

Membership Fees at RAFFWU

Dear members

At the June meeting of your union's committee we decided to commence a period of consultation over the membership fees of the union.

We launched almost seven years ago and in that time we have grown into a union of thousands of members in hundreds of workplaces across Australia. We have launched and won campaigns which have returned over a billion dollars per year in penalty rates, casual loadings, overtime rates and more at many of Australia's largest retailers and fast food companies.

Since we launched in November 2016, membership fees have increased once – in 2021. When we increased them we promised to apply the full value of that increase – 10% - to our Defence & Strategic Litigation Fund used for critical support of members engaged in strike action and on strategic litigation in defence of member rights. Our foresight means that fund is growing and will help protect members in the years to come because 10% of all our fees is being built up.

Our model is quite simple. When membership in a community reaches a critical threshold we resource organising and campaigning in that community by looking to appoint a local, experienced active member to join our fantastic team working for the Union. We have expert advocates and experienced campaigners handling all the technically complex work and ensuring every member has the professional support of the union when they need us – no matter which community they live in.

That model has served us well and we are not proposing to change it.

We now need to meet the growing costs of running your union. While all our costs go up, the vast majority of our spending is on the union organisers, admin workers, legal team and other workers who are employed by your union. They are the team which supports members across Australia build their action and win unprecedented outcomes.

They are paid in a similar way to many members – their wages are tied to the relevant Awards. When minimum Award wages increase, so do their wages. In just the last 2 years minimum Award wages have increased by 10.6%. Since we launched, they have risen by 27%. We have sustained much of this through growth and strategic resource deployment but it is time for us to discuss how we continue our current resourcing in light of these growing costs.

All unions have to grapple with a process for occasionally or regularly increasing membership fees to meet the ongoing costs of building a successful union. Our fees are tax deductible to members and include GST.

We believe the appropriate step is to increase our membership fees by 10% in July 2024. That is almost a year away when the Union will be approaching its eighth birthday and also include a further minimum Award increase determined by the Fair Work Commission in 2024. The increase – 10% of fees ranging from 26c to \$1 per week for each member – would be used to maintain the resources of the Union.

Possible Fee Increase Structure (including GST)

Membership	Current Fee		July 2024 Fee with 10%	
	Monthly	Weekly	Monthly	Weekly
Contracted 20 or more hours/week	\$ 42.90	\$ 9.90	\$ 47.20	\$ 10.90
Contracted less than 20 hours/week	\$ 28.60	\$ 6.60	\$ 31.50	\$ 7.30
Casual 18 or older	\$ 17.60	\$ 4.06	\$ 19.10	\$ 4.40
Under 18	\$ 11.00	\$ 2.54	\$ 12.10	\$ 2.80

The fees would continue to be among the lowest union fees in Australia.

The union committee will consider the fee increase at its next meeting at the start of October. The committee does **not** increase the fees of members. The Annual General Meeting of the Union determines the fees and the committee can recommend members consider a specific fee proposal. In order for the committee to develop that proposal we want your feedback.

We ask that any member wanting to give feedback please email your ideas, concerns, proposals or approaches to us at contact@raffwu.org.au by no later than 30 September 2023. If you'd like to discuss your feedback please let me know a good time to call you – send me an SMS at 0416 241 763 or email me at secretary@raffwu.org.au.

Josh Cullinan, Secretary