

Frequently Asked Questions

Visiting Medical Officers' Employees (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.1) 2023 (VMO1)

1. Who will be covered by the *Visiting Medical Officers' Employees (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.1) 2023 (VMO1)*

If approved, VMO1 will cover visiting medical officer employees (i.e. excluding independent contractors) employed by Queensland Health (The Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services) on or after date of certification.

2. What are some of the key features of VMO1?

VMO1 will operate from date of certification with a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2026.

The proposed certified agreement includes all relevant conditions of employment contained within the current employment framework, which includes the following:

- Health Employment Directive 05/18 'Visiting medical officers: Employment framework' (HED5/18); which includes the following:
 - Framework contract of employment;
 - VMO terms and conditions of employment; and
 - The total remuneration framework for VMOs.
- HED2/18 'VMO Fuel allowance'; and
- HED3/18 'VMO Professional Development allowance'.

3. What is new in the proposed VMO1 certified agreement if it is voted up and certified in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC)?

In addition to the proposed wage increases and COLA payments detailed above, new changes in the proposed certified agreement VMO1 are the following:

- Consultative forum;
- Implementation of a standard clause regarding contracting out;
- Development of a workload management kit through the consultative forum;
- Provision of the correct and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times;
- All VMO employees will be entitled to paid rest pauses;
- Provision for unpaid meal breaks;
- Provision of digital recall; and

- The Department of Health will undertake a review of phone calls received by VMOs who are on-call, including the instances and frequency of telephone advice being provided. The review will examine telephone advice duration and frequency amongst a representative sample of VMOs, departments and facilities as agreed between the parties and provide recommendations to support and inform telephone advice practices and fatigue implications.

4. What are the wage increases for VMO1?

The wage rates for employees subject to the Agreement are prescribed in schedule 1 and incorporate the following increases:

- 4% payable from 1 July 2023;
- 4% payable from 1 July 2024; and
- 3% payable from 1 July 2025.

The amount payable from 1 July 2023 reflects the application of 4% to the last Loaded rates (48%) applicable to VMO's under Health Employment Directive 11/21: Visiting medical officers: Interim arrangement – Wage increase, as at 1 September 2021.

A cost of living adjustment (COLA) payment will be paid at the end of each agreement year if the annual rate of inflation (March Quarter, Brisbane CPI) is greater than the annual wage increase. The allowance will be up to a maximum of 3% above the wage increase and will be paid on base salary. Detailed information in relation to how the COLA payment will be calculated and who will be eligible is contained at clause 2.2 of the Agreement.

5. Am I still eligible for back pay if my employment with Queensland Health has ceased?

If you are an employee of Queensland Health on the date the agreement is certified, you will be eligible to any back pay arising from the new agreement.

If your employment with Queensland Health has ceased after 1 July 2023 but before the date the new agreement is certified, you will not receive back pay arising from VMO1.

6. Does the proposed agreement provide a dispute resolution procedure?

Yes. In the event of any disagreement between the parties as to the interpretation, application or implementation of the proposed agreement, the dispute resolution procedure will apply see clause 1.10.

7. What is the peak consultative forum for VMO1?

The proposed agreement instigates a peak consultative forum called the VMO1 Oversight Committee. This Committee will meet at least quarterly. The Committee will discuss and make recommendations on any matters that have been escalated through local consultative forums or on matters that may have state-wide implications (across multiple HHSs).

8. Where can I access a copy of the proposed VMO1 agreement?

Hard copies of the proposed VMO1 agreement are on display in Queensland Health facilities. An electronic copy is available on [QHEPS](#) and [Queensland Health website](#).

9. What information is available online?

Further information regarding VMO1 is available on QHEPS and internet including:

- The proposed agreement;
- A summary of its contents;
- A comparison of VMO1 and the documents each clause was sourced from;
- A 'What's New' document;
- A VMO1 information session;
- A list of ballot contact officers for each Hospital and Health Service and the Department of Health, including their contact details; and
- An online copy of this FAQ document.

10. Where do I find more information about VMO1?

- Attend an information session being held within your Hospital and Health Service;
- Speak to your ballot contact officer;
- Visit the [Enterprise Bargaining QHEPS page](#) or [Queensland Health website](#);
- Email VMO1@health.qld.gov.au;
- Speak to your local union representative

11. Who negotiated the proposed certified agreement?

VMO1 was negotiated by officers of the Department of Health, representatives from the Hospital and Health Services, and by officials and delegates of The Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland (ASMOFQ) and the Together Queensland, Industrial Union of Employees (TQ).

