

# Number 4 EB6 BULLETIN



QUEENSLAND  
TEACHERS' UNION  
OF EMPLOYEES

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## Progress of negotiations so far

### A message from the General Secretary

Whether it be improved salary outcomes, introduction of non-contact time, or remote area incentives, the history of the QTU shows that significant industrial campaigns strongly supported by members achieve results.

We must not allow ourselves to be bullied into accepting unfair low salary levels.

The other states achieved good salary outcomes after significant industrial campaigns – unfortunately we have no choice but to do the same.

The government must treat teachers with respect. This includes paying reasonable salaries for the difficult job of teaching.

QTU research shows that the public overwhelmingly understands and supports our EB6 campaign, despite government attempts to bluff parents through inaccurate advertising.

Your continued strong support is needed to achieve success.

John Battams  
QTU General Secretary

### Progress on negotiations

Since the strike on 19 May, the Single Bargaining Unit has participated in significant negotiations. To date, the Department and the QTU have “in principle” agreement on matters such as managing unsatisfactory performance, the developing performance framework and workload management and support for sole administrators. Extensive negotiations have taken place regarding the conditions of temporary teachers, including processes for converting to permanency and access to professional development, with some further discussion on payment for the summer vacation period. Progress is also being made with respect to the consultative arrangements in schools, workplace reform processes in schools and executive principals.

While the negotiations with the Department have resulted in some positive outcomes on non-salary related items, there has

been no further offer from the government with respect to salary. This must occur if Queensland teachers are to secure salary rates commensurate with the highest paid in other states.

### EB myths busted

As expected, the Queensland Government has met the Union's reasonable pay claim with its usual bluff and bluster and more than a little spin. To clarify the context in which our EB negotiations are taking place, listed below are just some of the government's myths busted.

#### EB MYTH 1: the government claims its current offer includes the “highest superannuation contribution in Australia”.

The facts: including superannuation rates in interstate salary comparisons is a deliberately misleading tactic by the Queensland Government. The assumptions that all interstate teachers receive 9% SGC employer contributions and all Queensland teachers receive 12.75% employer contributions are both incorrect.

All state and federal defined benefit funds are now closed to new members, however many teachers (and nearly all principals) are still members of those schemes. While the exact employer contribution varies from state to state, they are still similar or greater than the current Queensland government contribution rate of 12.75% e.g. in Western Australia the government contribution to pre-1995 members is 15%.

In NSW and Victoria, approximately 50% of teachers remain in these funds, which have similar attributes to the QSuper Defined Benefit Plan or the old State Super Plan.

Where newer members in some other states receive the 9% SGC employer contribution, they also have the ability to co-contribute more and receive higher employer contributions e.g. in South Australia a member co-contributing 4.5% can receive a 10% employer contribution.

It should also be noted that not all Queensland teachers receive 12.75% employer contribution, as members can opt

to contribute as low as 2% thus receiving 9.75% from the employer.

The government claim that the current offer includes the “highest superannuation contribution in Australia” is also incorrect. Since 2008, new teachers in WA receive a 13% employer contribution if they co-contribute 5%. In the ACT, many members still receive a 15.4% employer contribution. Both these schemes are superior to the Queensland superannuation scheme.

The only true interstate comparison that can be made is to consider base salaries only.

#### EB MYTH 2: the government claims its current offer would lift Queensland teachers to “the second highest paid in the country”.

The facts: beside the fact that the government is already using some rubbery superannuation figures in its calculations (see EB myth 1), they are also conveniently ignoring the EB cycle in other states. Teachers in Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria (already higher paid than Queensland teachers) will begin new enterprise bargaining negotiations before the end of 2011, with further increases in Western Australia expected in July 2011 and in New South Wales and Victoria in January 2012. That means they will surge even further ahead of Queensland teachers in a few years. To see how the current offer to Queensland teachers doesn't even see them catch up in the pay stakes in the short term, and, worse, sees them slip even further behind in the longer term, visit [www.qtu.asn.au](http://www.qtu.asn.au)

#### EB MYTH 3: tough economic times make Queensland teachers' demands unrealistic.

The facts: Investing in education is the smart move in tough economic times. The Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister, Julia Gillard, realises this. When addressing the National Public Education Forum earlier this year she said: “I see the global financial crisis as a reason for investing more in education, not as an excuse for investing less. We know that in

a tough economic climate, education will make even more difference.” It is time for the Queensland Government to follow the lead of the federal government and invest in education. Now they have the money for Building the Education Revolution, they have the money to invest in better school facilities, but schools without teachers are just buildings. This state government needs to wise up and realise that it has failed teachers – it failed to invest in teachers during the boom years and if it fails to provide an improved offer, teachers will look elsewhere for employment. The cost of a bad three-year deal is significant for teachers – not only will they once again be forced to play catch up, but our profession will be under threat as more teachers leave to take up higher paid employment somewhere else.

