



TAFE EB ballot on government offer

The Queensland Government has offered TAFE teachers an 11-month agreement with a one-off wage increase of 2 per cent, backdated to 1 August. The offer proposes a “roll-over” of all terms and conditions in the current certified agreement. This means that there is no requirement for TAFE teachers to trade off conditions or show productivity improvements in exchange for a pay rise.

What does the QTU recommend?

The QTU TAFE Council unanimously recommends acceptance of the offer. Members are encouraged to vote “YES” in the ballot. Ballot papers will be mailed to members shortly and will need to be returned to the Union by Wednesday, 22 August.

Background to the offer

The government presented an interim offer because its Training and Skills Taskforce is undertaking a review of vocational education and training in Queensland and the future operation of the TAFE sector. This review could recommend significant structural and governance changes to the way in which TAFE institutes currently operate.

In light of this, the government proposes delaying negotiations around a replacement “three-year” certified agreement so that the impact of any change on workplace operations and practices can be considered in the drafting of the new agreement.

What are the positive implications of this proposal?

1. There are no trade-offs and the pay rise would be payable as of 1 August, so it is an immediate step forward in a hostile political environment.
2. The expiry date for the interim agreement of 30 June 2013 has the potential to deliver two salary increases during the 11 month life of the new agreement and to realign the “anniversary” date for future superannuation entitlements to 1 July.
3. Acceptance of the offer avoids the potential for industrial action and lengthy negotiations, conciliation and arbitration proceedings.

What are the negative implications of this proposal?

1. The increase is small.
2. Inflation and cost of living trends are likely to be higher than those predicted by the government.

Where to from here?

A fuller analysis of the offer is currently being written and will be posted to all QTU TAFE members next Wednesday, 8 August.

You will be asked to cast a vote in two ballots. The QTU conducts its own ballot to authorise the Union to proceed with signing the agreement. DETE will conduct its own ballot of all educational employees separately. We have been informed this will be undertaken electronically. It is essential that members vote in both ballots.

If the offer of an interim agreement is accepted by members in both ballots, the unions and DETE will lodge an application for certification of the new agreement in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. Once the agreement is certified, the 1 August date for the pay rise comes into effect.

The decision by the Newman government to exclude the QTU and Together from the Skills and Training Taskforce means that we are unable to directly represent the interests of members to the Taskforce. However, the QTU will be making a detailed written submission and working with the sole union representative to have your views taken into consideration.

Authorised by:

Graham Moloney
General Secretary