

UNION FACT SHEET 10

Meritorious Sick Leave

Queensland Ambulance Service Employees

What the Change Means

The *QAS Certified Agreement 2025* introduces a new entitlement — Meritorious Sick Leave — granting 13 weeks (65 working days) of full-pay sick leave to long-serving employees who have completed 26 years of meritorious service.

This new entitlement formally recognises employees who have demonstrated consistent, ethical, and high-quality service over an extended career.

It is a once-only benefit, credited to your sick leave balance upon approval.

Meritorious Sick Leave = 13 weeks' full-pay sick leave for 26 years of recognised meritorious service.

What the Law Says

Meritorious Sick Leave is established under Directive 09/24 – Sick Leave, issued under section 223 of the *Public Sector Act 2022*, and given effect in the *QAS Certified Agreement 2025* (clauses 48.9 and 48.10).

The Directive provides that the length of service is determined in accordance with:

- The *QAS Leave Without Salary Credited as Service Procedure*, and
- The *Long Service Leave provisions* of the Certified Agreement and *Industrial Relations Act 2016 (Qld)*.

In short — if a period counts toward long service leave accrual, it generally counts toward meritorious sick leave eligibility.

How the 26 Years of Service Is Calculated

Service within the Queensland Public Sector (excluding Government Owned Corporations) is to be considered when calculating an employee's service. This includes:

- a) a Queensland government entity, as defined in section 276 of the *Public Sector Act 2022*;
- b) the Queensland Parliamentary Service; and
- c) the Queensland Police Service.

Service in the Australian Defence Force will also be included for the purposes of calculating service for meritorious sick leave.

Eligible service need not be continuous and for QAS employees employed under the:

- a) Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award - State 2015 service length will be based on service during which long service leave was accruing under the directives relating to long service leave and leave without salary credited as service in operation at the relevant time the service is accrued;
- b) Ambulance Service Employees Award - State 2016, service length will be calculated in accordance with the QAS HR Procedure - Leave Without Salary Credited as Service, and the long service leave provisions of the QAS Certified Agreement 2025; and
- c) Ambulance Executive Service Terms and Conditions of Employment or the Ambulance Senior Officer Terms and Conditions of Employment, service length will be based on service during which long service leave was accruing under the directives relating to long service leave and leave without salary credited as service in operation at the relevant time the service is accrued.

What Counts as “Meritorious” Service

“Meritorious” means service that is consistently satisfactory, ethical, and aligned with Queensland public sector values.

Service may not be considered meritorious and the authorised delegate will consider:

- a) whether the employee has had disciplinary action taken against them resulting in a penalty being imposed;
- b) whether the employee has been formally counselled for poor performance that led to disciplinary action;
- c) whether the employee has a high rate of absenteeism without reasonable justification; and
- d) any other factor relevant to meritorious service.

The Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) may decline or revoke the leave if they determine the employee’s service has not been meritorious.

How to Apply

1. There will be an online application process available on the QAS staff portal.

Key Points

- Granted once only during your career.
- Separate from and in addition to ordinary sick leave.
- Standard medical certification and notification rules apply when taking the leave.
- May be declined or revoked if service is deemed unmeritorious or ineligible under the credited service rules.

Union Tip

Keep your own detailed employment record, including start and end dates with all government and ambulance agencies — both in Queensland and interstate.

When you reach or approach 26 years of recognised service, you will need to proactively apply rather than waiting for HR to identify you.

If your application is declined, request written reasons and seek union assistance to ensure that all eligible service — including interstate or prior agency time — is properly credited.

These fact sheets are provided to assist UWW members in understanding their new and existing rights and entitlements.

For any further questions or clarification, please contact a UWW Official at qldambulance@unitedworkers.org.au or speak with your local UWW State Council Delegate.