The recent Auditor-General report demonstrates that the government is prepared to spend money on labour intensive programs such as One School, so why are they not prepared to pay teachers fairly?

If the Queensland Government can't see an education crisis staring it in the face, the Queensland Auditor-General can. In late 2008, the Auditor-General tabled a report to Parliament that showed 36% of Departmental permanent employees – mostly teachers – were predicted to retire within the next nine years, and that resignations outnumbered retirements by two to one. Add to that scenario the results of the latest Australian Education Union beginning teacher survey, in which 50 per cent of Queensland respondents said they believed they would leave the public education sector within 10 years, and it is unbelievable that the government response remains: “education crisis? What education crisis?”

**EB MYTH 4: the government claims their current offer is one of the largest ever offered to Australian teachers, and needs to be considered in the context of extra teachers announced in the 2009/10 budget.**

The facts: the extra teachers do nothing but cover projected enrolment growth. Neither is it true that the offer is “one of the

largest ever”; teachers in Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all received greater increases in their recent EB rounds.

**EB MYTH 5: Premier Anna Bligh and Treasurer Andrew Fraser have repeatedly said that “strike action won't achieve anything”.**

The facts: strong industrial action has already been shown to be the only thing this government will listen to. It was only after the announcement of the 19 May strike that any pay offer at all was put on the table by government negotiators, despite the fact that the previous agreement had already expired. In other states where teachers have negotiated significant pay increases over the past 12 months, repeated and widespread industrial action had been necessary to force recalcitrant governments to improve their initial offers.

**EB MYTH 6: the government claims to be negotiating fairly.**

The facts: “Take it or leave it” is hardly negotiating. Neither is introducing a false deadline of 1 September for the offer to be accepted – that deadline has no relevance industrially, and was just pulled out of the air by the Treasurer to intimidate teachers. The Union, on the other hand, has consistently approached these enterprise bargaining negotiations with a commitment to remaining flexible in attaining a fair outcome for its members. The QTU has provided proposals to the government's negotiators that would see increases beyond the current offer taking place toward the end of the next agreement. This proposal is a fair proposal given the expected economic growth in the 2010/2011 financial year and the start of an upswing in the economy. As the majority of the National Partnership Agreement reforms are also to be implemented by the end of the next agreement, achieving a salary commensurate with those in other states at this time is only logical.

## What to do

**Go to a strike meeting if you can, show that Queensland teachers won't be bullied into submission, fight for your future and the future of education in this state.**

**To find your nearest strike meeting go to [www.qtu.asn.au](http://www.qtu.asn.au) and follow the links.**

### Strike directives

All members of the QTU employed by the Department of Education and Training (excluding TAFE) are hereby directed to stop work for a period of 24 hours in accordance with the following schedule (specific workplace dates are available on the QTU website [www.qtu.asn.au](http://www.qtu.asn.au)).

#### Wednesday, 29 July

All schools/workplaces in Darling Downs – South West Queensland Region, Mackay – Whitsunday Region (excluding schools in the QTU Peak Downs branch), Townsville District of the North Queensland Region and Gold Coast District of the South Coast Region.

#### Thursday, 30 July

All schools/workplaces in Far North Queensland Region, Fitzroy – Central West Region, Wide Bay – Burnett Region, Mt Isa District of North Queensland Region, Sunshine Coast North District of Sunshine Coast Region and QTU Peak Downs branch.

#### Wednesday, 5 August

All schools/workplaces in Greater Brisbane Region, Moreton Region, Logan-Albert Beaudesert District of South Coast Region and Sunshine Coast South District of Sunshine Coast Region.

Members should also ensure that they are implementing the work bans – it is only if our action affects the government that our message will be heard.

For more details regarding the strike and work bans, members should refer to Newsflash 12-09.

**Queensland teachers must remain firm in their resolve to achieve salaries commensurate with the highest paid in other states and continue to be committed to the campaign if we are to achieve this outcome.**

## Investing in teachers ...



**that's smart!**