

**Executive Report Item A4 -
The Next Step - A Process of Change in the QTU**

Key Organisational Objective

- Building a more powerful Union to win with members

Priorities

- Improving working/learning conditions
- Enhancing public education
- Enhancing the profession

Strategies

Empowering members by:

- Organising and campaigning
 - Political action
 - Bargaining and negotiating
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The Next Step : A Process for change in the QTU

A. QTU: Approach in the 1990s and early 2000s

Establishing strategic priorities in the mid 1990s ensured that we focussed on “strengthening” the Union in the workplace. Essentially, the vehicle for achieving this increased strength was through:

- Establishing a better “educated” network of Union Reps through the establishment of QTEC.
- Improved resources for Union Reps eg. Union Representatives Kit, improved website.
- Raising the status of Union Reps eg. seminars, training, clauses in EB.

At the same time the QTU attempted to strengthen the connection between **members** and the Union and therefore the strength of the QTU eg.:

- New teacher policy.
- Vigorous EB campaigns.
- Recognition of specific interest groups eg. Administrators.
- Funds to organise functions at workplaces.
- Strong position on behaviour management including issuing of directives.
- Major focus on recruitment and retention.
- Specific allocation of resources to fund public campaigns eg. the \$10 levy, allocations to the industrial campaign account.
- Professional research to ensure that the issues, services and priorities were in tune with the needs of members and the views of the community.
- Focussed connection between the work of the Officers and staff and the strategic objectives of the Union.

Over this time the QTU has met with considerable success eg.:

- Membership levels have increased by 40% since 1990, with Union density remaining at approximately 95%.
- Temporary teacher numbers have been restricted via the EA.
- Teacher salaries have improved.
- Some conditions have improved eg. NCT, RAIS and class size reduction.
- Membership activity has increased.
- Respect for the QTU has grown.

It also needs to be remembered that the QTU has thankfully always had a fundamental democratic structure with a long term culture of managing membership density.

B. The Need for Reflection

Despite our success, there is still need for a review of our strategic priorities and organisation to ensure that we continue to grow and win improved benefits for our members.

The primary purpose of this review is to ensure that the QTU is in the best possible position to improve working/learning conditions.

Many issues/areas requiring examination and/or reflection eg.:

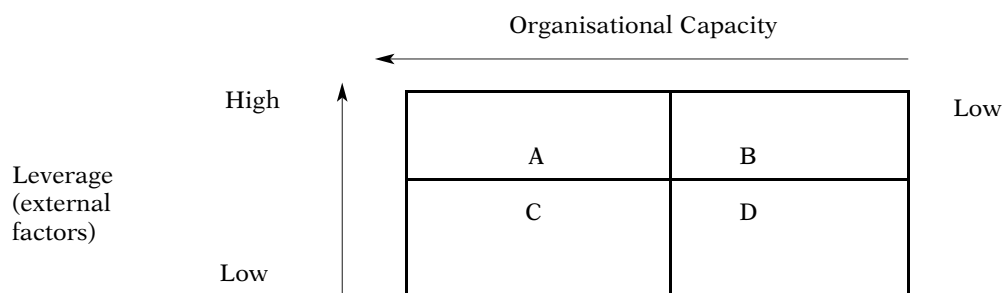
- The relationship between members, Union Representatives, QTU Officers and staff in terms of servicing.
- The structure and allocation of our Union Representatives and Womens Contact network.
- The degree of empowerment of individual members as opposed to their dependence on QTU Officers and staff.
- Given our heavy emphasis on servicing, particularly to individuals, the time and resources allocated to campaigning both at the workplace and statewide levels.
- Time and resources available for political activity (lobbying).
- The degree of involvement of members and Union Representatives in campaigns and political activity.
- Reliance on the EB process to solve most of our problems and to win most of our gains.
- The need to more powerfully influence the political agenda, particularly the State Government election platform and Budget.
- The way in which Union Officers and members deal with departmental investigations.
- The effectiveness of our Union Reps training.
- The effectiveness of the current QTU structure.

What aspects of our activities need to be considered for possible change?

It can be argued that the potential for success is dependent on two factors:

- QTU organisational capacity eg. Union structure leadership, human resources and our culture.
 - Leverage - the use by the Union of factors or processes external to the Union eg. political processes, the community, bargaining.
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How well is the QTU doing in terms of these two factors? Where does the QTU sit in the framework below?



