plan terms apply. Membership does not guarantee coverage, an outcome or representation.

Explore QPOA membership

Read MUSTERUP!!! **QPOA membership information and video**



The shift you actually worked

Former Boggo Road Gaol, Brisbane, 2015; not a site examined in this feature. Photo: Shiftchange / Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0; cropped. Photo source Licence

06 / MUSTERUP!!! STORY BEGINS HERE

The roster might say you had a break and finished on time. If the day went differently, here's how to make the difference visible and ask for a safer next shift.

QPOA / FIRST PUBLISHED IN 2003 Facebook

SHIFT RECORD

Rostered hours	Actual relief	What happened

A roster sets out what's meant to happen. It can't tell you whether relief arrived, whether a break was interrupted or whether someone stayed late to finish a handover. Those gaps don't always point to a safety problem. But if they keep opening up on the same shift or for the same reason, it's worth asking what in the way the work is organised needs to change.

That question matters in Queensland corrections. The Queensland Audit Office's report on rehabilitation and reintegration, tabled on 7 July 2026, recorded that Queensland's prison population grew from 7,318 in June 2015 to 11,278 in June 2025. The auditors found that rising numbers put pressure on staffing and facilities, disrupted routines and increased safety and security risks. The report examined rehabilitation and reintegration. It does not tell us whether a particular shift or centre had enough staff, or how much overtime anyone worked.

What the roster misses

Queensland's psychosocial hazards code uses corrections work as an example. Long periods of vigilance or monotony can sit alongside sudden, intense demands. Add noise, shift work and the risk of aggression, and each demand can make the others harder to manage. That's why looking at one incident in isolation can miss the pattern.

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The shift you actually worked

Start by writing down the difference between the roster and the shift. If relief came late, record when it was due, when it arrived and whether you got a break later. If you stayed back, record the actual finish and the effect on the time available to recover before your next shift. Separate what you observed from what you think caused it. Report an immediate safety concern through your workplace’s procedures straight away; don’t wait to build a record.

Five details worth keeping

1. **What was planned:** scheduled hours, breaks and expected relief.

2. **What actually happened:** start and finish times, whether the break was taken or interrupted, and whether your next shift changed.

3. **What made it harder to work safely:** describe the task or risk in general terms, without prisoner names, unit identifiers or security-sensitive details.

4. **Who was told and when:** the supervisor or reporting channel, and an authorised reference number if available.

5. **What would help next shift:** a workable relief plan, protected break coverage or a review of repeated overruns. Ask who is responsible and when it will be checked.

Use authorised systems for official records. Don’t forward internal reports, screenshots of restricted rosters or prisoner information to private email. If you seek outside support, start with a short, redacted chronology and ask what can be shared and how.



Editorial illustration: a quiet moment to record the shift.

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The shift you actually worked

Ask for a change you can check

A health and safety representative, where elected, can help raise a pattern affecting the whole work group. Put one practical question on the table: **What will change on the next roster, and how will we know it worked?** That could mean tracking actual breaks and finish times for an agreed period and checking them against the revised plan. WorkSafe Queensland's fatigue guidance is a useful starting point. Outside Queensland, check your local regulator and industrial instrument.

Explore QPOA membership through MYUNION. Check the terms and what support is available for your circumstances. This is general workplace information, not legal advice.

> THE TAKEAWAY
>
> **A roster is the plan. Make a dated record of what the shift required.**

