

QTU women education workers policy 2017–2019

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1. Preamble

The QTU recognises that women form the vast majority of the Queensland teaching service. Women have and continue to make a significant contribution to the profession, the union and the broader community. Women continue to experience discrimination and inequality in the wider community, their homes and their workplaces. The QTU is committed, through its policies, practices, programs and campaigns, to achieving equality for women and girls.

2. Women at work

Definition – for the purpose of this policy, Women refers to all people who identify as women.

2.1 Women in Leadership

The vast majority of education workers are women. Women teachers make up approximately 75% of all teachers in the Queensland service. By contrast the majority of educational leaders positions continue to be held by men. Women are significantly unrepresented in senior and executive roles, this is the result of direct and indirect discrimination

There is an urgent need for the Department of Education and Training to include an affirmative action program to redress the imbalance.

In particular, the department should:

- set up training seminars for women seeking promotion, especially in the areas of application writing and interview techniques
- train its interviewers, selection panels and all those involved in the promotion system in equal opportunity practices and the impact of unconscious bias
- ensure gender balance in selection panels and in chairs of selection panels
- redress the disadvantage caused by broken patterns of service and relocation due to circumstances external to employment with the Department of Education.
- ensure gender balance in schools' leadership teams
- encourage regional offices and schools to appoint women to at least 50 per cent of all acting positions, particularly in school leaders stream SL4–7 positions
- encourage, promote and value permanent part-time promotional positions
- monitor and make available, to the QTU and other interested parties, statistics on all promotion positions, substantive and non-substantive, by gender and by region
- build accountability into central and regional office strategic plans and performance agreements, with measurable performance indicators. Examples include the gender breakdown of those applying, being short-listed for or succeeding in promotion, including senior teacher, and acting school-based classified positions
- ensure that a transparent balance between relocations and merit appointments is applied in each region across the state;
- introduce long-term plans to minimise the mobility factor in promotions, by targeting, encouraging and training teachers who reside locally in remote centres
- encourage school leaders to mentor women aspiring to leadership roles and to provide opportunities for leadership and management experience in higher duties positions
- organise and resource formal workshadowing and mentoring programs.

The QTU recognises that it has a role to play in this process of reform, and commits itself to:

- monitoring the numbers of women appointed to various promotion positions
- advocating and negotiating with the department to achieve affirmative action in this important area
- facilitating membership awareness campaigns on this issue
- providing women teachers with the chance to share information and strategies, through relevant networks and facilitating information sessions for women members.

2.2 Superannuation

Women in Australia are at a superannuation disadvantage due to factors such as broken service, pay inequity, inequity of access to promotional positions and the greater uptake of part-time work and their role as carers. Superannuation benefits and contributions should apply equally to male and female members and should not discriminate.

2.2.1 Financial education

The QTU calls on DET and QSuper to provide paid leave to access free financial advice to ensure women can maximise their superannuation and retirement benefits. This should be made available at the following times:

- On entry to the workforce
- Parenthood
- Loss of partner
- Significant life event
- Transitioning to retirement
- Retirement

2.2.2 Recognition of previous Crown service

The QTU calls on the government to recognise that previous Crown service should be available on repayment of refunded contributions, particularly for those members who were forced to resign from the service on marriage or for child-rearing duties.

While preservation of benefits has gone towards addressing this problem in recent years, there are many women members who are still impacted financially as a result of past discrimination. Women members should be encouraged to consider the advantages of salary packaging their superannuation, to enhance their superannuation retirement benefit.

2.2.3 Addressing breaks of service

The QTU advocates for the Department of Education to investigate options to address the impact of broken service on the compounding nature of superannuation.

2.3 Employment Issues

The QTU recognises that there are high quality teachers of all genders. There should be no discriminatory recruitment practices on the basis of a perceived lack of male staff in education workplaces.

2.4 Leave entitlements

The QTU will continue to campaign and advocate for flexible work and leave options, recognising the changing nature of work in schools and caring responsibilities.

Family responsibility leave

2.4.1 Extended special leave for family responsibilities should:

- be available for up to seven consecutive years at any one time
- be available to teachers with 12 months service who adopt a baby
- be available equally to teachers who are primary care givers not prevent teachers, when returning from 2 years leave, from resuming work at their previous school (or, if this is impracticable, from working at an agreed school taking their subject/specialist area into consideration)

2.4.2 Parental/maternity leave should:

- be available to pregnant teachers or primary carers of an infant with 12 months service
- allow 2 years parental leave for each child
- include 18 weeks maternity leave on full pay (with a move to 26 weeks over time)
- enable access to both employer entitlement and Commonwealth paid parental leave scheme that includes superannuation.
- have the timing determined by the teacher concerned and be exclusive of payment for any vacation period
- have no minimum period requirements
- be available at half pay for double the time.
- recognise foster and formalised care arrangements, including kinship carers for newborns.
- Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave (CPPL) should be extended to six months and include superannuation on top of the 18 weeks minimum wage rate be credited as service for classification increments and should attract appropriate transfer points.