Our aim should be to position ourselves in Area A. Preferably we need to ensure that our organisational capacity is maximised before we can expect to use external factors to our best advantage.

C. The “Next Step” Proposals

Many of the aspirations of our members remain unfilled in some of the most basic areas eg. classroom facilities, behaviour management, special needs support etc. The purpose of taking the “Next Step” is to put in place the organisational structure and strategies to enable the Union (via members) to better campaign on working/learning conditions, whilst at the same time maintaining or improving services to individual members. Any changes will be implemented slowly and carefully and only after consultation.

1. Empower members to improve the quality of their working life

- We need to examine our organisations strategic priorities with a view to focussing on the empowerment of individual members. “Teachers are not empowered if someone else solves all of their problems.” The QTU should not view the role of Union Reps and Officers primarily as one of solving problems of individual members, but one of helping members to solve problems for themselves. Where possible, members need to take the “First Step” in dealing with their individual issues. It needs to be acknowledged that such a change in culture will be difficult, should be implemented slowly, and only after a thorough debate in major Union forums and examination of our current structures and services.

Options for the implementation of this change include:

1.1 *Membership enquiries for information:*

- The QTU will provide multiple copies of a “Conditions of Employment” booklet to each Union Rep/Principal. It will include clear directions on how members can access relevant information (eg. see the “Useful Website” section of the Guide for New Teachers booklet).

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- In relation to the QTU Website the QTU needs to investigate:
 - Collecting data on existing user rates;
 - Membership views on positive and negative aspects (perhaps a member survey) including the design of the front page;
 - The practicality of continuing the “members only” section; and a link between EQ site and QTU site.
 - The QTU will establish a high quality “Queensland Teachers” Assist Desk (QTAD)” (call centre) at the QTU office - Information Officers (staff members) will be available for basic information and advice, overseen by an Officer and when necessary supported by the “Duty Officer.” Highly skilled activists could also be “seconded” to work in the QTAD. A special 1300 number and email address will be attributed to QTAD.
 - The QTU should investigate whether some of the QTU regional offices could be included as part of the QTAD.
 - Members calling for information are to be initially informed (when applicable), that the information they are seeking is available without calling the QTU. Members are encouraged to take the “first step.”
 - The QTU will actively promote the phone and email address of the QTAD and the QTU website address.
 - The new approach will be highlighted in the journal and the “on hold” message on our phone system.
 - Consideration should be given to developing a membership charter on rights and responsibilities.
 - The QTU will obviously continue to value the direct contact members have with Organisers, and we would aim to increase membership contact associated with campaigning.

1.2 *Membership enquiries re problems, request for advice, grievances, investigations and workplace disputes:*

- The Union’s **major** role is to improve the working/learning conditions in our schools. The Union must also provide essential services to individual members.
 - In relation to problems, advice, grievances and disputes the QTU needs to introduce a standard procedure which results in the Officer/Information Officer who receives the call, email, letter, enquiry asking what action the member has undertaken to solve the issue him/herself and whether the Union Rep has been asked for assistance? (The “first step”). Obviously, the degree to which this can be applied will depend on the nature of each case.
 - At all times the following philosophy needs to be emphasised “If your employer/supervisor recognises you as a person who will stand up for yourself, you will be more likely to be treated with respect.”
 - Assistance undertaken by Union Reps/Officers is on the basis of shared responsibility - the Union Rep/Officer acts **with** the member.
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- For the more difficult, complex and time consuming cases, a proforma is to be prepared which indicates what assistance the QTU can provide and what the member needs to do if the Union is able to be of assistance. The proforma will include space for the Union Rep/Officer to request the necessary information from the member to take the case forward. The member must also provide in writing his/her preferred solution or settlement. This proforma will effectively provide an agreed framework for dealing with the issue.
 - In relation to general advice, many enquiries will be able to be referred to the QTAD, whilst the more difficult will still need to go directly to other Officers.
 - The introduction of the Queensland Teachers Assist Desk (QTAD) is to be highly publicised. We need to consider a specific email address and 1300 number. Email requests are to be encouraged as these are easier to screen in terms of how they can be handled.
 - Where possible when an Officer is handling the more difficult cases, the Union Rep should be involved so that there is more than one contact person.
 - The QTU's current policy re member versus member is to be publicised and strictly adhered to.