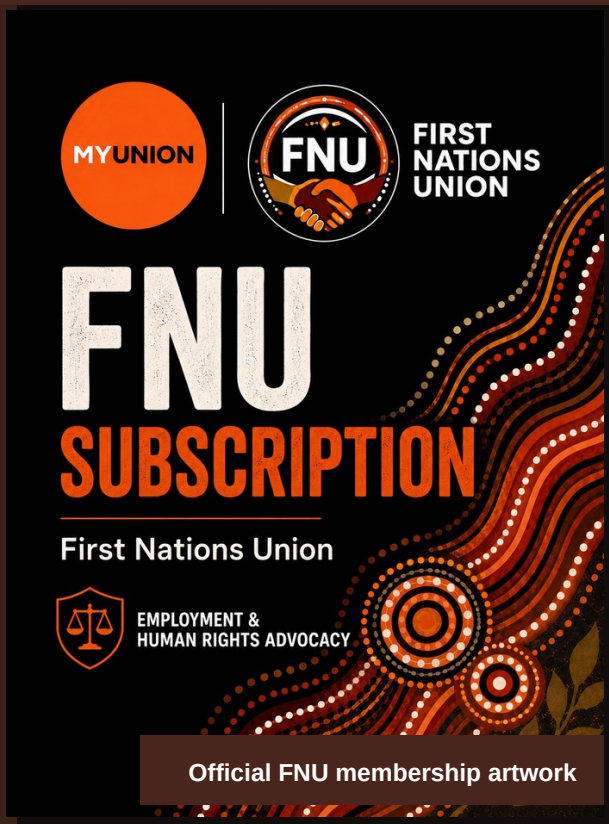


Editorial illustration: safer handovers depend on the whole team.

FIRST NATIONS UNION

FNU

Employment and human rights advocacy



Official FNU membership artwork

First Nations Union membership

Employment and human rights advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Free life membership includes MYUNION News Blog access and one free initial consultation per member. Compare the current paid options for further support.

Eligibility and membership terms apply. Further advocacy is subject to scope and separate written agreement.

Explore FNU membership

NATSIC-AS **1300 698 646** **gethelp@myunion.au**



Before the corporation says yes

Original editorial illustration; not a named corporation or site.

07 / NATSIC-AS

STORY BEGINS HERE

An offer of funding can bring a community project within reach. Before anyone signs, make sure the people who will carry the responsibility have had their say, and that the decision is made by the right people.



NATSIC-AS / FIRST NATIONS AFFAIRS YouTube Facebook

BEFORE YOU SIGN

Identify authority **Record the decision** **Check the agreement**

A grant offer can arrive with a deadline and a familiar question: can someone sign this today? Start one step earlier. What is the corporation agreeing to do? The answer may sit across a budget, a delivery schedule and the agreement itself. Look for any contribution the corporation must make, when the money will actually come in, and who will prepare the progress and financial reports. A programme might be worth doing and still need a different timetable or budget if it depends on staff the corporation hasn't yet hired.

The next question is who can make that commitment. For corporations registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act), start with the current rule book. It sets out the corporation's purposes, its membership and how decisions are made. Check the proposed agreement against the rule book, any relevant board resolution and any written delegation. Authority to apply for funding, accept the final terms and approve spending may sit with different people. If a staff member has signing authority, check what it covers and whether it has a limit. ORIC explains when a board can delegate a power and how to record it. ORIC: rule books · ORIC: delegating board powers.

Ask early whose views or consent need to be sought. The right process depends on the corporation, the project and the people affected. A deadline set by a funder shouldn't be the first time people hear what the project will ask of

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Before the corporation says yes

them. If the work involves Country, cultural knowledge or community information, make time to establish who can speak for the material and what may be recorded or shared. If a director has an interest in a supplier or the proposal, disclose it early and record how the board dealt with it. Keep a clear minute of what was approved, who may sign and what conditions still need to be met. ORIC: managing a conflict of interest.

Keep beside the agenda: three questions for the rule book

1. **Which copy are we using?** Find the corporation's entry on ORIC's public register and check the lodged rule book and any relevant changes. Record which version you relied on. The CATSI Act can still apply even if a requirement isn't printed in your copy.

2. **Who hears a concern about this decision?** A CATSI corporation must have an internal dispute process. Check the clause for the steps, who receives a concern and whether any separate pathway applies. Registered native title bodies corporate have additional requirements for certain disputes involving common law holders.

3. **Is this also a workplace issue?** The same facts may raise a separate concern about pay, safety or dismissal. Write down the date and the outcome sought, and check the relevant workplace process and deadlines promptly. Don't assume raising it with the board or ORIC stops another deadline. CATSI Act, s 66-1 · Fair Work Commission: deadlines.

