

FAQs

New government, New direction



Australia has a new Federal Government with the election of Labor, after almost a decade of the Coalition in power. So what direction will the new government take and what will that mean for enterprise agreement negotiations at CSIRO?

When will we get a new bargaining policy?

Prior to the election, the incoming Labor government committed to abolishing the 'no-enhancements' rule, removing the federal public sector wage cap while ensuring fair and genuine negotiations with employees and the CPSU (of which the CSIRO Staff Association is a section), plus an ability to negotiate on backpay.

- None of that is possible under the current policy, and there will need to be a new one.
- It is likely that the new policy will provide interim arrangements until some of the bigger changes that lay the groundwork for service-wide bargaining can be achieved.
- The development of a new bargaining policy is usually a decision of government and subject to certain processes, including cabinet approval.
- CPSU is continuing discussions the new Labor government and will keep members posted on discussions.

CSIRO is due to bargain next year. What does this mean for us?

- A number of Australian Public Service (APS) agencies due to settle a new employment arrangements before the end of this year, including the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Industry, Science and Resources, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, Fair Work Ombudsmen, and others.
- Enterprise Agreement negotiations or determination processes will not be able to commence until there is direction from government.
- There is almost a decade of the effects of the former Coalition government's approach to workplace relations in the APS to undo, which represents a significant body of work.
- CPSU will be working with government and agencies about how a new bargaining policy can be applied to make sure that members in these agencies get pay rises on time, those pay increases are genuinely negotiated and (where applicable) back pay is discussed.
- CSIRO members will be able to observe agencies that bargain first and learn from these campaigns.

What if my agency already voted up an agreement and it contains Wage Price Index (WPI)-linked pay increases?

- We know that in some APS agencies, members have already been subject to WPI-linked pay rises. Earlier, this was as low as 1.7 per cent, however, now it has crept up to 1.9 per cent.
- The new WPI rate is due to be published on 18 August 2022, and there is every indication the rate may edge higher but remain well below inflation.
- Labor has committed to scrapping the wage cap, and negotiating fair pay rises with employees and their union.

Will there be a new wage cap or mandated pay increase in the new policy?

- The incoming Labor government has committed to genuine negotiations on rates of pay with employees and their union. We will hold them to that.

What about backpay?

- Labor has made a commitment that employees will have the capacity to negotiate back pay or pay rise dates of effect with their agencies.

Can we win back conditions?

- The ALP has made a commitment to abolish the 'no enhancements' rule, which opens the door for improvements to conditions. That means the ability to restore rights that have been lost. It also means the ability to negotiate important improvements.

How can we make the government stick to its commitments?

- Many active CPSU members and delegates have worked hard to secure these big commitments. There is a lot of work to do to make them happen in practice, and we need strength in every workplace to do it.
- At the same time, it is a huge opportunity deliver better pay and conditions at CSIRO and create real change for the better. The first step is getting active in your workplace, get in touch with your delegate or organiser about how you can get involved early.

More information

Find out more at www.csirostaff.org.au/new-direction or email us at csstaff@cpsu.org.au to connect to a workplace delegate or one of our of of organisers.



Not yet a member? **Join the union today** at www.csirostaff.org.au/join

Authorised Susan Tonks, Secretary CSIRO Staff Association