1.3 *In relation to Union Representatives:*

- Changes in relation to Union Representatives will have to be implemented carefully and only after considerable consultation.
 - A charter of Union Reps rights and responsibilities should be developed.
 - The QTU will further promote the enhanced role of Union Reps as the first point of contact between members and the Union. However, we must always acknowledge the fairly limited time and resources Union Reps currently have available.
 - It will be strongly encouraged that Union Reps attend QTEC training.
 - There needs to be a re-examination of allocation of Union Reps with a view to increasing the number of QTU Reps at a rate of 1 rep per 15 members or part thereof.
 - The position of workplace Women's Contact may cease at the end of the current term.
 - When a school is entitled to more than one Union Rep (provided there are sufficient nominations) no fewer than 50% of Union Reps shall be women.
 - As a condition of settling the next EB, time off for Union representation is to be a priority allocated according to number of members at each workplace, although this means such time will not be available until 2006/2007.
 - A new Union Reps Kit focussing on how to undertake the role of Union Rep rather than "content" should be produced. In addition:
 - ▶ Relevant items for the Womens Contact Kit to be included in the Union Reps Kit (the Womens Contact Kit will cease to be provided);
 - ▶ The CD version needs to be promoted and reviewed to ensure it is user friendly;
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- ▶ Confirm that the CD is compatible with EQ computers;
 - ▶ Flow charts should be included as a method of clearly explaining how particular issues/problems can be dealt with.
- The QTU will identify experienced Union Reps (Senior Union Reps) who, with extra training and support can assist QTU Organisers in the field when required eg. grievances, Departmental investigations. Consideration will be given to gender balance when Organisers determine Senior Union Reps.
 - The Reps Kit should include suggestions on how Reps can work as a team.
 - When the next round of QTU Union Rep nominations is called, the role of the Union Rep will have to be made very clear.

1.4 *QTEC will consider taking the following action:*

- Introduction of a generic introductory 4-module training package to be completed over 2 days, (retrospective credit for existing QTU Union Representatives). There will be strong encouragement for all Union Reps to attend this 4-module training course.
- The Union will seek to include in the next EB, reference to QTU Reps having to attend the introductory 4-module training course.
- Introduction of a further 4-module (2 day) optional training package for Senior Union Representatives. This package will include issues relevant to women eg. work and family entitlements and discrimination.
- New political lobbying modules (see below).
- New worksite/area campaigning modules (see below).
- New grievance/Departmental investigation modules.
- Better monitoring of Union Rep attendance at courses.

1.5 *The QTU will need to further develop strategies to involve new teachers in the Union. This will require:*

- New and beginning teacher networks must be developed and the current networks need to be extended to include:
 - ▶ Rank and file co-ordination with Officer assistance;
 - ▶ E-lists or “virtual” forums;
 - ▶ Face to face meeting of the network, two or three times each year.
- Branches need to consider the following variations to current meeting arrangements:
 - ▶ 20 minute new and beginning teacher sessions prior to branch meetings;
 - ▶ meet and greet Branch Officials;
 - ▶ Discuss new and beginning teacher issues;
 - ▶ Encourage new and beginning teachers to engage in branch business.

The extent to which these changes are required depend on the nature of each branch.

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- In relation to QTEC, the current training programs need to include:
 - ▶ Providing modules (which are currently delivered “face to face”) “on line;”
 - ▶ Small sessions for new and beginning teachers (eg. dinners, half day seminars and afternoon seminars);
 - ▶ Recognition of training achievement levels;
 - ▶ More practical “hands on” training (eg MUP, mediation and investigation).
 - New and beginning teacher observer positions need to be created:
 - ▶ QTU Biennial State Conference (10 positions);
 - ▶ QTU State Council (3 positions);
 - ▶ QTU Area Councils (2 positions);
 - ▶ Each position will rotate for each meeting according to an expression of interest listing;
 - ▶ Review outcomes at the end of 2005.
 - Rank and file contributions to QTU communications, including the QTU Journal and website.
 - Pre-service teacher recruitment must include:
 - ▶ Pre-service teacher recruitment in the form of associate membership at university level;
 - ▶ Provide a copy of the “New Teacher” booklet to all associate members, along with all non-member beginning teachers as a recruitment tool.