NATSIC-AS offers practical governance and workplace advocacy support. This feature is general information, not legal advice.

ORIC: law, rules and obligations

NATSIC-AS contact

1800 238 622 **gethelp@natsic.org** **natsic.org**

08 / WORK & WELLBEING

When work spills into the rest of your life

Take on the things you can control, and recognise the changes only a workplace or platform can make.



Wellbeing context, not a recipe or dietary guidance. Photo: Sambazon / Unsplash via Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0; cropped. Licence

Finishing a shift doesn't always mean finishing the work. There may be a long drive home, a late meal, or another shift close enough that sleep has to be fitted around it. For an app courier, the pressure can take a different form: deciding whether to accept another delivery without knowing how long you'll wait or what it will cost. You can make a useful plan for yourself, but not every problem is yours to solve alone.

Make the next break possible

Prison Officers, hospital teams and people on lone security shifts can't necessarily take a meal break just because it's printed on the roster. Someone

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Work & wellbeing

has to relieve them, or the task has to be handed over safely. Safe Work Australia's fatigue guidance puts work design, sufficient breaks and recovery time among the controls. The worker who can't get relief three nights in a row is giving the workplace useful safety information, not admitting they've failed to manage their own sleep. Safe Work Australia: managing fatigue risks.

Try one practical check this week: compare when breaks were rostered with when people could actually take them. Note what got in the way, without collecting confidential records. Bring the pattern to your supervisor or health and safety representative, and ask for a change that can be tested, such as relief coverage at a predictable busy time. If stress or sleep problems persist, a conversation with a GP can help you consider individual support while the workplace addresses the work conditions. Healthdirect: mental wellbeing.

Food on shift: what the 5:2 evidence says

The 5:2 diet restricts intake on two days and leaves five days without that planned restriction. A 2026 Cochrane review of several intermittent-fasting approaches found that they may make little or no difference to weight loss compared with regular dietary advice for adults living with overweight or obesity. That does not establish that every fasting schedule has the same result or is suitable for an individual. Cochrane review.

A 2021 randomised trial tested 5:2 specifically. Weight outcomes after a year were similar for self-help 5:2 and brief conventional advice. Adherence to self-help 5:2 fell from 74% at six weeks to 22% at a year. That trial wasn't designed to tell a person working nights what to eat. For a roster with unpredictable breaks, a useful starting point is checking what food, water and a proper break you can reliably access, rather than trying to force a rigid diet around the work. Seek individual health advice before fasting if you take diabetes medication; recognised guidance advises against fasting during pregnancy, breastfeeding or with a history of eating disorders. 5:2 trial · Dietitians Australia.

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Work & wellbeing

Beyond Australia: what app workers can check now

On 18 November the International Labour Organization's Governing Body asked its Director-General to consider a strategy for acting on June's platform-work resolution, resource the work within budget constraints and report back. That was an implementation step at the ILO. It was not an Australian ratification or a new Australian pay rule. ILO Governing Body decision.

There is already a separate Australian interim order, which started on 17 August for eligible employee-like workers who mainly deliver specified consumables or supermarket groceries on demand through a platform. It is not a general floor for every parcel courier or proof that all covered workers are employees. If you think it may apply, look up the coverage terms and save your own offer, activity and payment records. Fair Work Commission: decision and actual order.

This article gives general workplace and health information. It does not recommend a diet or determine anyone's employment status.

THE TAKEAWAY

A personal wellbeing step can help today. It cannot substitute for correcting unsafe work.



Editorial illustration: a short walk can be one practical wellbeing step.

CONTINUE ON MYUNION
Health and wellness resources



A place to start, before you need it

Editorial illustration: learning on the job. Not a photograph or endorsement by a member.

09 / MEMBERSHIP STORY BEGINS HERE

Free life membership and the apprentice and trainee offer serve different purposes. Here’s what each includes, what happens when training ends, and what to check before relying on support.

