

Important Advice from the Australian Services Union

Your conditions at work for the next 3 months

There is a lot of change happening in response to the COVID-19 crisis and we are all adapting the way we live and work in response to the Government's mandate of isolation and social distancing. Two peak employer organisations and the Australian Services Union have been negotiating the best way to keep employers of clerical employees viable and to protect your job and others in your sector.

We are the biggest union in your sector, looking after many occupations including yours. Our role is to stand up for workers' rights, entitlements and to negotiate better pay and conditions on behalf of the entire workforce.

We have reached agreement with two peak employer organisations on award variations to maintain employment and help workplaces remain viable during this phase of the Covid-19 Pandemic. We have taken an extremely flexible approach with these negotiations recognising the unique situation and workers' priority to protect jobs.

With most people currently working from home, the changes will provide more flexible work hours so you can better juggle you work and home commitments. They also provide different ways that you can use annual leave that were not previously allowed.

The key changes to your work arrangements are:

1. On your request and by agreement with your employer while working at home you can change your working hours to fit within the window of 6am to 11pm Monday to Friday, and 7am to 12.30pm on Saturday.
2. While working from home, your employer now has the option to reduce the minimum shifts for part-time and casual employees to two consecutive hours. The existing Award is more restrictive than that, but while working from home many people need this flexibility.

3. If you choose, and by agreement with your employer, you can now take Annual Leave at half pay to extend it over a longer time.
4. If your workplace is under financial distress, to remain viable they can seek to reduce the hours of work for employees by no more than 25%. To do this your employer must have the support of 75% of workers in the workplace and if you are a union member your employer must consult with us prior to a vote. Importantly your leave accrues during this time at the normal rate that existed prior to any change to hours.
5. You can also seek other work with another employer to boost your income, while maintaining your current employment. Your employer cannot unreasonably refuse this.

The changes apply to people working under what is called the Clerks – Private Sector – Award which covers a range of clerical and administrative occupations including yours.

The changes we have outlined above are temporary. At this stage, they are planned to continue until 30 June 2020 at which time the normal conditions under the Award will resume, but we will of course be monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely as we get closer to that date.

The union has also put in place arrangements so you can get greater access to professional development courses because we know people are thinking seriously about their skills and future. Under the arrangements we have negotiated, your employer must consider all reasonable requests for your participation at these courses.

We recognise this is a tough time for you and your family. We are by your side every step of the way. If you have any concerns with your workplace or need support, please contact us – the details for your local area are provided on the following page.

The Australian Services Unions has developed online professional development webinars and training courses through our "ASU Career Launchpad" series. We have decided to provide ALL WORKERS access to one free course, noting our members still have access to the full suite of professional development modules. To take advantage of this and stay up to date about developments at your workplace please go to: <https://mailchi.mp/asu.asn.au/clerks>



How to contact your union

Australian Services Union Local Contacts	Phone Number
New South Wales	1300 784 278
Victoria	0473 385 033
Tasmania	0427 813 821
North and FN Queensland	07 3844 5300
Queensland – other parts	1800 177 244
South Australian and Northern Territory	08 8363 1322
Western Australia	0421 920 978