2. **Fight for public education through electoral politics and community alliances**

We need to formalise and better resource our involvement in the political process. Members need to be comfortable with, and be involved with, the QTU’s active involvement in the political process. The achievement of many of our goals depends on our success in influencing politicians and the community.

2.1 ***Rank and file involvement in political and community lobbying***

- A new group will be introduced within the Union - Campaign Action Group (CAG).

Individual members can nominate as a CAG member.

- The aim is to establish one standing Committee eg. to coordinate political activity. Each Organiser will be asked to organise CAG members in his/her area in a manner which best suits the area eg. by branch, groups of branches, electorate or area council.
 - The purpose of this initiative is to have a considerable number of members who are available to coordinate and be involved in various political campaigns. This will get us away from the current need to recruit activists for each campaign. It will enable us to infuse political campaigning within the organisation as a permanent feature.
 - An Officer together with the General Secretary will be allocated responsibility for CAG.
 - Specific activities/training will be available for CAG members.
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- CAG members will be involved in a range of activities eg.:
 - ▶ Organising delegations to MP's (including questionnaires;
 - ▶ Organising rallies and demonstrations;
 - ▶ Organising meetings for support with community groups eg. parents;
 - ▶ Support for selected MP's during elections;
 - ▶ Organising telephone campaigns eg. telephone banking;
 - ▶ Letters to editors;
 - ▶ Talk back calls (often CAG members will organise rank or file members to participate at there activities).
 - CAG members will be able to be communicated with collectively via email.
 - CAG will give those members disillusioned with our current political systems an opportunity to be involved.
 - QTU Offices will have to be equipped with the technology to enable telephone "banking."
 - Political campaigns will include:
 - ▶ Specific education issues eg. behaviour management, teacher housing;
 - ▶ Non-education political issues;
 - ▶ EB;
 - ▶ Federal funding.
 - Regular CAG newsletters and space on the website will be introduced.
 - Members must be made more comfortable with the process of political involvement by the Union.
 - A regular column in the Journal is to be introduced, highlighting the activists of CAG and both negative and positive activities of Governments and MP's.

3. **Campaign for improved working/learning conditions through improved campaigning capacity "Turning Problems into Campaigns."**

We need to recognise that alongside our political campaigning, industrial campaigning will be necessary. Whilst such campaigning in conjunction with EB will continue to be important, other rank and file campaigning at a workplace area or statewide level will be essential. We need to choose which are relevant to members, eg. rebuild our schools, make our schools safe. In most cases, such campaigns will be conducted in conjunction with political campaigning. It would be hoped that Officers would have more time, and the Union more resources available for campaigning if the changes in (1) above are implemented.

3.1 *Campaigning Initiatives:*

- If an Officer wishes to organise a campaign (usually at the request of members) Executive, on receipt of a request/report of the issues, will "approve" the campaign.
 - An "approved" campaign will attract Union resource support in addition to Officer time.
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- An “approved” campaign request (1 page) will include (in accordance with the QTU campaign framework):
 - ▶ Name of campaign;
 - ▶ Aims of the campaign;
 - ▶ Timelines;
 - ▶ Membership affected/involved;
 - ▶ Plan of campaign activities;
 - ▶ Whether the campaign will have a political component.
 - In the initial stages we should focus on workplace campaigns involving rank and file members and Union Reps.
 - Obviously state-wide campaigns eg. EB, Public Education Funding, will still be organised centrally as is the case now, although there will be a greater emphasis on political campaigning through CAG.
 - 6 Workplace Awards will be presented at each Conference for the best membership campaigns.
 - The Union needs to better promote those conditions gained through successful industrial campaigns.
 - The Union needs to establish, through research, the areas/ issues associated with the Labor Government/Education Department which we can use as leverage in our campaigning eg. in the last EB campaign we were able to use the ALP policy on class size to embarrass them when they attacked our claim.

D. The Process of Change

The extent and timing of changes within the QTU should be determined by Council, following use of the process outlined below.