When something changes at work, the first question often isn’t “Who will represent me?” It’s “What should I check first?” A roster changes. The rate on a payslip doesn’t seem to match the hours worked. A letter arrives with a short response date. A good starting point is to write down the dates, keep the documents you’re entitled to hold and find out what kind of help is available.

Free life membership: the starting point

MYUNION’s Free Life Membership is listed at **$0 with no expiry date** for Australian workers. It includes access to the MYUNION News Blog and **one free initial consultation per member**. That consultation is a chance to explain what’s happened and discuss a possible next step. It is not a fresh allowance every year. You can join before a problem arises and use the news and guides to get familiar with your options.

Membership itself does not mean MYUNION has taken on a case. This particular plan does not include ongoing advocacy, drafting, negotiations, service discounts or representation. Further services require a separate written engagement and agreed fee. If an issue has already started, say when it began and whether you have a deadline. Don’t assume joining covers it or gives you more time to respond or lodge a claim.

Apprentices and trainees: help while you qualify

Training raises its own questions. Are your hours and stage of training recorded correctly? Does an award or enterprise agreement set a different rate after a milestone? If there’s a dispute about the end of a placement, is it about your job, your training contract, or both? Apprenticeships and traineeships are formal

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

A place to start

arrangements under a training contract registered with a state or territory authority. Ordinary workplace induction or probation doesn't make someone an apprentice. Adult apprentices can be part of these arrangements too.

The **MYUNION Free Apprentice & Trainee Membership** has no membership fees while you finish the relevant apprenticeship or traineeship qualifications. The plan lists access to resources, templates and updates, and a **50% reduction in MYUNION professional advocacy fees**. It also advertises a no-win-no-fee arrangement for **approved cases** where reduced professional fees are unaffordable. Ask what is approved, what expenses or other costs could still apply, and get it in writing before work starts.

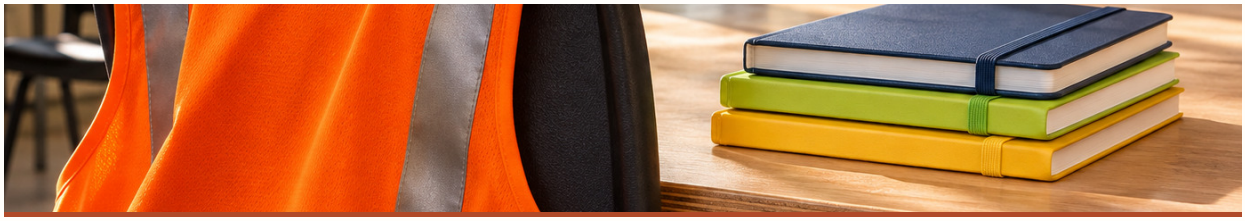
The plans page doesn't spell out an age cutoff or how a transfer, suspension or recognition of prior learning affects the plan end date. If your finish date is uncertain, check your formal training record and ask MYUNION to confirm your membership end date. Don't rely on your last shift, class or expected graduation date alone.

MYUNION provides employment and human rights advocacy and is not a law firm. Neither plan guarantees that a case will be accepted, that anyone can appear for you in a court or tribunal, or that you'll get a particular result.

Compare the two plans and read the current terms. What the Free Life plan includes · Fair Work Ombudsman: apprentices and trainees.

THE TAKEAWAY

Ask what the plan includes now, and get the terms of any additional work in writing.



Editorial illustration: compare the support available during training.

Join free. Know where to start.



Illustration created for this advertisement; no worker or testimonial depicted.

