

**November marks the annual WWAM (Workload, Wellbeing and Assertiveness Month), a time for members to come together and discuss issues in preparation for the next school year. Find the space in your work day/week/month to touch base with each other about some of the issues below and what you can do to address them.**

# WWAM!



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### Workplace workload health check

How is your school going with putting in place solutions to mitigate workload?

Did you know that agreements exist covering:

- data in schools
- planning, preparation, differentiation and ICPs
- collegial engagement in classrooms
- annual performance reviews
- access to a minimum 30-minute uninterrupted lunch break each day and 225 minutes of uninterrupted meal breaks each week
- the purpose, frequency and duration of staff meetings
- bus and playground duty
- reporting
- class sizes
- non-contact time
- mentoring for beginning teachers?

Are these agreements considered before a change impacting on workload is introduced in your workplace?

Are any of these matters issues in your workplace? If so, why not have a conversation with your QTU Reps so that they can raise them with your school leader and steps can be taken to find solutions?

### Wellbeing – take care of yourself

Throughout November, the QTU will continue its relationship with Thea O'Connor, personal wellbeing coach, and provide a number of articles containing useful and practical strategies for members to consider. Check in with the QTU Facebook page on Mondays and Wednesdays for the weekly update and share the articles with your colleagues. You may also wish to reflect using the articles provided by Thea last year which can be found on the QTU website.

### Wellbeing – climate control

Managing schools during conditions of excessive heat is a very real issue for Queensland schools. The Union continues to work with the department and schools on mitigating the issues, but in the meantime, QTU members are encouraged to talk about the strategies you can implement to keep staff and students comfortable and safe during a heatwave. It is suggested that you conduct this meeting at a whole school level to ensure all members have input into the school strategy. An example agenda and recording sheet for a facilitated meeting/discussion that will take between 45 minutes and 1 hour is included in this journal and will be available on the QTU website.

### Wellbeing – feeling healthy and safe at work

The Union is clear, teachers and school leaders are entitled to feel healthy and safe at work, and it is the department's obligation as your employer to ensure it provides a healthy and safe working environment. Members have the right to return home after a day's work in the condition that they commenced. If you believe this is an issue at your workplace, find the time to hold a meeting and speak up about the issues. Your QTU organiser will then work with you, your school leadership and the department to address them.

### Workload – complete the survey

If you do nothing else during WWAM, take the time to complete the Workload Survey.

As part of the 2018 Workload Strategy, the QTU has commissioned researchers at the Australian Council for Educational Research, ACER, to conduct a survey of union members currently working as teachers, principals, deputy principals and heads of program in government schools in Queensland. The purpose is to provide comprehensive, reliable data about the level and nature of the work (regulated and unregulated) of teachers, principals and heads of program to inform upcoming enterprise bargaining negotiations.

The survey will be open from Wednesday 3 October until Saturday 10 November.

The survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete and can be done across sessions if necessary.

### Assertiveness

Once aware of issues we need to employ strategies to address them. That's why, this year WWAM stands for Workload and Well-being Assertiveness Month. Keep an eye out for the November Journal and QTU Vice-President Sam Pidgeon's article on assertiveness or sign up for the assertiveness training that is conducted throughout next year. In the meantime, consider the following strategies when considering whether (or not) you wish to commit to something.

Framework for assertive decision making:

1. Do I have time to do this?
2. If I prioritise this by making time for it, what else won't get done?
3. Do I have the capacity, knowledge and resources to do this?
4. Can someone else do it or part of it so that the load is shared?
5. Will I enjoy doing this or will it make me feel stressed?
6. Is it a reasonable part of my job to do this?

Only you know the answer to these questions. Once you know them, how you communicate them is also an important part of being assertive. You may wish to use these questions when conducting your personal workload check up and making decisions about the things you plan to be involved in at work in 2019.

### Personal workload check-up

We say yes to many things – those things at work that extend beyond our immediate responsibilities and those things outside of work that we enjoy, including our relationships with others. It's okay to say yes, it's our way of exerting our control/influence over a situation. However, when we are feeling overworked we may wish to consider what we have said "yes" to and what things we do at work that contribute to our role as a teacher.

As a teacher you have agreed to the following elements of your role:

**Planning for the classes you teach:** this may be done individually or collaboratively and is done in accordance with a range of factors. Forms of long-term planning and the storage of such plans should be agreed to at the school level (following consultation)

**Teaching your classes:** each workplace will have a pedagogical framework that teachers should use - additionally, you are required to teach the curriculum for your subjects/year levels and in accordance with the needs of your students

**Assessing student work:** this should be done in accordance with school assessment timeframes, the curriculum, school data plan and the P-12 Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework (P-12 CARF)

**Reporting to parents:** each school will have agreed processes on the form and frequency of written reports and the opportunities for face-to-face reporting to parents. Written and other forms of reporting to parents should align to the P-12 CARF

**Development of self:** this commitment is in two forms. Teachers and school leaders are required to undertake mandatory training prescribed by the government and participate in Annual Performance Reviews. Additionally, to maintain registration, teachers need to complete continuing professional development hours.

While this framework of plan, teach, assess, report, develop appears simple, these are just the basics. However, teachers do so many other things. During WWAM why not take the time to consider what other things you do in your role as a teacher and why? Ask yourself, what beyond planning, teaching, assessing and reporting, do I do in my school? Make a list and identify why you do these things. Most of the time we choose to do them because they enrich our experience as teachers, however, sometimes it is these additional issues that contribute to a sense of feeling overwhelmed. If this is the case, can you identify anything that you may be able to let go in 2019? If so, maybe it's time to make a plan of action on how you will go about saying "no".

## Plan of activities for WWAM 2018

During WWAM we/I plan to:

- conduct a workplace workload health check
- complete the QTU/ACER Workload Survey
- undertake a personal workload check up
- read and encourage others to read the Thea O'Connor articles
- conduct a workplace meeting to develop a heatwave workload response process
- touch base with my workplace Union Reps/each other about our right to feel healthy and safe at work, and develop some strategies to address issues that make us feel unsafe/unwell
- learn more about assertiveness
- take the time to speak with each other about workload and wellbeing.

Staying well

Find out more at [www.qtu.asn.au/staying-well](http://www.qtu.asn.au/staying-well)