

QTU Conference Statement 2019

The QTU's Biennial Conference recognises and celebrates the achievements of the Union and its members over the past two years. It also helps set the direction and priorities of the Union for the next two years, in combination with the Union's other democratic structures and processes.

The Conference Statement provides context for the following commitments that Conference delegates are asked to consider and ratify.

The QTU 2019 Biennial Conference endorses the following priorities for the Union from 2019 to 2021.

1. Reducing the workload of teachers and leaders.
2. Improving wellbeing, including through addressing occupational violence and sexual harassment.
3. Revised strategic objectives that build on the values and strengths of the QTU.
4. Pursuing enterprise bargaining agreements in schools and in TAFE.
5. Ensuring that the Queensland Government acts on the findings of the Queensland Review of NAPLAN and lobbying for a national delay of NAPLAN Online until 2021, plus an independent review of NAPLAN.
6. Leading the development of a preferred and purposeful definition of professional autonomy.
7. Implementing the QTU's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, to increase recognition and self-determination for Aboriginal educators and Torres Strait Islander educators, and supporting national recognition and reconciliation as called for in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
8. Defending and enhancing the voice of the teaching profession on relevant government bodies, including returning a teachers' union representative on the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).
9. Improving gender employment equity by ensuring that gender does not affect status, opportunities, salary, superannuation or access to leave; and calling on the Queensland Government to genuinely support the Respectful Relationships program in all state schools.
10. Working with the Department of Education to ensure: DoE regions are supporting schools to meet their industrial obligations; positive and long-term outcomes are achieved for teacher transfer and classified teacher relocation processes; improved remuneration and incentives are delivered for rural and remote locations; permanent positions are maximised; joint statements are regularly reviewed and updated; and teachers are supported in the transition to the new Queensland Certificate of Education system.
11. Working in the short term with other stakeholders to implement all recommendations from the IPS reviews; and, in the longer term, repeating calls for the abolition of the IPS program.
12. Continuing to work with the AEU to secure fair funding for schools.
13. Challenging governments to recognise TAFE as the public provider of vocational education and training and conducting campaigns to secure resourcing and member conditions to support this.
14. Continuing to support instrumental music teachers/instructors in staring down workload issues and improving their conditions.
15. Working to address and prevent discrimination in schools, TAFE campuses and the wider community, including ensuring members have quality professional development to help support students who identify as LGBTIQ+.
16. Strengthening workplace organisation to improve members' direct, collective say and control over their working lives.
17. Continuing to campaign on political and social agendas that support the Union's strategic objectives and benefit our members and the world they live and work in.

Workload and member wellbeing

The reduction of the workload of teachers and principals in a sustained way is the top priority of the QTU from 2019-2021.

The 2016 EB agreement in schools included a range of measures to address workload: the re-strengthening of class size targets; clarification of the personal use of non-contact time; and LCC consideration of meetings and workload. 2017 Conference endorsed a QTU Workload and Wellbeing Strategy. The Joint Statement on NAPLAN in 2018 addressed workload. The QTU conducted a survey of members in 2018 to identify the extent and contributors to excessive workload.

Yet the evidence from members anecdotally, from Union meetings (including Conference) and from the member survey in 2019 is that workload continues to increase, seemingly unabated.

The Conference calls on the Queensland Government to translate its pre-2017 election commitment to review workload into a reduction in the workload of teachers and principals, through respecting their professionalism and safety, reducing the rate and extent of change, and properly resourcing that change.

While the Union supports wellbeing strategies to support members, its priority is to reduce workload rather than to address the effects of excessive workload on wellbeing.

Strategic direction

The Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) aims to be the most democratic and representative voice of the teaching profession in Queensland on industrial and professional matters and in support of public education and training.

The values of the QTU have been developed to support the Union in its endeavours. In its pursuit of members' interests, the QTU is:

- professional
- courageous
- united
- democratic
- member-focused.

New strategic objectives will be endorsed by Council by the end of 2019 for the next four-year period.