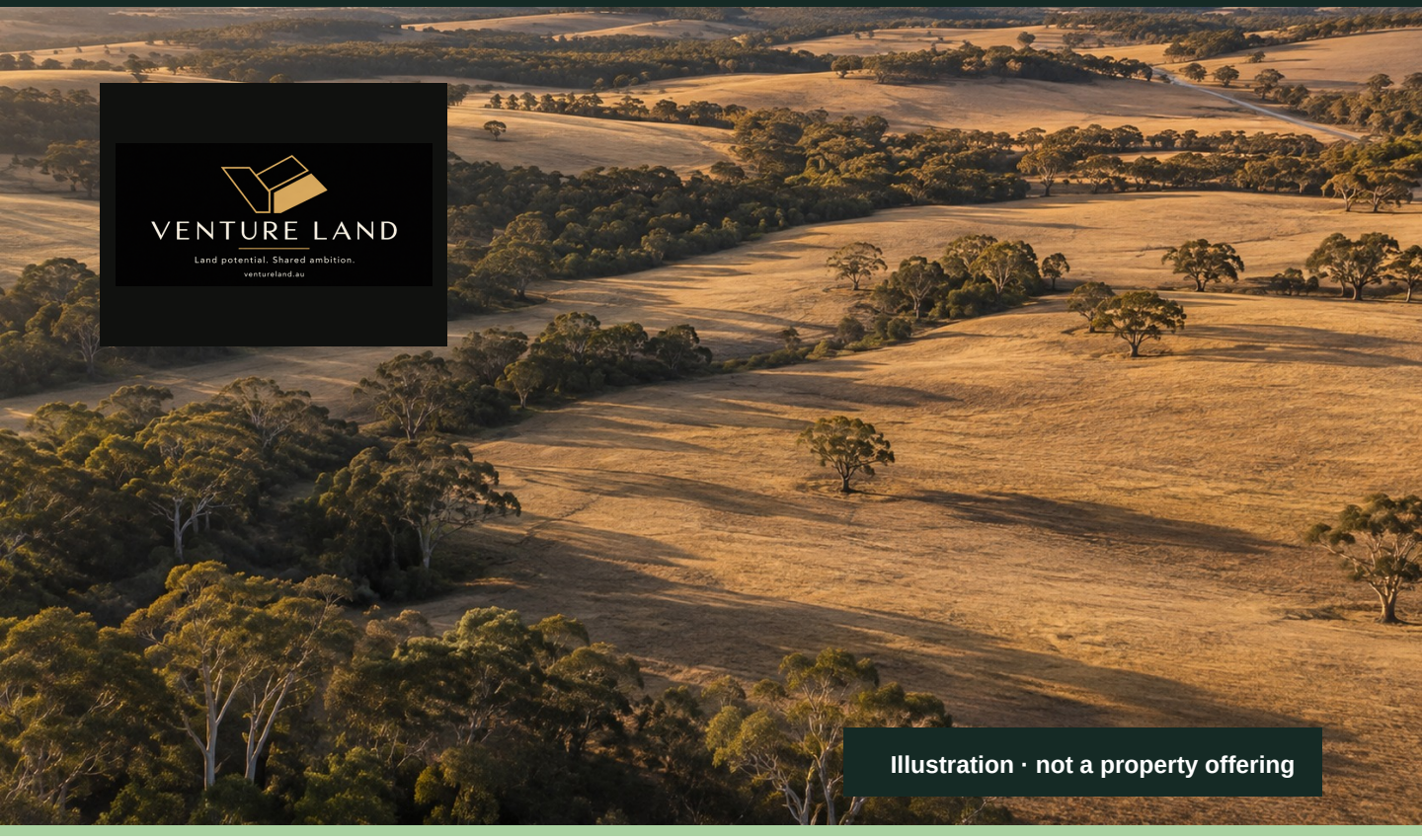
MYUNION Free Life Membership
$0 with no expiry. Access the MYUNION News Blog and one free initial consultation per member.

MYUNION Free Apprentice & Trainee Membership
$0 membership while you finish your apprenticeship or traineeship qualifications. Access workplace guides and resources, plus a 50% reduction in MYUNION professional advocacy fees under the plan.

Check eligibility and current plan terms. Further support is subject to scope and written agreement. Membership doesn't guarantee coverage or representation, or stop a deadline. MYUNION is not a law firm.

Compare memberships MYUNION.AU/PRICING-PLANS

gethelp@myunion.au 1300MYUNION



Land acquisitions. Development joint ventures.