The department should:

- facilitate a transfer to safe duties for pregnant teachers who, under medical advice, are at risk of contracting a communicable disease (e.g. Parvo virus, Rubella, CMV, Hepatitis A) which may have a negative impact on her pregnancy
- consider a transfer to duties at a school of distance education or regional office, if professional medical advice recommends this
- grant teachers leave on full pay (for the period covered by a medical certificate), if such positions are unavailable.
- develop policies to protect teachers in insecure employment situations to maximise their access to paid parental leave.

2.4.3 Partner leave is currently available:

- to teachers with 12 months service
- for a period of one week
- in connection with the birth of a baby for whom they have accepted responsibility.

The QUTU believes that Partner leave should:

- be for a period of six weeks on full pay or 12 weeks on half pay
- be available to a support person helping with a sole parent birth
- have the timing determined by the teacher concerned
- be automatically approved by the employer.

2.4.4, Return to work should:

- be available to a member who has an ongoing post-partum medical condition

- include access to flexible work options give priority to women returning to work from a period of two years parental leave
- allow women to return to the same school.

2.4.5 Sick leave is currently available:

- to women who are on paid parental leave and long service leave

The QTU believes that the two week waiting period for accessing incapacity benefit leave should be waived in these circumstances, to enable women, where necessary, to access two or three days at a time and then return to work.

The QTU believes that paid sick leave should:

- be available to teachers who are on unpaid parental leave
- be given where paid sick leave is exhausted, so that the pregnant teacher can apply for incapacity benefits from Q Super for pregnancy-related illnesses
- be paid to women who need to access additional sick leave entitlements to undergo specialist medical treatment, sufferers of dysmenorrhea and those experiencing the adverse effects of menopause.
- QSuper income protection should extend to carers leave

2.4.6 Special parental leave

A teacher should:

- be entitled to both employer entitlement and Commonwealth paid parental leave if their pregnancy ends due to their child being stillborn, or if their child dies after birth. during the period of paid maternity leave. have access to special paid maternity leave should the pregnancy end, not in the birth of a living child, within 28 weeks of the expected date of birth.

2.4.7 Sick leave credit for meritorious service

Sick leave credit for meritorious service should:

- be based on a total of 26 years of service, without any reference to breaks in service of more than 12 months
- be aggregated for those women who were forced to resign and who did not receive any cash equivalent
- Teachers should not have to “apply” for meritorious sick leave, the leave balance should be credited when the anniversary is reached
- An individual’s should be informed when they become eligible for meritorious sick leave

2. 4.8 Sick leave for family purposes

Compassionate use of sick leave should:

- be granted to allow access to all of an employee’s accrued sick leave in the case of illness of family and household members

2.4.9 Depletion of sick leave

When a teacher has depleted their sick leave due to care responsibilities and subsequently diagnosed with a significant long term health issue, the QTU believes the Department should have the capacity to provide additional sick leave.

2.4.10 Pre-natal leave

Entitlements to pre-natal leave should:

- be increased to 10 days paid leave for the teacher and two days paid pre-natal leave for the spouse
- not be deducted from sick leave entitlements.

2.4.11 Pre-adoption leave

- Two weeks paid pre-adoption should be available to the primary care-giver.

2.4.12 Fertility program leave

Teachers and their partners should be given special consideration in relation to access to leave benefits and work arrangements. They should:

- have access to paid sick and emergent/compassionate leave
- have access to up to 10 days additional paid special leave for IVF treatment.

2.4.13 Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave recognises that many women shoulder the major responsibility for looking after dependants, aged relatives and sick friends. All teachers should have access to:

- 10 days paid emergent leave per teacher per annum, and the leave should be cumulative (in addition to normal sick leave entitlement).

2.4.14 Special leave for other exceptional circumstances

Teachers should have access to paid leave for varied circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Matters arising from family or domestic violence
- Undergoing intensive medical treatment
- Dealing with a terminal illness of a close family member or friend (recognising kinship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)
- Mourning the death of a close family member or friend
- Home and property disruption from natural disaster
- Being impacted by crime.