Industrial issues

The QTU Conference recognises the achievement of the QTU's longstanding claim for professional pay for classroom teachers. The highly accomplished teacher (HAT) and lead teacher (LT) negotiations and subsequent pilot have resulted in the establishment of two new teacher classifications, and with them, the most significant gain for classroom teachers in more than 25 years. It sets a remuneration for HAT and LT among the highest in the country. The certification process, pay and conditions of a HAT and LT are currently enshrined in two memoranda of understanding lodged with the QIRC, including an agreement by the parties to include the process, pay and conditions in the next certified agreement.

The QTU has continued to build upon the back to basics approach taken to implement the agreements in workplaces, focusing on both basic and advanced training for Union Reps and school leaders. Recent outcomes include work-to-rule directives for TAFE Division members employed as educators delivering the Adult Migrant English Program, and QTU members employed as instrumental music teachers or instructors in our schools. In accordance with our democratic structures, the QTU will continue to support members seeking work-to-rule directives to mitigate rising workload and to secure safe workplaces. Members in sub-branches across the state have also sought directives to refuse instruction to students who are an imminent health and safety risk. To this end, the QTU Conference endorses the approach taken by the QTU to ensure the implementation of the agreements in workplaces and at central level. The Conference endorses the QTU in continuing to build on our proud 130-year history of providing professional, industrial and legal support for members. The Conference calls on the department to work in collaboration with the QTU on the implementation of the new agreements, to ensure regions are supporting schools appropriately to meet their industrial obligations.

In 2019, the QTU has sought to negotiate new certified agreements for members in both the TAFE and school sectors. Central to the log of claims for both sectors were four key priorities: a new salary classification structure for promotional positions within schools and for TAFE leaders; addressing the issue of gender employment equity; factors to mitigate increasing workload; and salaries that achieve comparability with interstate colleagues and address the cost of living. The Conference endorses the democratic process by which the QTU developed each respective log of claims and the approach that QTU officers have taken in terms of negotiations. The QTU Conference calls on the Queensland Government to make an acceptable offer to members which adequately addresses each of the core elements in each of the respective log of claims.

In 2017, the QTU Conference called on the department to deliver positive outcomes in the review of teacher transfers and relocations, and the trial of incentives under RAIS. The QTU Conference calls on the department to enhance the levels of compensation and incentive payments, including linking this remuneration to salary increases and introducing attraction incentives in rural and remote locations. These elements are part of the QTU enterprise bargaining claim under the broader heading of incentives for rural and remote locations.

The QTU Conference notes the Guaranteed Teacher Transfer pilot is an attempt by the department to address the teacher transfer problems associated with IPS. The QTU Conference calls on the department to ensure there are

sufficient vacancies in preferred geographic areas to ensure all members who complete minimum service are transferred to a geographic area of choice.

Finally, the Conference notes that the changes to the classified teacher relocation process are in effect and operating across the state, and as a result there has been an increased number of relocation outcomes delivered over the earlier stages of the trial. The QTU Conference calls on the department to continue to make improvements in the system to allow the timely filling of vacancies in schools and the opportunity for classified teachers to relocate to other positions across the state.

Professional issues

The QTU is the voice of the teaching profession and continues to represent classroom teachers and school leaders in state forums where decisions affecting our members are made. The QTU actively supports member representation on the board and committees of the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) and the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA).

Policy and decision making regarding matters such as curriculum, senior assessment, pedagogy and collegial engagement must pay heed to the expert professional voice of teachers and school leaders.

While the QTU acknowledges the support and resourcing for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the new Queensland Certificate of Education provided by the government via DoE and the QCAA, we will continue to lobby for timely advice, support and access to quality professional development to support teachers in the transition to the new QCE system.

The QTU supports members who determine, through local consultation, to take action if workload issues or concerns emerge regarding the capacity of schools to implement the new QCE effectively and equitably in all schools and locations throughout the state.

The QTU has had success in recent years in negotiating important joint statements and shared understandings that clearly specify the position of both the Union and the employer on a range of varying professional issues. The QTU commits to working closely with the Department of Education to ensure that these joint statements are regularly reviewed and updated.

It is essential that QTU members continue to assert their right to be consulted in their workplace on professional matters that are impacting on their industrial working conditions.

