
Frequently Asked Questions

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations 2026

14 April 2026

What is an Enterprise Agreement?

An Enterprise Agreement (EA) is a formal agreement between an employer and its employees that sets out pay, working conditions and entitlements. It's negotiated between the employer, employee representatives (including unions), and then put to employees for a vote. Once approved, it becomes legally binding and applies for a set period of time.

Is everyone at IRT covered by the EA?

At IRT, most employees are covered by the existing 2018 EA. Employees not covered by the EA have an individual employment contract with IRT. If you aren't sure which one applies to you, please ask your Manager.

When did the current 2018 IRT Enterprise Agreement expire?

The existing 2018 EA expired in February 2021. Each January since then, IRT has provided an increase in pay equivalent or greater to the annual increase outlined in the EA and conditions have remained the same.

Where can I find a copy of the existing 2018 EA?

The current EA can be found on IRT's intranet home page.

Why didn't IRT renew the EA when it expired?

The EA expired during the COVID-19 pandemic so, in consultation with employee representatives, it was decided that it was best for all involved to focus our energies on the increased workload associated with the pandemic.

Why is IRT seeking to negotiate a new one now?

We strived to get a new EA in place last year. The bargaining process began in October 2024 with unions and employee representatives across NSW, the ACT and Queensland. It concluded in April 2025 with employees voting in May 2025. After an initial yes vote, a second ballot was held in July following concerns about potential confusion during the formal access period. The second ballot resulted in a narrow no vote (50.7%).

Since then, we've taken the time to listen and reflect. We completed a comprehensive review of our approach, engaged an independent workforce sentiment specialist, conducted staff interviews and gathered feedback through employee surveys to better understand what matters most to our people.

Your feedback was clear – pay matters – because it's key to feeling valued for the work you do.

So, we've used your input to shape a revised Enterprise Agreement proposal – with a stronger focus on pay outcomes – and have returned to the bargaining table with your representatives to build a better EA, together.

How has IRT developed the new EA?

The new EA has been developed through extensive consultation with employees, unions and internal stakeholders. It reflects careful consideration of employee feedback, current market conditions and the long-term sustainability of IRT, while representing a significant investment in our people.

What are the steps involved in negotiation the EA?

The process involves four main steps:

1. Notifying staff that the process is about to start and providing information about your representational rights.
2. Negotiating with your nominated representatives to draft the renewed EA.
3. Inviting all employees to vote on the new draft EA.
4. Seek approval from the Fair Work Commission.

Where is IRT up to in the negotiation process?

IRT has continued meeting regularly with the unions since the no vote last year. The most recent bargaining meeting with employee representatives and unions was held on 9 April, with more to follow.

How can I have a say?

The EA negotiations are held between your nominated representatives (including the relevant unions) and representatives of IRT.

We will keep you informed regarding the key items for negotiation, and your feedback is encouraged via the following channels:

- Discussion with your manager or P&C business partner
- Contact the EA hot line: 1800 965 055
- Email: itsyourEA@irt.org.au
- Contact your employee representative

What is being proposed in the new EA?

- **Pay:** 3% increase or 1.5% above the award each year - whichever delivers the higher pay outcome for your role. This means:
 - if the award increases by 3%, employees paid at the award rate will get an additional 1.5% on top. That's 4.5% in total.
 - if you're already paid more than 1.5% above the award, you'll receive a 3% increase.
- **Paid parental leave:** 14 weeks paid leave.
- **Paid partner leave:** 4 weeks paid leave.
- **Appreciation leave:** 2 days paid leave.
- **Domestic violence leave:** 20 days paid leave.
- **In-charge allowance rate:** Increased to recognise responsibilities.
- **Plus much more.**

Do we have to vote on the EA?

Voting is not compulsory, but you are strongly encouraged to have your say and vote in the EA ballot.

What happens if the majority of votes are in favour of the EA?

If the majority of votes are in favour of the EA, we would then finalise the EA documents for submission to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for formal approval. Once approved by the FWC, we can start delivering all the new benefits and provisions of the new EA to you.

What happens if the majority of votes are not in favour of the EA?

A vote against the proposed EA will delay delivery of the new wage increase, access to the new conditions, and may result in withdrawal of our offer altogether. In that case we would then revert to operating under the current EA conditions.

If the EA is approved, when will it come into effect?

If majority of votes are in favour of the EA, it will be provided to the Fair Work Commission for ratification. This process typically takes six to eight weeks. When ratified, it will formally come into effect seven days later.

The 2018 EA outlined pay increases to be applied in January of each year. When will pay increases be applied under the proposed EA?

We propose a change with this EA, bringing the pay increases in line with the financial year. Once the new EA formally comes into effect this year, pay increases will be applied. Following this, annual increases will be applied on 1 July each year.

How does the new proposed EA differ to the 2018 EA?

The proposed EA builds on the 2018 agreement by strengthening pay – with no reduction to your existing conditions.

What's improved

- Pay increases: 3% per year or 1.5% above the modern award – whichever is higher.
- New Appreciation Leave: 2 days per year (replacing 1 day of birthday leave).
- Paid parental leave: Increased from 12 weeks to 14 weeks.
- Paid partner leave: Increased from 2 weeks to 4 weeks
- Domestic violence leave: 20 days paid leave.
- In-charge allowance: Increased to better recognise additional responsibilities.

What this means for you

- You're not losing any existing conditions under the current EA.
- You'll gain stronger pay outcomes.
- The agreement remains competitive across the sector.

Why does IRT continue to build or improve residential care homes and retirement villages instead of using that money to give employees a bigger pay increase?

We are prioritising wages in this proposed EA. The increases put forward represent a significant investment in our frontline workforce – and is being supported by disciplined cost savings and efficiencies across other parts of the organisation, so we can direct more of our resources where they matter most.

IRT has been around for more than 55 years, which means some of our residential care homes and retirement villages are nearly as old and in desperate need of upgrades.

As one of Australia's largest community-owned aged providers, our profits do not go to shareholders - but instead are reinvested into our care homes, retirement villages, people and services - ensuring we provide safe, high-quality environments for both residents and staff, now and into the future.

Will IRT be passing on the final stage of the Work Value Increase to its nurses in August 2026?

Yes, we are committed to passing on the government funding to our nurses when it's released in August this year.

By the end of September 2026, IRT expects to have paid a total of \$60.1 million towards our Work Value obligations – about \$1.9 million more than the funding received (\$58.2 million).

As a not-for-profit, community-owned organisation, IRT passes every dollar of government funding directly to employees and covers any shortfall to ensure our workforce continues to be fairly recognised for the important work they do.

Will I still have access to other IRT employee benefits outside the EA?

Yes - absolutely! In addition to what is proposed in your renewed EA, the following benefits are available to all employees:

- Fitness Passport – discounted gym memberships
- Professional development – free learning opportunities and career development courses and cadetships
- Salary packaging – opportunities to reduce the tax you pay
- My rewards – discount and reward program
- EAP – free service to all staff including counselling and mental/physical health advice via an app.
- Career opportunities and career development pathways

Who can I contact if I have more questions about the EA?

You can speak to your manager, your P&C Business Partner or use the EA hotline or email address for more information about the EA.

- The hotline number, which is for EA enquiries only, will be answered by one of our People and Culture Business Partners, and is as follows: **1800 965 055**.
- The email address is: itsyourEA@irt.org.au.