Other leave need not be exhausted prior to accessing this leave.

2.5 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

- is unsolicited or unwelcome
- is implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment
- is implicitly or explicitly a term or condition for decisions which would affect promotion, course completion, salary, or any job condition
- creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment for one or more employees
- results in people being defined in terms of their sex/sexuality and their contribution and worth being denigrated or ignored.

In educational institutions, sexual harassment can occur between student/student, student/staff, staff/student, staff/staff and within the wider school community.

Sexual harassment refers to behaviour that is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which erodes individual rights, debilitates morale and interferes with the work effectiveness and learning ability of its victims.

Sexual harassment is an industrial issue in that it inhibits a member's right to work. It is the responsibility of the employer to provide a harassment-free environment.

The QTU condemns the department for the lack of continued training for and provision of, sexual harassment referral officers.

2.5.1 Equity Contact officers

The QTU condemns the Department of Education for abolishing the roles of Equity Contact officers (ECO) and Sexual Harassment Referral Officers and calls on the Department to reinstate these positions. . The ECO in schools should be fully trained and supported by a network of regional ECOs.

These contact officers would act as a confidential information contact for employees who experience sexual or workplace harassment, violence, discrimination or equity issues in the workplace.

All employees should receive training to build awareness of sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

2.5.2 Gender based violence

The QTU takes a very strong stance against gendered violence and sexual harassment in the workplace and takes the following positions. The QTU:

- insists that gendered violence and sex-based harassment must be eliminated from all educational settings by teaching about the construction of gender, effective communication and relationship skills, conflict management and resolution skills with staff and students in public educational settings.
- rejects victim blaming and excuses for violence on the basis of perceived differences between girls and boys, women and men.
- supports whole school approaches to identifying and eliminating gendered violence and disruptive behaviours. Gendered violence and disruptive behaviours should never become simply the responsibility of individuals in educational settings.
- recognises that the nature of gender based violence has changed through the emergence of new technologies impacting on the safety of staff and students. Education Departments must have appropriate policies, strategies and professional development to allow staff in education workplaces to respond effectively to new challenges as they emerge.

2.6 Permanent part-time work – job sharing

The QTU recognises the desire and necessity for many members, particularly women, to work part-time at some stage in their teaching career.

Permanent part-time positions should:

- protect all employment conditions on a pro-rata basis
- be encouraged as a viable employment option by departmental officers and administrators
- be truly accessible to all members, including those in classified positions.

The QTU calls on the department to:

- ensure the guaranteed right of return to full-time work for permanent part-time employees who moved from full-time employment to permanent part-time employment
- inservice principals on the equal employment opportunities policy during induction, **particularly on the accessibility of permanent part-time work and other flexible work options**
- recognise, clause 8.2.1(f) in the Teaching in State Education Award – State 2016 which requires that an involuntary return to full time work be negotiated with the member, who must agree to this return.
- To ensure all regional directors, assistant regional directors and HR staff, and school leaders are aware of their legal and industrial obligations to support part-time work.

A part-time teacher should not be expected or required to replace their absent teaching partner on their non-rostered working days. Such decisions should be voluntary.

A part-time teacher should not be required to work or participate in work related activities on days or times other than their regular rostered duty time.

A part-time teacher should not be required to work half days unless it is teacher initiated.

The QTU recognises the systemic disadvantage part-time workers experience in regards to their rate of accrual of entitlements and pay progression.

2.7 Childcare and travelling costs

In the exceptional circumstances, where a teacher elects to work at times other than on her/his regular rostered days (e.g. a part-time teacher working a pupil free day which is not their normal rostered day), the department should refund the cost of the additional childcare and travelling expenses incurred.

3. Women in the Union

3.1 Introduction

The QTU acknowledges its responsibility to ensure equal treatment and outcomes for its women members, and will continue its affirmative action programs to achieve this objective. The following are aspects of that program.

3.1.1 Employment of Women's Co-ordinator

The Women's Co-ordinator position should remain a permanent position like all other Officers' positions.

The officer's duties will encompass the responsibility:

- to promote the active involvement of women in the Union
- to assist other Officers in providing advice on issues particularly affecting women
- to support the Women Teachers and Girls Education Committee
- to perform such other duties as the General Secretary may require
- to promote the industrial and professional concerns/rights of women members.