This Conference calls upon all political parties at both a state and federal level to ensure that governments recognise the Union as the representative of teachers and school leaders in all decision-making regarding our work, and that a union voice be restored to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

In recent years, the QTU membership has demonstrated a willingness to exercise its industrial strength to promote and protect our profession, our students and public education. This was never more evident than in 2018, when we instituted a ban on NAPLAN Online and pressured the Queensland Government into conducting a state review of NAPLAN.

The QTU will be working with the Department of Education to ensure that the Joint Statements on NAPLAN and the Use and Purpose of Data in State Schools are reviewed and updated to align with the findings of the Queensland Review of NAPLAN. At a national level, following the debacle of this year's online test, the implementation of NAPLAN Online must be delayed to 2021 and a full and comprehensive review of NAPLAN itself conducted by an independent third party. After 10 years, the NAPLAN census test must be replaced with a sample test which is not high-stakes.

The Union puts the wellbeing of students and teachers at its core. It is the caretaker of the profession and of public education, and this QTU Conference notes both our proud history and our ongoing responsibility to ensure we retain our professional rights and the autonomy of teachers in our classrooms across the state.

Professional autonomy

The QTU has led debate on the issue of school autonomy for a long time, but nearly always from an oppositional standpoint: our rejection of Leading Schools and Independent Public Schools are two examples.

A major component of the 2019 QTU Biennial Conference has been a professional issues panel focused on resolving the issue of autonomy into a practical definition. Our purpose was to be inspired by thinkers about autonomy and then to workshop a framework for developing a comprehensive response by the QTU to the question of what autonomy in Queensland schools should look like.

The QTU rejects the reliance on legislated frameworks of autonomy that focus largely on managerial responsibilities and compliance. The QTU will undertake future work leading to the development of a preferred and purposeful definition of professional autonomy as the culture of trust developed within and around a school that fosters professional decision-making supported by the education system in the best interests of students, while fostering sustainable wellbeing for teachers and principals.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues

The QTU, on behalf of members, pays respect to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the oldest living cultures on this earth, and to the Elders, past, present and emerging. The QTU recognises and respects the history of the nation's two unique living cultures and our collective responsibility to recognise land, language and culture. The QTU is committed to supporting strong outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families in education; and is committed to working for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in employment within state education, TAFE and the public sector generally. The QTU is committed to promoting inclusive, culturally safe places of learning and work, aligning with the principles of trade unionism and the moral purpose of the teaching profession. The QTU's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan commits to increased recognition and self-determination for Aboriginal educators and Torres Strait Islander educators within our organisation and the department. The QTU supports national recognition and reconciliation through promoting voice, truth and treaty, as called for in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Promotional positions

The review of the classification system was the first such review in more than 25 years and is seen as the best opportunity for a significant and long overdue adjustment in the salaries of those in promotional positions, as well as replacing an outdated system for classifying positions. The review has been seen as a major commitment over the past two years and is a priority of EB9.

Once a new classification structure is agreed upon, the Union's communication strategy will be multipronged to provide members with a clear understanding of the new structure and transition arrangements. The Education Leaders' Committee and Principal Union Representatives will continue to play a key role in informing the roll out of the new structure.

Gender employment equity

As a feminised organisation, the QTU is acutely aware of the impact of the systemic disadvantage faced by the women of our Union. We know that it is commonly women who take breaks in service and work part-time as a result of caring responsibilities. Part-time work not only impacts on income, it also negatively impacts on salary progression, and disappointingly, due to negative perception of part-time work, promotional aspirations and opportunities. These factors are then compounded, with women, on the whole, retiring with significantly less superannuation than their male colleagues.

Gender employment equity also encompasses access to parental leave and carers leave and flexible work for all workers. Gender should not be a factor if you are a primary care-giver to a newborn infant, and we want both parents to share in the joy of caring for their kids. Everyone wins when we value the roles of both parents. We also need our students in schools to see that your gender should not limit your status and position in schools, and that men are able to work part-time or take parental leave too. As teachers, we have a unique role in modelling gender roles for the coming generations.

The National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces will release its findings in the coming months. It is important that unions, including the QTU, respond to the issues that are raised, including reporting processes, training, the role of bystanders and, in the case of schools and TAFEs, processes for sexual harassment and gendered violence and harassment that is directed from students.

