

For QTU members in promotional positions



21 Aug 2018

Welcome to the first edition of the QTU PPCR update. Over the coming months, the QTU will be emailing updates to all QTU members in promotional positions. To receive your copy please make sure your contact details are up to date with the QTU at www.qtu.asn.au/myQTU

Progress to date

1. Submissions from key external stakeholders and individual submissions – Term 3, 2017
2. Focus groups – Term 2, 2018
3. Deloitte jurisdictional benchmarking – being finalised
4. Mercer work value assessments – Terms 1 and 2, 2018

The table below outlines the key themes that have arisen out of the PPCR key components to date.

PPCR key components	Key themes
Stakeholder submission themes	<p>PPCR stakeholder submission themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a future classification structure, stakeholders and staff want: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Fair and equitable pay reflective of the position’s work value » Equity and relativity to other positions based on work value • Community factors (i.e. the background of the students) are single greatest contributor to the complexity of promotional positions • Recognition of the difficulty of teaching/small-school principal roles
Focus groups (50 Focus groups held)	<p>Common themes from PPCR focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity and accountability • Remuneration relativity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Between promotional positions » Between teachers and promotional positions • Transfer system/relocation /recruitment processes • Role descriptions
Deloitte jurisdictional benchmarking (preliminary findings but a work in progress)	<p>Preliminary Deloitte jurisdictional benchmark findings (this is a work in progress):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparisons impacted by the level of flexibility in resourcing as principals can exercise more discretion over duties • Even in systems with prescriptive resourcing models there are material differences in the teaching load of positions • Incremental progression system is common, but NSW and SA don’t have increments • Evidence of only modest differences in remuneration outcomes for similar positions – more significant differences in terms of number of promotional positions.

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<p>Mercer work value assessments (preliminary findings but a work in progress)</p>	<p>Preliminary Mercer interview themes (this is a work in progress):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing statutory and reporting requirements Increasing performance monitoring Increasing expectations by parents Increasing incidents of mental health/wellbeing issues Complexity factors (socio-economic status, indigenous students, students with disabilities, EAL/D)
<p>Preliminary Mercer interview themes – specific context (work in progress)</p>	<p>Regional and remote challenged by access to resources and attraction/retention difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching principals challenged by having to be across everything P-10/12 schools challenged by establishing a ‘one-school’ culture Schools of distance education challenged by managing student and parent interactions remotely Special schools challenged by developing agency partnerships and unique learning programs Outdoor education centres challenged to manage cost structures

A potential way forward

The department have been reviewing a number of different promotional classification systems across the country. Once a classification system has notionally been adopted, modelling is required to firstly identify anomalies in the system, and secondly to look at grouping and banding of positions, and the thresholds for changes. In the early 1990s, this involved at least 10 models developed before one was finally agreed and adopted. Another similar process is likely to be required for deputy principals and those in heads of program positions.

One proposal in terms of an appropriate structure is an enrolment based classification system, excluding complexity. All principals with the same number of enrolments in a sector would be paid the same and would have different enrolment thresholds for different school sectors. Loadings would be used to recognise differences in context/complexities between school. The measures would be outside a schools control (i.e. student background) and complexity would attract different levels of remuneration. At this stage, this particular proposal moots that loadings would only apply to principal positions.

Determination of an appropriate classification structure for Queensland will be the key focus of semester two.

Where to from here?

A better classification system and pay that reflects the responsibilities of 2018 will not simply materialise as a result of the information gathered for all the reports listed above. The information gathering has been one stage; the negotiation of a new classification structure is a new and very different stage, leading to a report at the end of 2018. The negotiation of salary in EB9 will be a third distinct stage.

One passing comment during the information gathering stage (and not from the Union) was that responsibilities did not seem to have changed significantly since the CED evaluations of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Union does not think that is the case. You can form your own opinion by comparing the generic role description for a principal in the work value report released in April, 1990 (www.qtu.asn.au/1990role) with the requirements and position profiles of principals today. Remember that it is work value, and not workload, that we are talking about. But after taking out 28 years of cost of living increases, does pay now really reflect the changed responsibilities of promotional positions in Queensland schools? We think not.

Likewise, the jurisdictional benchmarking report will provide a picture of interstate salaries and responsibilities. It will not show where Queensland principals and others in promotional positions should be placed, just where they are currently. The report does not say either where those interstate should be placed. Why should Queensland not set a new benchmark? No reason at all. Alternatively, why not benchmark against some other Queensland salaries, like the salaries of grammar school principals reported in annual reports to the Queensland Parliament?

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The limitations of Mercer

One of the significant reports is the Mercer work value assessments of positions. The department is required to undertake job evaluations using the Mercer system as a public service-wide requirement to provide some consistency in evaluations.

The Mercer job evaluation system is one of a class known as points factor systems. Their complexity and numerical scoring give them an aura of objectivity. They are far from infallible, however, and the limitations of the Mercer system and points factor systems generally have been well known at least since they were first used in public services in the 1980s. The work of the late Dr. Clare Burton, for instance, identified many limitations in the mid 1980s.

The systems have evolved over time, not least because of their application to the public sector, but many of the key limitations remain. For example, a new but limited stream of evaluation for policy advice rather than management of resources was developed when the system was applied to the Queensland public service. From our perspective, the evaluations using the Mercer system are informative but are not definitive.

What are some of the limitations? They include:

- the bias towards dollars managed either in the form of staffing (education positions), assets or sales/revenue, rather than, for example, the demands of instructional leadership
- the resultant differences in job evaluation as a result of differences in staffing allocations
- system rules that limit the score on knowledge and reasoning demands based on the level of staffing
- an emphasis on “hard” skills rather than soft
- the hierarchical nature of the evaluation process with five of the eight sub-factors being limited to less than or no more than the score of the immediate supervisor
- the top-down nature of the evaluation process, with the more layers there are in the organisational structure forcing down evaluations, which is particularly an issue in a public service bureaucracy (e.g. In 1990, it was critical that principals were determined to be reporting to the regional director, rather than a subordinate supervisor of studies)
- the evaluation system is based on a rigidly Taylorist model of organisation at a time that professional discussions revolve around distributed leadership and collaboration.

At the end of the day, the CED (as Mercer then was) evaluations in 1990 resulted in a better classification system than previously, in spite of its limitations. It is far from likely that applying essentially the same system nearly 30 years later will result in anything substantially different, apart from the extent that there are schools with over 3,000 students compared to the maximum of 2,000 students around 1990.

There should be no illusions that a classification structure that properly rewards principals and others in promotion positions is not going to be hard won. It will disrupt relativities and hierarchies within education, and by extension, with other senior positions across the Queensland public service. The cost of the new structure will be significant because of the numbers of people involved and the level of increases that we believe are justified.

It will depend not so much on the cleverness of negotiators as it will on the willingness of those in promotional positions, together with the whole school membership of the QTU, to prosecute a campaign for pay against whatever the current reason given for why now is not a good time for teacher pay rises.

“It is necessary to direct one’s attention violently towards the present as it is, if one wishes to transform it. Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.” Antonio Gramsci.

PPCR background

As members will be aware the PPCR was committed to in the last Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. It has been approximately 30 years since the last comprehensive review and the findings of this review must be completed by the end of the year.

Most importantly, the findings of this review will inform enterprise bargaining negotiations in 2019.

The QTU set up a PPCR specific page last year. If members want to find out more about the scope of the PPCR and other important information including FAQs, go to www.qtu.asn.au/ppcr to find a range of resources and updates.