3.1.2 Training and organisation

The QTU will continue to provide:

- seminars on issues of particular relevance to women members

- sessions on specific women's issues embedded into courses and seminars run by QTEC
- annual participation in the QCU's Anna Stewart Memorial Project, Emma Miller Award presentation and International Women's Day
- maintenance and expansion of the equal opportunity resources collection in the QTU library
- the use of e-newsletters to provide specific information for Branch and Area Council Women's Contacts
- the insertion of relevant material of importance to women in Organiser newsletters
- the strategy of focusing on the education of girls as an issue of particular concern to women teachers
- the use of the women's pages on the QTU website as a means of communicating information of importance to women
- a Biennial Women's Conference in a non-conference year.
- a Women's lunch as part of Conference.

Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Program

The QTU will also continue to develop a Women in Leadership Development (WILD) program.

The aim of the WILD program is to encourage women's participation in their union and provide them with the skill development, knowledge and confidence to take the next step towards leadership positions in their union.

It is envisaged that the WILD program will involve 10 – 15 women, of whom at least two should identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and include representation from beginning teachers, school leaders and members from across the state.

It is hoped that the initial WILD program will run for one year (June 2015 – June 2016) and will combine self-paced learning, four afternoon sessions (tele/web conferencing access for non-Brisbane participants) and two day long workshops that will be an adjunct to the QTU Conference (2015) and the QTU Women's Conference (2016). This is designed to minimise travel costs and participants involvement in these important union functions.

3.1.3 Campaigns and issues

The QTU will continue to:

- campaign around issues of particular concern to women
- seek to involve women members actively, and thus have an affirmative action objective, as well as seeking to achieve particular policy goals
- monitor any changes to working conditions which may impact on the lives of teachers with family responsibilities, and insist that these changes should be the subject of a workload impact statement.

The QTU Women's Officer should be involved in any negotiations which may impact on teachers with family responsibilities.

3.1.4 Non-sexist language and meeting practices

All union publications will use non-sexist language and graphics.

Where appropriate the Union will use non-gender specific pronouns (eg they instead of he/she).

Meeting procedures, the use of standing orders and participants' behaviour should be sensitive to the need for equal participation by women.

Strategies for the greater inclusion of women in meetings and debates will be included in relevant union documents.

3.1.5 Decision-making structures

The proportion of women in various decision-making positions should continue to be monitored and reported to Council.

Except for the Women's Committee, where the *raison d'être* for such structures/delegations is gender-based, the QTU will have at least 50 per cent women) in the following structures and/or delegations consisting of multiple representatives:

- AEU Conference delegation
- QTU Executive members
- QTU standing committees
- Deputy General Secretary
- appointed Union Officers
- acting Union Officers

Where the quota of 50 per cent of women is not met, those positions are re-advertised and remain vacant until a woman applies for this position.

3.1.6 Affirmative action

The QTU is:

- committed to anti-discrimination which does not mean or imply opposition to affirmative action
- supportive of affirmative action programs which seek to remove discriminatory practices and promote the participation of all members in democratic decision-making processes
- supportive of affirmative action as a means of systematically dismantling barriers which have directly or indirectly discriminated against women's involvement and participation in unions.

4. Women teachers as citizens

4.1 Issues affecting women teachers

The QTU recognises that its members' working and non-working lives interact, and that the Union has a role to play in publicly lobbying and campaigning on issues affecting the lives of women teachers, particularly where these issues affect their capacity to participate equally in the workforce. Such issues include the following:

4.1.1 Women's Log of Claims

The QTU commits to the inclusion of a Women's Log of Claims as part of their EB priorities, thus recognising the distinct needs of women as workers who make up the majority of their membership.

4.1.2 Anti-discrimination legislation

The QTU:

- supports the principle of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act, which allows workers to seek redress for discriminatory actions taken against them
- recognises that the department is bound to eliminate all forms of discrimination by developing and implementing strategies and policies in line with the Anti-Discrimination Act

- believes that all school leaders must be provided with Anti-Discrimination training
- will continue to keep its members informed of any changes that may occur to anti-discrimination legislation that impacts on their working conditions.

4.1.3 Sex and Sexuality Education

The QTU recognises that all women and girls have the right to access formal sex and sexuality education programs delivered at school. These programs enable women to make informed decisions about their bodies, fertility, relationships, interactions and choices. This enables women and girls to better recognise and gain control over safe and unsafe practices. Where teachers are involved in the delivery of these programs they must be provided with specialised training.

4.1.4 Fertility control – planned parenthood

The QTU recognises the right of every person to control her/his own body, including her/his own fertility. This right includes access to adequate health and counselling services, and the removal of all restrictions to safe abortion.