Domestic and family violence continues to plague our community and impact on the members we work with and the students we teach. Gender inequality is at the foundation of gendered violence. The QTU calls on the Queensland Government to provide funding to genuinely support the implementation of a Respectful Relationships program in all state schools, to address gender inequality and violence in our community.

As a Union, we are committed to a gender equity plan for our internal processes, roles and structures, and to campaign and deliver for the women of the QTU. Our focus on gender employment equity in our current EB claim reflects this commitment.

Secure employment

Employment security is an essential Union objective. In our member surveys, job security is consistently among the most important issues identified by members themselves.

Despite the fact that Queensland faces a predicted teacher shortage, which the Department of Education has addressed by adopting a raft of measures, the percentage of teachers employed on a temporary basis remains unacceptably high. Since the last Conference, a new memorandum of agreement has been negotiated between the QTU and DoE pertaining to the conversion to permanency of teachers and instrumental music teachers. While we applaud the department's willingness to commit to a temporary to permanent conversion process, it is not the only solution to maximising permanency. Too often it is seen as "the process" rather than a final, catch-all step. Regional HR needs to be willing to risk-manage positions and be more prepared to offer permanency. It is hoped the newly statewide Exit Summary Observation Report process will result in permanent offers being made more quickly and schools being able to make better informed staffing decisions.

The Union recognises that casual and temporary teachers provide vital flexibility to schools. However, their employment must adhere to fair working conditions, as negotiated with the QTU.

The QTU continues to advocate on behalf of TAFE Division members to improve access to permanent employment in TAFE and Central Queensland University.

The QTU has developed the Temporary and Casual Teacher Support and Involvement Strategy, alongside our New Educator Recruitment, Retention and Engagement Strategy, which aims to better communicate with and engage those QTU members most likely to experience insecure employment.

Independent Public Schools

The QTU's issues with the Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative have been extensively canvassed over a long period. Federal government funding for IPS ended in 2017, and the maximum number of 250 IPS has been reached. There have been no new IPS since 2017. The QTU has condemned the Queensland Government's decision to unilaterally extend funding for IPS up until the next state election, a decision which is contrary to the best interests of public education in this state and misguided.

Reviews of IPS in 2015 and 2018 raised major concerns about its impact on the department's human resources functions. The QTU congratulates the hundreds of schools, including three quarters of the current IPS, that voted to take strike action if real changes to department human resources processes were not delivered by the start of the 2019 school year. Early outcomes from the trials of changed processes for classified teacher relocations and teacher transfers show promise. Critically, all schools are now expected to participate equally in both teacher mobility processes.

The QTU is actively working with other stakeholders to implement the full suite of review recommendations.

The strength of our state's version of public education lies in its systemness. While the changes to IPS are consistent with repeated calls from the QTU to normalise some privileges of the IPS initiative so that all schools have access to appropriate flexibilities, the QTU again reiterates its call for the abolition of the IPS initiative in its entirety, to restore cohesion.

School funding

The QTU's latest school funding campaigning kicked off in April 2018 with the launch of Fair Funding Now! at Parliament House, Canberra. The campaign focused on seeking a change to the Turnbull/Morrison government's guarantee of 80 per cent of the schooling resource standard (SRS) for private schools and 20 per cent for state schools. Without lifting the 20 per cent cap on state school funding, the majority of state schools in Queensland will never reach 100 per cent of the SRS in the current forward estimates. The campaign also sought the establishment of a \$300 million capital fund with ongoing investment each year for upgrades to state school facilities.

The federal government's latest budget, which will now be legislated post-election, again leaves state schools in Queensland without an appropriately needs-based funding system. The current school funding plan:

- has actioned \$14 billion worth of cuts to schools (across the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison governments)
- does not provide a funding model that addresses factors of educational disadvantage
- fails to remove the cap on the Commonwealth share of the SRS to state schools

- means 99 per cent of state schools will miss out on reaching 100 per cent of the schooling resource standard by 2032
- results in Queensland state schools being denied \$647 million across forward estimates
- introduces a new funding allocation of \$374,626 million for non-government schools from 2020-2023 called the “Choice and Affordability Fund”, in direct contrast to the cuts to state schools.