Considering a sale, or interested in exploring a development partnership?

Tell Venture Land the property location, lot and plan details if known, and what you are exploring. Visit the BAJN Land Development Hub to start the conversation.

An enquiry is not a commitment or a promise of planning approval, valuation or financial return.

Explore the Land Development Hub

gethelp@bajn.au **1800 238 622**

The perils of Christmas parties

Festive tabletop, 2016; context only. Photo: Mira Bozhko / Unsplash via Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0; cropped. Photo source Licence

10 / SEASONAL FEATURE STORY BEGINS HERE

Two Christmas party decisions show why the context, the evidence and a fair process all matter.

The office can close for the afternoon without workplace responsibilities ending at the door. A Christmas party can still be connected to work when it takes place at a pub, outside rostered hours or with attendance optional. But whether the conduct breached the law, whether it provided a valid reason to dismiss, and whether dismissal was fair are separate questions. Two Fair Work Commission decisions show why.

Keenan: the official event and the later gathering were different

In *Keenan v Leighton Boral Amey NSW Pty Ltd*, a team leader was dismissed after his employer's 2014 Christmas function. The Commission distinguished the official event from a later private gathering in the public bar upstairs. The employer had not organised, authorised or encouraged that gathering. The Commission found that an unsolicited kiss there met the statutory definition of sexual harassment, but on the facts and under the provisions considered at the time, it lacked the required employment connection to be a valid reason for dismissal. The Commission found one allegation concerning conduct at the official function gave a valid reason, but the worker was not properly given an opportunity to respond to its substance. Taking the circumstances and alternatives to dismissal into account, it found the dismissal unfair. The decision did not endorse the behaviour or make a final reinstatement order. Keenan [2015] FWC 3156, [101]–[103], [118]–[126], [136]–[140], [148]–[151]; original reasons as reproduced · FWC's later quotation of the original reasons, Chambers [2020] FWC 5819, [69]–[72]

That is not a rule that the next venue, the end of a bar tab or the words "unofficial afterparty" give anyone immunity. Ask what connects the conduct to work: who arranged or supported the gathering, what the people involved were

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

doing there, and whether the conduct had a real bearing on workplace safety or relationships. None of those facts alone settles every case. Nor is being drunk an excuse. How the employer supplied and managed alcohol can be relevant to prevention and, depending on the evidence, the fairness of the sanction. Drake; Bird [2019] FWC 7444, [109]–[116]

One Christmas party, two different outcomes

At a bowls club in Moranbah, Queensland, two BHP workers were dismissed after an altercation at a 2018 Christmas event. BHP had sanctioned the event and contributed to catering and transport. The Commission found the gathering work-related but examined what each person actually did. It found Mr Drake had punched a supervisor and dismissed his application. It did not find that Mr Bird punched the supervisor; although he behaved inappropriately, his dismissal was unfair. The Commission ordered reinstatement and reduced his back pay. The setting supplied the connection to work; it did not prove the individual allegations. Drake v BHP Coal Pty Ltd; Bird v BHP Coal Pty Ltd [2019] FWC 7444, opening summary, [109]–[116], [215]–[222]

Before the party, and if something happens

Organisers: Set clear start and finish times and expectations, brief the venue about responsible alcohol service, offer appealing alcohol-free options, arrange safe transport and name a contact outside the immediate line of management. A reminder email is not a safety plan. The federal *Sex Discrimination Act* positive duty requires employers and businesses to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate covered unlawful conduct as far as possible. WHS risk-management duties are separate. If someone reports harm, address immediate safety, keep information on a need-to-know basis, act promptly and give the respondent clear allegations and a genuine opportunity to respond before deciding disciplinary action. Sex Discrimination Act, s 47C · WorkSafe Queensland party guidance · Fair Work Act, s 387

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The perils of Christmas parties

Workers: Get somewhere safe, tell someone you trust and keep messages, times, names and a private account of what happened. You can check complaint options with the Fair Work Commission or Australian Human Rights Commission. An FWC order to stop sexual harassment requires an ongoing risk; it is distinct from other dispute pathways. If you lose your job, the usual national unfair dismissal deadline is **21 days after the dismissal takes effect**. Do not wait for an internal review before checking your options. Sexual harassment complaint options · FWC deadlines

Explore MYUNION membership and check what support is available. An enquiry does not lodge a claim or stop a deadline. General information, not legal advice.

