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# Frequently Asked Questions

## Enterprise Agreement Negotiations 2026

5 June 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 2018 EA (as well as the proposed 2026 EA) can be found on IRT's intranet home page, the [EA Negotiations hub](#), and the [online digital information pack](#).

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

## How has IRT developed the new EA proposal?

The new EA proposal 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 negotiating 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.

## 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, 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](mailto:itsyourEA@irt.org.au)
- Contact your employee representative.

## What is being proposed in the new EA?

You can read the full proposed IRT Enterprise Agreement 2026 [here](#). Some of the highlights include:

- **Pay:** a wage increase of 3% each year, or 1.5% above the modern award each year - whichever delivers the higher pay outcome for your role. You can view examples of pay increases [here](#).
- **Appreciation leave:** 2 days of paid leave each year, replacing 1 day of birthday leave
- **Parental leave:** 14 weeks of paid leave
- **Partner leave:** 4 weeks of paid leave
- **Part-time employees:** stronger arrangements to support clearer and more predictable agreements around guaranteed hours and working patterns.
- **Work Value Adjustments:** a commitment to pass on government-funded wage increases to ensure Work Value Adjustments flow through to relevant employee wage rates.
- **Home Care protections:** improved arrangements so employees are paid appropriately if a customer cancels a shift in less than 24 hours or after 5pm for a service scheduled the next day.
- **Roster clarity:** clearer rules around changes to shifts, overtime and when employees are required to work on a rostered day off.
- **Community service leave:** 3 days of paid leave
- **Domestic violence leave:** 20 days of paid leave
- **Natural disaster leave:** increased from 1 to 2 days paid leave
- **In-charge allowance:** an increased rate to better recognise additional competencies and responsibilities.
- **Medical certificate requirements:** no requirement to provide a medical certificate for personal/carers leave absences of up to 2 days (increased from 1 day in the current EA).
- **Extra paid leave:** for those who experience the sadness of miscarriage
- **Lactation breaks:** clear guidance on accommodating breaks fairly and consistently.
- **Plus much more.**

## Has IRT agreed to any items put forward by the unions this year?

Yes. The unions have put forward a range of suggestions on behalf of their members. We've taken the time to work through these carefully and have agreed to a number of changes that make the EA more clear, consistent and fair for employees. Some of these include:

- **A commitment in the EA to pass on government-funded wage increases** to ensure Work Value Adjustments flow through to relevant employee wage rates.
- **Improving access to the EA and National Employment Standards** either by paper or electronic copy, so all employees can easily view and understand them.
- **Updating union delegate arrangements** to 'one workplace delegate per 50 eligible workers' to align with the modern award.
- **Clarifying rostering rules**, including how alterations to shifts and overtime are treated, including when employees are required to work on a rostered day off. For example, weekend shifts will continue to have weekend loading maintained and overtime will apply to the shift worked.
- **Strengthening arrangements for part-time employees**, to reinforce clearer and more predictable agreements in place around guaranteed hours and working patterns.
- **Aligning roster change provisions** directly with the modern award by limiting changes without notice to situations where another employee is absent due to illness or in an emergency, to enable service of IRT to continue.
- **Improving protections in Home Care**, so employees are paid appropriately if a customer cancels a shift in less than 24 hours or after 5pm for a service scheduled the next day.
- **Allowing greater flexibility for re-allocated shifts**, where an employee and IRT can agree to a shorter notice period where this suits both parties. This also aligns with the modern award.

## 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 15 May. After a very positive discussion, it was agreed this would be our final bargaining meeting before moving into the next stage of the process.

The next staged included three weeks of employee information sessions, which ran from Monday 18 May to Friday 5 June 2026. The purpose of these sessions was to explain the proposed EA, including the key changes, inclusions and what it means for you. These sessions were also an opportunity to ask questions and better understand the offer before voting. A schedule for these sessions is available [here](#).

## What happens next?

The next stage of the process is the Access Period, followed by the voting period, the sharing of ballot results, and then seeking approval from the Fair Work Commission (if we receive a majority YES vote), as outlined below.

Date	Stage
Tuesday 9 June – Tuesday 16 June 2026	<b>Access Period</b> This is the formal period before voting begins. During this time, you will have access to the final proposed EA and supporting information, so you can read it, consider its contents, and ask any questions before deciding how to vote.