The QTU State Budget Submission had called for education’s proportional share of the Queensland State Budget to increase to 25 per cent and be sustained at that level across the forward estimates. Under the Palaszczuk government, education’s proportional share has increased to 24.9 per cent in the 2019-20 Budget, including \$13.302 billion to school education.

In its 2019 Budget Submission, the QTU called on the Queensland Government, with the Commonwealth Government, to ensure that Queensland state schools are funded to at least 100 per cent of the schooling resource standard.

The Queensland Government’s signing of the bilateral agreement condemns our state school system to the second lowest funding level of any state or territory, reaching only 69.3 per cent of the legislated 75 per cent state contribution.

The QTU will work with other branches and associated bodies of the AEU to conduct a review into the Fair Funding Now! campaign, with a focus on how we achieve a long-term genuine needs-based school funding system in Australia.

TAFE

TAFE has long been the cornerstone of public vocational education in Queensland. The QTU acknowledges the role that TAFE Queensland institutes perform in supporting their communities and that the local TAFE campus is valued as a safe place that connects students with training opportunities and future employment with industry.

The QTU celebrates the exceptional quality of teaching and learning throughout TAFE Queensland, which was recognised and reported on by the national regulator’s audit.

The QTU recognises the significant economic benefit that TAFE Queensland delivers to the Queensland economy, generated by the exceptional quality of TAFE, as the public provider of vocational education. TAFE Queensland consistently delivers high proportions of students transitioning to further study or training, and high rates of completion with high satisfaction ratings of students and employers.

The QTU is alarmed that systematic defunding of this iconic institution by all levels of government continues to deeply erode TAFE’s accessibility and functions. Opening the sector to private providers who have rorted the system has devastated TAFE. It has shifted the burden of the cost of education to students and led to a drop in TAFE enrolments, cuts to TAFE courses, staff redundancies, campus closures and a reduction of quality teaching.

The QTU asserts that a strong public TAFE must be the leading institution for vocational education in this state. This once world-class system has suffered from the policies of successive governments, which have succumbed to the neo-liberal worldview and considered vocational education to be a commodity in an open market rather than an investment in the individual or as a public good.

The QTU will continue to campaign for all levels of government to put TAFE first.

TAFE campuses must be adequately resourced and upgraded with new technologies to reflect the advances being made in industry. TAFE educators need time to maintain industry currency, build industry relationships and engage in learning new technological and business practices to incorporate into their teaching. The QTU will continue to campaign on programming measures to mitigate spiralling workload. The QTU is alarmed at the increasing casualisation of the workforce.

Workplace health and safety

The QTU has been working with members to strengthen understanding of how workplace health and safety and wellbeing principles and procedures operate to keep teachers and educational leaders safe.

The complex issue of keeping people safe online is presenting big challenges for Queensland schools and communities. The QTU supports the recommendations of “Adjust our Settings: A community approach to address cyberbullying among children and young people in Queensland” and urges the Queensland Government to also

acknowledge the harmful effect of cyberbullying on teachers and principals, and to act immediately to provide comprehensive protections from cyberbullying for all school employees.

The QTU, in partnership with other unions, shaped the department's Occupational Violence Prevention Procedure. The QTU Conference reaffirms the importance of this procedure, which includes reporting "near misses" as WHS incidents, and calls on the department to prevent and effectively respond to WHS concerns in schools.

Social welfare issues

We are a union that values inclusion and diversity.

Our LGBTIQ+ network continues to grow, and collectively we strive to ensure workplaces are safe for our members and the students in schools and TAFE campuses who identify as LGBTIQ+. We recognise that the LGBTIQ+ community commonly faces discrimination and barriers to real inclusion at work and in the wider community, and that many institutions, including our Union, are embedded with cis, heteronormative "norms" and systems that require attention and action.

We are committed to ensuring members have access to quality professional development to ensure that they understand the needs and risks for students who identify as LGBTIQ+, and importantly, the legislation that underpins this important work.

From the 1 July 2019, Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Commission will be known as the Queensland Human Rights Commission and will cover a further 23 areas of human rights that will impact on Queensland Government bodies, including schools. The QTU will work with the commission in the education and protection of those impacted by discrimination and infringements of their human rights.

