Members are determined to see the government deliver its commitment for a new classification structure for our school leaders and heads of program members and the salaries that go with it. Members want more measures to address the increasing workloads of members and measures to address the rising gender employment inequity in education.

The EB claim was forwarded to the government in early February with the request for bargaining to commence as soon as practicable. Informal negotiations commenced in mid-February.

To date, the QTU has sought commitments around workload, recognising and valuing the work of members in promotional positions and unpacking the impact of practices that give rise to gender employment inequity.

What’s the deal with workload?

Late last year, the QTU commissioned ACER to conduct a workload survey of members. The response rate of 31 per cent is statistically significant and shows the increasing pressure of workload on all parts of the QTU membership.

The survey showed that, in a typical week in term three last year, members in primary and secondary schools worked 44 hours per week on average, and in special schools 46 hours per week. This is 19 hours longer than the rostered duty time of members (25 hours) and significantly more than the hours expected of other Queensland public servants.

In addition to these hours undertaken by classroom teachers, principals reported that, on average, they worked 62 hours in a typical week during term three and 18 hours a week during the October school holidays.

The duties undertaken by members outside of rostered duty hours include planning and preparation of lessons, the development of resources to support these lessons and units of work, reporting on student progress, and communicating with parents.

These statistics alone demonstrate that the allocation of non-contact time is currently insufficient for its purpose of preparation and correction time as part of rostered duty hours.

Members’ views about measures to address workload

Arising from the survey, members identified numerous measures that could be introduced to address workload, including:

- protecting non-contact time so that it is related to preparation and correction and used at member discretion (measures to achieve this were introduced in the 2016 certified agreement)
- a decrease in government initiatives and bureaucracy
- smaller class sizes in special education settings, practical subjects, rural and remote schools, and schools in areas of educational disadvantage
- increased non-contact time
- time in all settings for collaborative planning, moderation of student work, the implementation of the Australian curriculum and professional issues such as the annual performance review process, and professional development
- release from co-curricular activities, such as exam supervision, sports carnivals etc, to provide additional non-contact time.
Workload management elements of the QTU EB claim

The claim suggests a range of initiatives to address workload.

The key initiative is the establishment of a workload audit tool to be employed at all levels across the system to manage change.

Other initiatives include:

- transitioning to increased non-contact time for primary and special schools to meet secondary hours of NCT
- increases to NCT in all settings
- an allocation of three professional days for all classroom teachers each term for engaging in collaborative planning, professional development and other professional initiatives in schools
- mandatory induction for beginning teachers to occur in school time
- a decrease in contact time for beginning teachers to 0.8
- stronger provisions around class sizes
- a workload review in accordance with government election commitments and the implementation of recommendations arising from the review
- additional release time for members undertaking duties such as subject coordination, workplace health and safety, and year level coordination
- allowances that recognise additional duties undertaken by members on a regular basis.

Throughout the campaign and negotiations, QTU members’ workload will be a key element. Reports about the progress of negotiations will include updates on the government’s response to member workload issues. This response will also be considered by members regarding any offers made by the government as we progress toward the end of negotiations and a replacement agreement.

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