<b>Wednesday 17 June - Monday 22 June 2026</b>	<b>Voting period</b> Voting will open at 12.01am on Wednesday 17 June and close at 7am on Monday 22 June and will be managed by external provider, GoVote. During this time, eligible employees will be able to vote on the proposed EA. More information about how to vote will be shared soon.
<b>Monday 22 June 2026</b>	<b>Ballot results</b> Once voting closes, the votes will be counted by GoVote, and we'll share the outcome with you. If the majority vote YES, we then seek formal approval from the Fair Work Commission. We expect all benefits to be available from August (subject to FWC approval).

### Where can I find the proposed EA and supporting information during the Access Period?

To support you during the Access Period, we have prepared a digital information pack for you [here](#) with the key documents in one place. The pack includes:

- **Proposed 2026 Enterprise Agreement and schedule of rates** – printed copies will also be available at your workplace.
- **Current 2018 Enterprise Agreement and schedule of rates** – for comparison and reference.
- **Summary of Changes** – outlining the key changes between your current agreement and the proposed agreement.
- **Residential Care Home employee information session materials** – including a video, presentation and supporting scripts in English, Hindi, Nepali and Filipino.
- **Home Care employee information session materials** – including a video, presentation, and supporting scripts in English, Hindi, Nepali and Filipino.
- **Award Comparisons Table documents** – explaining any material differences between the relevant awards and the proposed IRT Enterprise Agreement 2026. These are available for:
  - The Aged Care Award 2010
  - Nurses Award 2020
  - Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020
  - Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010.
  - Note: If you are not sure which of these four Awards apply to you, the front page of each document explains who it applies to.
- **Frequently Asked Questions** – covering common questions and answers about the proposed EA.

These resources are also available on the [EA information hub](#), along with the latest updates from IRT.

### 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 majority 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **On 2 June 2026, the Fair Work Commission announced a 4.75% increase to minimum wages, and that this increase will apply from the first full pay period starting on or after 1 July 2026. Will this apply to the IRT EA?**

Wage rates for all classifications under the current IRT Enterprise Agreement (EA) will be reviewed throughout June when the relevant modern awards are updated as a response to the Fair Work Commissions decision to increase minimum award rates by 4.75%. IRT classifications will be increased to align with the adjusted modern award increases to ensure they are at least at the award level. Any current EA classifications that are above the adjusted modern award rates will not change until the new EA is ratified by the Fair Work Commission, if the proposed EA receives an overall yes vote.

### **Will IRT be passing this on come 1 July?**

For relevant classifications that need to be adjusted to ensure they are in alignment with the increased award rates, they will be applied from the first full pay period in July.

### **What is the impact if the EA receives a YES vote on 22 June? Will this mean a further 3% increase or a 1.5% increase above the applicable award rate in ~August, post FWC approval of the EA?**

If there is a yes vote result on 22 June, the wage rates will be increased to ensure the new rate is 1.5% above the revised modern award wage rates. For some classifications that are currently on the award level rate, like ACE Direct Level 1, 2 and 3 or Home Care Level 3, this would result in an increase of 6.32% with the inclusion of the 4.75% increase to minimum award rates announced by the Fair Work Commission on 2 June. Other classifications will have smaller increases, depending on how far they are already above the award rate. The minimum increase that employees can expect will be 3% and the new rates will be effective 7 days after the EA is approved by the Fair Work Commission.

### **Do part time staff qualify for the LSL at 2.5 times the rate prescribed in LSL Acts?**

Yes, after 10 years.

### **How does the new proposed 2026 EA differ to the 2018 EA?**

The proposed 2026 EA builds on the 2018 agreement by strengthening pay and other conditions – with no reduction to your existing conditions. This means you're not losing any existing conditions under the current EA, you'll gain stronger pay outcomes, and the agreement remains competitive across the sector.

The changes were explained during the employee information sessions in May and June. Additional documents with more information can also be found in the [Information Pack here](#) – which includes a Summary of Change doc that outlines the key changes between the 2018 EA and the proposed 2026 EA.

## **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 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.

With regards to building and improving our assets, 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

## **How is information about EA negotiations being shared with employees?**

Information is being shared regularly across a number of communications channels including; email, SMS, Platinum, Viva Engage, posters on staff noticeboards (with QR codes linking to additional information), updates on the My Central homepage, meetings and huddles, and via the online [EA negotiations hub](#).

## **Where can I find more information and resources about the EA?**

Our online EA negotiations hub includes everything you need to know about this year's EA negotiations – from the latest news to important resources. You can access this hub [here](#).

## **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](mailto:itsyourEA@irt.org.au).