Membership growth

In 2019, membership has grown by 914 members, with a current membership of 46,674. These figures have been achieved through a strategic focus on membership growth and value proposition for joining and retaining membership.

In December 2018, the QTU welcomed its 46,000th member. This number was the growth target set by Executive and Council for achievement by 2020 – we are now ahead of schedule and we should celebrate this success.

Since the QTU's 2017 Conference, a focus on identifying and addressing membership trends has been achieved by enhancing capacity to map and interpret membership data. Implementation of the Power BI platform has enabled this to occur.

The QTU Conference recognises the renewed energy and action in the areas of growth target setting in all areas of the QTU, growth training for Union Representatives, identifying and actioning potential membership growth opportunities, growth promotional resource development, and strategic field campaigns.

The QTU Conference acknowledges the on-going key challenges of:

1. rates of temporary employment
2. large numbers of retirements resulting in high levels of churn
3. continued projection of growth in our sector.

Population and enrolment growth will present ongoing challenges regarding recruitment of new members in greenfield sites and areas of growth across the state. Strategic development of processes regarding these areas will be ongoing in order to maintain improved growth in membership and density.

The QTU Conference recognises that a high level of membership improves member power in the workplace. Collectively, we need to meet the challenge of continuing to grow our membership to maintain and improve density.

The QTU Conference recognises that membership growth aligns directly to the 2019 theme of "Our Meeting Place". Improved membership growth will strengthen power in our meeting place. Power in our meeting place will ensure the ongoing success of the QTU.

Human rights and international issues

A fundamental belief in the primacy of human rights underpins the work of the QTU in education and on social and community issues. The QTU Conference asserts that education in schools and TAFE must be provided in an

environment that respects and accepts diversity in all its forms: gender; age; sexuality; religion; social status; culture and ethnicity.

The QTU will continue to campaign on issues related to diversity and will take an active role in advocacy for education and industrial policies and environments that embed Australia's international duties and responsibilities on human rights.

The QTU, through the Australian Education Union, will be an active participant in Education International and relevant campaigns to ensure access to free, high quality public education for all.

It is shameful that Australia continues to evade its responsibilities under international law to resettle refugees and people seeking asylum fleeing conflict whose refugee status has been confirmed. The QTU Conference has a particular concern for the shocking treatment of people in detention centres, the denial of appropriate support to live in our community, and the serious violation of the right of children and young people to a proper education.

The QTU Conference acknowledges and celebrates the stand taken by members in support of vulnerable new Australians, including stop-work action as a part of the #KidsOffNauru and #BlueforNauru community campaigns.

Involvement in state and federal elections

The QTU involvement in state and federal elections is directly connected to our strategic objectives. The QTU Conference confirms the need to continue to seek, through political campaigning and lobbying, influence over state and federal education and training policy. These government policies and the related decisions of governments have a direct impact on the working lives of members in schools and TAFE and on the resources allocated to support our students.

The QTU is not affiliated with any political party but will continue to be involved in election campaigns. QTU campaigns will seek to elect governments and candidates who support teachers, school leaders, TAFE, public schools and workers' rights.

The QTU Conference supports the continued allocation of campaign resources, including QTU employee time, to QTU election campaigns, while maintaining all other core business services to members.

The QTU Conference endorses the need for the Union to communicate with members and the public about matters that relate to achieving the policy objectives of the Union. This may include surveys, member to member phone calls and other direct campaigning where candidates sign a pledge to support key Union issues.

QuEST

The QTU has commenced a focus on professional development through the foundation of QuEST, a branch of the QTU committed to providing high quality face-to-face and live online professional development to members across the state. This is one way in which the QTU can take stewardship of the professional growth of our members, by providing the professional learning members have stated is most beneficial to them.

Teachers' Union Health

The QTU Conference recognises Teachers' Union Health (TUH) as the health fund for Queensland teachers. TUH was started by the QTU and our Union continues to have strong representation on the TUH Board.

The Conference supports TUH against the increasing threat from interstate competitors and encourages Conference Delegates to become TUH advocates in their schools.

Authorised by:



Graham Moloney
General Secretary

03 July 2019