THE TAKEAWAY

A safe celebration needs a plan before the invitations go out.



Editorial illustration: plan the venue and workplace safeguards before guests arrive.

11 / READER DESK

Letters to the editor

Help shape the next issue: one practical reader question at a time.



Coffee and notebooks, 2016; context only. Photo: Freddy Castro / Unsplash via Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0; cropped. Licence

Before you attend an investigation meeting

A reader could ask: “I’ve been called into a meeting and don’t know what it’s about. What should I do before I go?” This is an example question, not a submission from a reader.

Start with a short written request for the purpose of the meeting, who will attend and the date you need to respond. Ask whether you can bring a support person and how you can see the material being put to you. If a deadline is unclear, say so and seek help early rather than assuming you have extra time. Afterwards, keep a dated note of what was said and agreed.

Send the editor a question

Tell us what workplace topic would be useful in a future edition. Please keep it general: don’t share names, case files, patient information or details that could identify a worker or employer. We’ll ask permission before publishing a contribution. The editorial mailbox is not a lodgement service and does not stop a deadline.

Write to MYUNION NEWS gethelp@myunion.au

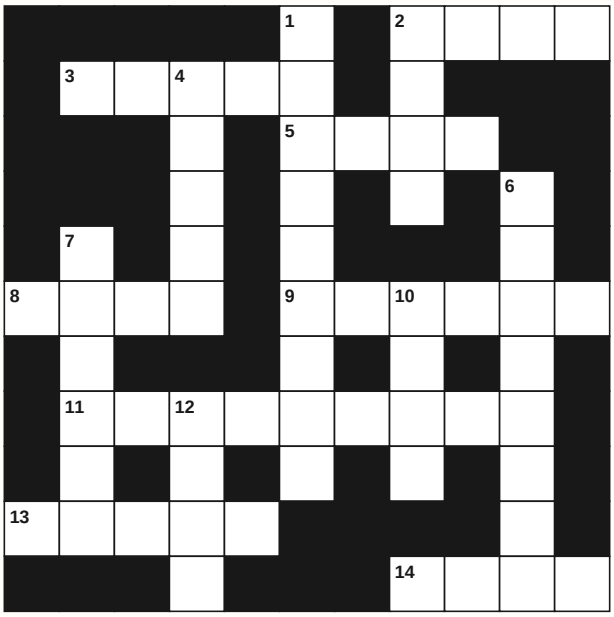
Facebook Instagram YouTube

PUZZLES

The crossword

Quick clues for the working week. Print the page or fill it in on a tablet.

WORKPLACE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

2. Day, month and year on a form (4)

3. Wearable timepiece (5)

5. Compass direction of the sunrise, roughly (4)

8. Short written reminder (4)

9. Small cupboard for personal belongings at work (6)

11. Record of when you worked and for how long (9)

13. Scheduled pause away from work tasks (5)

14. Colleague of similar standing (4)

DOWN

1. List of steps to tick off (9)

2. Surface used for paperwork or computer tasks (4)

4. Skilled occupation, such as carpentry (5)

6. Work beyond ordinary hours, under the applicable rules (8)

7. Work schedule showing who is on and when (6)

10. Group working the same shift (4)

12. Food eaten at breakfast, lunch or dinner (4)

PUZZLES

The word search

Find every workplace word. Words can run in any direction.