12. Who are the parties to the proposed certified agreement?

- Queensland Health;
- Hospital and Health Services;
- The Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland (ASMOFQ); and
- Together Queensland, Industrial Union of Employees (TQ).

13. Does the proposed agreement cover employees who are Union members and employees who are not Union members?

Yes. VMO1 will apply equally to both Union members and employees who are not members of a Union.

14. What will be the operative date of the proposed VMO1 and how long is the Agreement for?

The proposed VMO1 will operate from the date of certification. Wage increases will have an effective date of 1 July 2023. VMO1 will have a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2026. By using the term 'nominal', an enterprise agreement can remain in place past the end date until a replacement agreement is negotiated and certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

15. What is the relationship between the proposed agreement and the *Medical Officers (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015*?

The proposed certified agreement provides that following clauses of the *Medical Officers (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015*, as amended or replaced from time to time, will be incorporated into this Agreement:

- (a) Clause 1 (Title)
- (b) Clause 2 (Operation)
- (c) Clause 5 (The Queensland Employment Standards and this Award)
- (d) Clause 6 (Enterprise flexibility and facilitative award provisions)
- (e) Clause 8 (Types of employment) applies in part as follows:
 - i Clause 8.1 (Record of appointment – all medical officers)
 - ii Clause 8.8 (Anti-discrimination)
- (f) Clause 9 (Termination of employment) applies in part as follows:
 - i Clause 9.1 (Notice of termination of employment)
 - ii Clause 9.4 (Notice cannot be offset)
 - iii Clause 9.5 (Job search entitlement)
 - iv Clause 9.6 (Statement of employment)
- (g) Clause 10 (Redundancy)
- (h) Clause 11 (Consultation – Introduction of changes)
- (i) Clause 15 (Payment of salaries – all medical officers)
- (j) Clause 23 (Personal leave)
- (k) Clause 24 (Parental leave)
- (l) Clause 25 (Long service leave)
- (m) Clause 27 (Jury service)
- (n) Clause 33 (Training, learning and development)
- (o) Clause 34 (Clothing and laundry – all medical officers)
- (p) Clause 35 (Union encouragement)
- (q) Clause 36 (Union delegates)
- (r) Clause 37 (Industrial relations education leave)
- (s) Clause 38 (Right of entry)
- (t) Schedule 2 (Directives Which Apply to Employees Covered by this Award).

16. How does VMO1 impact me if I have a VMO contract of employment?

If there is any inconsistency between the proposed certified agreement and an existing contract of employment, the provisions of the proposed certified agreement will apply unless the condition of the relevant employment contract is more favourable.

17. What is involved in the ballot process?

Following a 14 day consultation period from 22 January 2024 to 6 February 2024 inclusive, during which visiting medical officer employees have an opportunity to access and receive an explanation of the terms of the proposed VMO1 certified agreement, employees will be able to vote on whether or not they accept the proposed certified agreement.

An electronic ballot will be conducted by GoVote, an independent service provider engaged for this purpose. GoVote will send ballot information to the email address and mobile phone numbers associated with your myHR account. Employees without a myHR account or valid email/mobile phone number will be mailed at the postal address registered in the payroll system. This information will include a unique personal identification number (PIN) and 'How to Vote' instructions.

18. When is the ballot period?

The electronic ballot information will be provided to all relevant employees via email and/or text message prior to voting being open from 8am Wednesday 7 February 2024 until 5pm Monday 19 February 2024.

19. How can I lodge my vote?

You can vote via:

- Internet;
- Telephone; or
- SMS

Electronic ballot information and 'How to Vote' instructions including your PIN will be sent to all relevant employees.

20. What information do I need?

You will need to know your Person ID (payroll number) and Person Identification Number (PIN) provided by GoVote to be able to vote. Your Person ID is located on the top right hand corner of your Pay Advice.

21. Are temporary employees and casual employees eligible to vote?

Yes. All temporary and casual employees are eligible to vote.

Independent contactors are **not** eligible to vote.

22. Why is Queensland Health conducting a ballot?

In accordance with the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*, the onus is on the employer to demonstrate to the QIRC that a valid majority of employees support the proposed certified agreement. This is determined by conducting a secret ballot.

23. What does a valid majority mean?

A valid majority will be 50% plus one of the relevant employees who cast a valid vote.

24. What happens if the proposed VMO1 is not voted up?

Should a valid majority not be achieved, Queensland Health and the relevant unions will meet and discuss options.