March 2026

FAQ / Myth Busting – QGS / AAE / QAL

In late 2025 Qantas management met with TWU leadership to discuss the ongoing relationship between the two organisations in light of the long court battle for the 1800 illegally sacked workers, with record compensation and penalties awarded to the workers and union. QGS bargaining had already commenced at the time of the first discussions.

In this meeting TWU leadership set out concerns about multiple practices across Freight, Ground and Commissionaires and outlined how safety, pay and conditions needed to be urgently improved, beginning with the current fragmented bargain.

In the last 15 years Qantas has systematically fragmented and broken up its workforce with terrible consequences for the safety, strength, voice and security of workers. Each work group has become increasing vulnerable feeling the impacts of outsourcing, internal competition between more and more employing entities, labour hire and an out of control number of bargains.

In response, TWU management challenged Qantas to work collaboratively to undo this fragmentation, starting in Freight and Ground. If a proposal could be drafted that would see improved outcomes for the workforce, it would be brought to delegates and members to negotiate further. If not, the idea would be left for now. QGS bargains continued during this time. Qantas has not yet elected to commence bargains in AAE and QAL but delegates must be brought together urgently to decide next steps on these bargains.

Why do TWU members want to consolidate the QGS, AAE and QAL agreements?

Simply put, there is strength in numbers. AAE and QAL are effectively legacy workforces - once enjoying strong conditions that are now well below industry standards. As smaller workforces, their ability to bargain independently and restore conditions to industry-leading levels is significantly limited due to reduced industrial leverage. Consolidating the three agreements allows workers to stand together as one united workforce, strengthening bargaining power, increasing job security into the future and improving outcomes for all.

I'm worried that consolidating the agreements means my conditions will go backwards.

Our guiding principle is that no one should go backwards through consolidation. TWU members and delegates have never, and will never, negotiate away existing conditions for any groups of workers in the course of a bargain.

If a consolidation plan would see workers worse off, it would not be pursued.
Consolidation is about lifting standards, not cutting them. The TWU has negotiated countless consolidated arrangements. These often include protections for specific workgroups of key historical conditions.

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Will Qantas agree to consolidate the three EAs?

Qantas was initially opposed to consolidation. Since then, the company has shifted to a without prejudice position that allows for partial consolidation. TWU members and delegates are continuing to push for full consolidation of the agreements as partial consolidation could risk leaving some worker groups vulnerable still.

We have to ask, why would Qantas refuse to consolidate all the worker groups and just hand pick some?

We all do different work (different terminals, different types of work). If we accept consolidation, Qantas will roster us anywhere. We're happy with how things are now.

Consolidation does not mean unrestricted rosters or being sent "everywhere." There is no indication from Qantas that consolidation would result in workers being rostered vastly differently to how they are now.

The purpose of consolidation is about being covered by one agreement so workers can bargain together, not about merging roles or erasing operational differences. The reality is that you can have one EA while still recognising different work locations, tasks, and operational requirements. What consolidation delivers is collective strength at the bargaining table — strength that is essential to lifting pay and conditions across all groups.

We're worried Qantas will screw us over if we agree to consolidate. QGS is taking our jobs and work.

It's important to be clear about why Qantas created subsidiaries like QGS in the first place. These structures were deliberately set up to fragment the workforce, drive down wages and conditions, and increase corporate profit — all at workers' expense. QGS has grown while AAE and QAL have stagnated because QGS workers are cheaper to employ. That lower labour cost creates a financial incentive for Qantas to funnel work into QGS.

Consolidation removes that incentive. When all workers are brought up to a level playing field at or above sector standards, Qantas no longer benefits from shifting work based on cheaper labour. Instead of competing against each other, workers are united — and that's how jobs and conditions are protected.

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Wage freezes happen because smaller, fragmented workforces have limited bargaining power. On their own, they are easier for Qantas to stall, delay, or ignore.

Consolidation directly addresses this by bringing workers together into a larger, more powerful bargaining group.
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That collective strength makes it far harder for Qantas to impose wage freezes or below-inflation outcomes. It also allows workers to push for industry-standard increases that keep pace with the cost of living — not just for one group, but across the board.

Put simply: consolidation turns isolated workers with little leverage into a united workforce that can force real wage movement.

Why has the QGS group started bargaining with Qantas, but not AAE or QAL?

QGS bargaining commenced when Qantas opposed consolidation and was intent on bargaining separately with each workgroup. The QGS agreement also expired before the AAE and QAL agreements.

Bargaining for AAE and QAL was not initiated due to ongoing discussions between the TWU and Qantas aimed at consolidating all three workgroups into a single bargaining process. However this unnecessarily dragged. The TWU expects Qantas to reissue bargaining notices so that all three groups can bargain together in one combined negotiation.

I've seen an agreement document from the TWU. Has a deal been done?

No. The TWU is currently engaged in high-level discussions with Qantas regarding options of consolidation of the agreements to bring back to members and delegates. Nothing has been agreed to and never would be without delegate and member discussions and endorsement.

Any final agreement will ultimately be decided by members through a vote, following comprehensive consultation and feedback. A draft document was shared with Qantas solely to begin discussions about what a consolidated agreement could look like. Whether we negotiate as one consolidated group or separately, bargaining needs to happen with the member led bargaining group to decide on the content of an agreement.

What happens now?

The next QGS bargain is scheduled for 26 March. We have asked Qantas to outline its position on consolidation to the member led bargaining team, answer questions and respond to outstanding claim items we are waiting on from management.

Delegates meetings will also be held with AAE and QAL to hear the proposal from Qantas and discuss next steps in the bargain. A joint delegate meeting from all three work groups will then be held.

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