4.1.5 Breastfeeding in the workplace

The QTU commends the Public Service Commission policy on breastfeeding in Queensland. The policy recommends minimum standards for facilities provided for employees to breastfeed/express milk, as well as guidelines to assist the employer and employee to negotiate paid lactation breaks, through the working day.

The QTU supports the introduction of up to one hour per day of paid lactation breaks for members in schools. These should be separate from lunch breaks and should not be taken from non-contact time or preparation and correction time.

4.1.6 Parent's room

A parent's room should be established in all new workplaces and, where feasible, in existing workplaces. This room can be used by staff and parents who need to breastfeed and/or express milk or toilet/change children. Privacy should be ensured when using the room, which should contain the following:

- nappy-change station
- bins
- a sink with both hot and cold water
- paper towels
- two comfortable, firm and supportive chairs and footrests
- a pillow
- immediate access to a refrigerator
- lockable storage facilities
- a microwave/other suitable heating appliance
- quiet calming music
- a power point
- a small, low table.

4.1.7 Community childcare

The QTU supports the provision of readily available, community-controlled childcare facilities, so that teachers who are parents may have better opportunities to re-enter or remain in the teaching profession.

All students should be educated in the understanding that childcare is the responsibility of all members of the community.

All parents should have the right to high-quality, free, government-funded, community-run childcare.

The right to childcare is an industrial and educational issue which should be actively pursued by unions in order to ensure:

- equality of opportunity in the workplace for men and women
- equality of opportunity in education
- a stimulating and caring environment for the children of members.

Schools and colleges can provide an excellent base for government-funded community-run childcare centres. Such centres can cater for the needs of:

- children of students – long-day care
- children of teachers – especially during pupil free days and staff meetings
- the school community – before and after school care and vacation care for school-aged children.

The trade union movement should campaign for services for members which:

- are low cost to parents, with fees being tax deductible
- are of high quality, catering for the emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs of children
- include parents in their management structures
- support wage justice, acceptable conditions and adequate training for employees
- open at hours suited to the needs of families, particularly working parents
- offer an enriching, non-sexist environment, sensitive to cultural diversity.

Where members are forced to access childcare through private providers, a quality program should deliver services equal to those outlined above.

In addition, private childcare should:

- be available at reasonable cost
- be delivered by appropriately qualified early childhood professionals.

Both community and private childcare providers should offer flexible arrangements that meet the needs of part-time and casual teachers. Considerations should also be made for gazetted school holidays.

4.1.8 Violence against women

The QTU recognises that all women and girls are vulnerable to violence, especially sexual and family and domestic violence, and that fear of violence restricts their activities, life choices and self-esteem.

All staff should have access to paid special leave which includes matters arising from or as a result of family, sexual and domestic violence. It is the responsibility of the employer to adhere to good workplace practices in this area. These may include time off to:

- seek safe housing
- attend medical and counselling appointments
- attend court hearings
- access legal advice
- organise alternative childcare or education arrangements
- rebuild support networks with children, family and others.

The period of leave accessible should be as needed and the approval process should be simple, easily accessed and approved expeditiously

The QTU will participate in relevant government and community programs which seek to eliminate violence against women and girls.

The QTU will endeavour to support members gaining access to and provide information about special leave.

4.1.9 Not Now, Not Ever Report

The QTU recognises the significance of the Not Now, Not Ever report and the prompt and universal response of the Queensland Government in supporting the recommendations of the report. Specifically the recommendations that impact on working women and the school curriculum and environment.

4.1.10 Respectful Relationships

The QTU commends the Queensland Government for the introduction of the Respectful Relationship curriculum support materials and calls upon the Government to mandate the incorporation of age-appropriate lessons in existing school pastoral care programs with the aim of preventing domestic violence. The QTU calls upon the Department of Education to provide paid time for teachers to familiarise themselves with these materials and participate in quality professional development to support the implementation of this curriculum in schools.

5. Human rights for women and girls

The QTU acknowledges that women and girls around the world are more likely to suffer from breaches of basic human rights. The QTU will continue to work with the AEU and EI to seek to redress this situation for our sisters around the globe.

Executive, on the advice of the Women Teachers and Girls Education Committee or an Officer, shall have the overall responsibility for determining, from time to time, the details of the Union's position on matters relating to this policy and its content.

The QTU supports the UNESCO rights of the child and the varied factors that limit the access to free quality education globally.

The QTU condemns the act of female genital mutilation (FGM), and practices such as forced marriage, child brides and restricting access to school for girls and menstruating women.

The QTU condemns the detention of refugees in Australia and being held on off-shore detention centres and the shameful assaults on women and girls in these environments that continue despite the repeated reporting of these assaults to the government.