C	C	E	L	T	S	I	H	W	P	K
R	C	Q	I	E	G	S	M	C	B	O
K	I	K	G	X	U	J	B	A	X	F
V	E	O	P	F	L	Y	Y	B	B	N
A	T	X	Z	A	P	L	I	I	M	Q
V	U	L	I	D	R	A	Y	N	A	L
D	O	P	V	B	A	T	T	E	R	Y
G	O	G	G	L	E	S	S	T	K	J
A	I	C	M	S	L	I	C	N	E	P
K	H	N	K	F	V	I	S	O	R	H
I	X	L	H	M	B	U	J	S	C	A

FIND THESE WORDS

- ☐ BATTERY
- ☐ CABINET
- ☐ DOCK
- ☐ EARPLUGS
- ☐ GOGGLES
- ☐ KIT
- ☐ LANYARD
- ☐ MARKER
- ☐ PENCIL
- ☐ STRAP
- ☐ VISOR
- ☐ WHISTLE

PUZZLES

How did you go?

Answer keys for the crossword and word search.

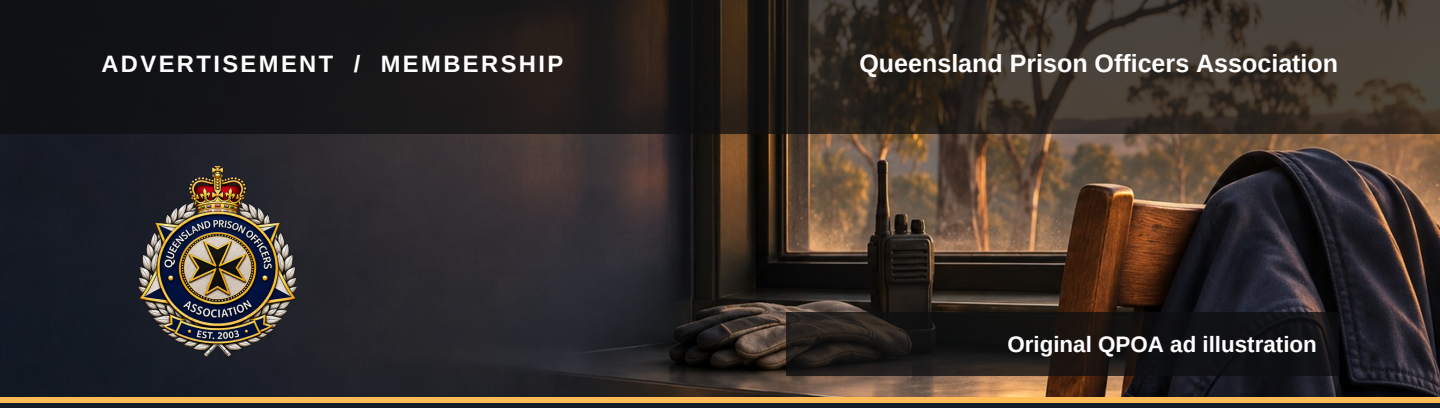
CROSSWORD



WORD SEARCH / ROW, COLUMN

BATTERY	7,5 to 7,11	**CABINET**	2,9 to 8,9
DOCK	7,1 to 10,4	**EARPLUGS**	8,6 to 1,6
GOGGLES	8,1 to 8,7	**KIT**	3,3 to 1,5
LANYARD	6,11 to 6,5	**MARKER**	5,10 to 10,10
PENCIL	9,11 to 9,6	**STRAP**	8,8 to 4,4
VISOR	10,6 to 10,10	**WHISTLE**	1,9 to 1,3

Queensland Prison Officers Association



Original QPOA ad illustration

Backing Queensland Prison Officers

Explore free life membership, or QPOA General at **$30 a month** with up to **10 hours** of eligible employment advocacy support per membership year.

Explore QPOA membership

Membership enquiries via MYUNION

Eligibility and terms apply. Joining does not guarantee help for an existing matter or any outcome.

First Nations Union

First Nations Union

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY

Advocacy that understands community

Employment and human rights advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Free life membership includes MYUNION News Blog access and one free initial consultation per member. Compare FNU's paid options.

Explore FNU membership

FNU membership enquiries via MYUNION **1300 698 646** **gethelp@myunion.au**

Eligibility and terms apply. Joining does not guarantee help for an existing matter or any outcome.