

# POLICY



## Help with a Pre-Existing Workplace Issue – Union Services Fee FACT SHEET AND FORM

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### Help with Pre-Existing Issues

As a financial member of the ASU, you are entitled to receive individual help with workplace problems that arise in the future.

It's possible that you have joined the union with a pre-existing workplace issue. The ASU has a policy around assisting new members with pre-existing issues, which is explained for your information below. If you have any questions about this policy, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

### Our policy

If you join the union with a pre-existing problem and wish to receive the union's help with that problem, you may elect to pay a Services Fee. As the name suggests, this fee entitles you to receive union services about your problem. What union services you can receive from the ASU will vary depending on the nature of your pre-existing workplace issue.

### Why do we have this policy?

If we did not have a policy around helping new members with pre-existing issues, workers could join the union only when they knew or suspected that they might need individual help with a workplace problem. If these new members then ceased their membership, the costs of helping them would have to be paid for by long term members. This would not be fair to all members of the union.

The union seeks to assist all of its members with workplace issues, but we need to balance the use of union resources to assist new members with pre-existing problems with the support we need to provide existing members of the union, without whom the union would not be in a position to provide the support that it does.

## What is a pre-existing problem?

The union defines a pre-existing problem as:

- A problem the member knew about or ought reasonably to have known about before joining, or;
- A problem arising from something that happened or began happening before the member joined.

Examples:

*A worker contacts the union for advice about an upcoming disciplinary meeting and they are not a member of the union.*

*A member who joined the ASU a month earlier contacts the union for help regarding an investigation that is being conducted by their employer. The investigation is into an incident that occurred over a month ago.*

*A member contacts the union for help with an underpayment that has been going on for nine months. The member joined the union two months before and had knowledge of the underpayment when joining the union.*

*A member contacts the union for help with performance management. The member joined the union five months earlier. Prior to joining the union the member has had numerous performance management processes undertaken about the same or similar issues.*

## How much is the Union Services Fee?

The Union Services Fee is equivalent to six month's membership fees. The fee is additional to the ~~normal~~ ordinary membership fees. Union Services Fee and union membership fees in general are tax deductible.

### **What assistance will the union provide me if I pay this fee?**

If you have recently joined the ASU and you contact the union for assistance with a workplace matter the following process will apply:

1. Your enquiry will be explored with you further by our ASU Support Officer in the first instance.
2. If after speaking with the Support Officer an assessment is made that your query requires the support of a specialist ASU Industrial Officer, the query will be referred to an Industrial Officer to make an assessment in relation to your query, noting that you are a new or recently joined member of the union.
3. Following this assessment, if the ASU Industrial Officer believes that your query is impacted by this policy, but that there is merit to your concerns, the Industrial Officer will discuss with you the requirement for payment of the Union Services Fee for assistance. The assistance they are able to provide will be discussed with you at this point.
4. If you agree to pay this fee, the Industrial Officer will provide you with advice and assistance consistent with what they have informed you they will be able to provide. The Industrial Officer will determine what advice and support is appropriate for your query based on their professional judgement and opinion in consideration of your personal circumstances and the matter you are seeking assistance from the union for.

## **What are the benefits of being a Union member?**

Being an ASU member means working with your co-workers and your Union to:

- achieve fairness
- secure and maintain decent wages and conditions
- build a positive work environment
- resolve issues productively
- achieve industry standards

Union members also get exclusive access to online training courses via the ASU Career Launchpad as well as savings on their shopping and other benefits by using the ASU Member Advantage Program.

Being an ASU member means you are never alone. Unions help to break down barriers in the workplace - they unite workers and create a community so workers don't feel isolated, and they create power so workers aren't afraid to have a say in their working conditions.

As an ASU member you have access to high quality services and representation when you are dealing with industrial and legal issues at work.

Union members have better job security - protection from unfair treatment, support if unfairly dismissed and much better redundancy entitlements.

People who belong to unions have better wages and conditions than non-union members. Union members on average earn 15% more than non-union members!

We know that unionised workplaces have better health and safety conditions. The ASU provides WHS education and training for members, as well as specialised resources and advice.

## **Questions about this factsheet**

If you have any questions about the information contained in this factsheet, please don't hesitate to contact us by calling (08) 8363 1322 or emailing [union@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:union@asu-sant.asn.au).

## Union Services Fee

I ..... have read and understood the *Help with a Pre-Existing Workplace Issue – Union Services Fee* Policy and wish to pay the fee in order to receive assistance in relation to a pre-existing workplace problem.

Signed .....

Date                    /                    /

Payment details