- Discussion paper “The Next Step”, to be considered by Senior Officers, Officers, and Executive.
 - Draft discussion paper to be considered by July State Council.
 - Draft paper to be considered by members, workplaces, branches and area councils, with feedback to the General Secretary. Executive to finalise a paper, after considering the feedback to be tabled at the September Council.
 - Endorsement at September Council.
 - Development of a presentation display to be used at Council, Conferences, Area Councils etc.
 - Inclusion of details of our plan at QTEC courses, conferences etc.
 - Implementation arrangements developed October - November.
 - Resulting changes to be given effect in the 2005 QTU Budget and a detailed progress report to be given to March Council.
 - Union Reps Convention in May in conjunction with Council.
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- Official Launch Conference 2005. (By which time most aspects would have been introduced).
 - Ongoing monitoring by Executive and Council.

E. Effects on Officers

Organisers

- There will need to be a change in Duty and Responsibilities Statement to reflect the above direction - less time on providing information, individual grievances/complaints, more campaigning, political activity, which should result in more direct contact with a larger numbers of members. Where necessary relevant professional development will be provided to assist Organisers in accommodating the changes.
- As a result Organisers will hopefully focus on increasing the empowerment of members and Union Reps through workplace contact, campaigning and political activity.
- Internally schools may be classified (eg. 1, 2 or 3), with level 3 schools being the most self sufficient. Organisers will attempt to move as many workplaces as possible to level 2 and 3, ie. workplaces that can increasingly handle the "First Step", and are capable of initiating and being involved in campaigns.

Internal Officers

- The establishment of the QTAD should "free-up" time and resources.
- Specialist Internal Officer work eg. Legal Officer, Industrial Officer etc. will still continue. In such, Officers should have more time to spend on their specific duties.
- Internal Officers work should connect with the Union's political and campaigning activity eg. more strategic research related to campaigning and political issues.

F. TAFE Organiser

TAFE is the only area of our "coverage" which in any way could be described as an opportunity for "new" organising. This is because there still remains a number of teachers/tutors to recruit. Therefore it would be appropriate to consider a membership organising campaign in TAFE each year:

- Aim: The aim of each campaign would be to increase Union density, in the first instance, at two or three campuses, where there is an assessment that there is significant potential for gaining increased membership.
 - Research: TAFE Organiser to research which campuses the QTU should focus on giving consideration to existing membership levels, degree of activism, number of non-members, nature of management.
 - QTU Resources: TAFE Organiser and Industrial Officer, 1 Senior Officer. The TAFE Organiser is to lead the campaign.
 - Rank and File Membership Resources: Establishment of a Campaign Committee comprising the TAFE Organiser and 3 to 4 TAFE members/activists. QTU will request assistance from activists at other Institutes.
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- Timelines: A period of four weeks initially.
 - Plan: Initially the research will establish member and non-member numbers. The Campaign Committee is to determine best days to visit campuses given the members and non-members teaching timetable. Activity is to include a total of six team activities/visits to the campuses (at least 3 at each). At least one meeting/function to be conducted at each campus. There will be telephone follow-up.
 - Tactics: Personal contact, 2 persons from QTU team to talk to each non-member. Use of current EA and feedback re priorities for next EA used as the main vehicle for discussion.
 - Review: At the end of the 4 weeks, an evaluation to be made on degree of success.

G. QTU Organisation Plan (2005 - 2010)

Key Organisation Objective

- Building a more powerful Union to win with members.

Priorities

- Improved working/learning conditions
 - improved salaries
 - smaller class sizes
 - better behaviour management
 - decent facilities
 - joint QTU - Education Department change of management process
- Enhancing public education funding
 - promoting public schools as quality educational institutions
 - real increases in State Government funding
 - fairer share for public schools from federal funding
- Enhancing the profession
 - improving the status of the profession
 - protecting the quality of the profession
 - ensuring teachers are involved in leading curriculum change processes

Key Strategy

- Empowering members
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Tactics

→ Organising and campaigning

- greater individual member involvement and responsibility in Union affairs
- recruitment to maintain 95% density
- strengthening the role of the Union in the workplace
- increasing the number and skills of Union Reps
- continuous campaigning to solve problems
- development of the QTAD

→ Political campaigning

- establish a framework for membership political activity - CAG
- involving initially 5% of membership formally in CAG
- developing links with Government and MP's about education issues

→ Bargaining and negotiating

- continue to use EB to improve conditions if possible
- link bargaining and negotiating to campaigning and political action

Authorised by:

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