

TO: QTU MEMBERS

## Cast your vote in QTU ballot – closes at noon on Friday 24 July

Make sure you cast your vote in the member ballot on the government-imposed pay deferral and its proposals for a range of workload reduction and other measures, including COVID-19 protection for temporary teachers.

The ballot will close at noon on Friday 24 July, to allow members to be notified of the results on Friday afternoon.

All financial members in schools and Department of Education workplaces should have received an email link to an electronic ballot paper earlier this week. If you did not receive it, please check your spam folder first, and then email your details to [consult@qtu.asn.au](mailto:consult@qtu.asn.au) (members with Hotmail, Live and Outlook accounts may need to provide an alternative email address).

### Every vote counts

The Union considers a return of more than 30,000 votes as a successful ballot. There are two reasons for this, one external and one internal.

- Externally, the greater the vote, the greater the influence on government and the department.
- Internally, being democratic and giving all members the opportunity to have a say is one of the QTU's core values.

As of 9am this morning, just over half the membership had cast their vote in this ballot.

### The ballot questions

There are two questions in this ballot:

1. Do you oppose the government's pay deferral?
2. Do you accept the government's proposals to address workload issues, including:
  - an additional two days leave at the end of the 2020 school year
  - a commitment to advocate for the replacement of NAPLAN
  - a review of the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (CARF) during Term 3, which results in workload reduction from the commencement of Term 4
  - the streamlining of data collection, which will require a review of the school accountability regime during Term 3, with workload reduction from the commencement of Term 4
  - continuity of service for temporary employees to be unaffected by COVID-19?

The QTU Executive, which considered the government proposals at its meeting on 13 July, recommends that you vote "YES" to both questions.

More details of the government proposals and the ballot questions can be found [here](#) or in QTU Newsflashes [31-20](#) and [32-20](#).

## Workload Advisory Council

Members are encouraged to continue to complete submissions to the Workload Advisory Council (WAC). At the beginning of this week, more than 500 submissions had been received. We are currently unable to report on the themes emerging in the submissions due to the survey structure, reporting capabilities and attachments that many respondents are providing.

Thank you to members and branches who have provided submissions. The more submissions received by the WAC, the more awareness the government and the Department of Education will have of workload issues, encouraging relevant action. Work on this analysis will commence closer to the end of the submissions process, which remains open until midnight **Sunday 16 August**. Submissions can be accessed through OnePortal.

The reviews of the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (CARF) and the school accountability regime are intended to lead to tangible (though not final) changes in those areas within a short timeframe.

They will proceed in parallel to the WAC submission process, which is currently underway after a COVID-19 delay. The WAC was established under the 2019 enterprise bargaining agreement to address workload over the three years of the agreement.

## First stage of Public Service Act changes in Parliament

On Thursday 16 July, the Queensland Government introduced the first stage of changes to the Public Service Act, based on the report by Peter Bridgman, "A Fair and Responsive Public Service for All".

Though the process has been frustratingly slow at times, the legislative and other changes represent a significant improvement in the terms and conditions of public service employment, which have always been a combination of industrial and legislative regulations.

Since January, the QTU, along with other public sector unions and government representatives, has participated in a Joint Advisory Committee to negotiate and develop the proposed changes.

As far as employment arrangements are concerned, the first stage of legislative reforms are directed at:

- employment security in the public sector
- reforms to investigation, discipline and grievance processes to promote positive performance management.

More specifically, the legislative changes include:

- a statement that permanent employment is the default basis for employment in the public service, with insecure employment limited to defined circumstances
- a review of employment status for temporary and casual employees after one year (compared to the current two years)
- transfer of responsibility for appeals under the Public Service Act to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission
- a requirement to apply legislative positive performance principles before commencing disciplinary action
- publication of binding directives, to apply to a number of areas like investigations and discipline, to replace non-binding guidelines.

The issues associated with investigations, suspension of employees and disciplinary action have been a significant and ongoing area of concern to the QTU and Holding Redlich, the QTU's lawyers. In August 2018, the QTU presented a summary of frequent flaws in department investigative processes. While the QTU has continued to argue individual cases as they arise, the broader systemic issues raised by the QTU became part of the Bridgman Review. In particular, these included the misuse of disciplinary investigations in circumstances that should be addressed in the normal course of management. These issues have been a significant focus for the QTU in the Joint Advisory Committee and the review process that preceded it.

The legislative changes will involve new public service directives on discipline, investigations, suspension and positive performance management. The directives will be binding on the department and other agencies, whereas current guidelines are non-binding and cannot be relied on in disputes.

These changes will also involve amendments to several current directives, including recruitment and selection, appeals, independent medical examinations, grievances, temporary employment and casual conversion.

The proposed legislation has been referred to a Parliamentary committee, which will receive submissions and report to the Parliament before the legislation is considered. While there has been agreement about many issues, the QTU and other unions will be making submissions about some matters not agreed, as well as the positive features of the legislation. The Joint Advisory Committee is scheduled to report to the Parliament before the sittings in September.

A second stage of legislative reforms will consider codes of conduct, recruitment, merit selection and diversity, executive management and public sector administration.

The review was commissioned by the government in September 2018, and the Bridgman Report was provided to the government in May 2019 after an extensive consultation and submission process. After Cabinet consideration of the recommendations, the Joint Advisory Committee was established to develop details of the proposed changes for government consideration.

## An historical note

The Newsflash is the mainstay of ongoing QTU communication to members. Originally sent in 1974 via fax to Union Reps in schools for copying and distribution to members (including posting on the school's Union notice board), Newsflashes are now forwarded to all financial members direct to their email inbox. Members have indicated that emails are the preferred form of communication from the QTU, with more than 71 per cent of members indicating satisfaction with Newsflashes as a form of communication.

Newsflashes provide members with current information on emerging issues, and are supplemented by member specific communications such as Principal Update and New Educator Connect.

The all-time record for the number of Newsflashes set in a year is 42, set in 1997 – the year of Leading Schools, enterprise bargaining, two 24-hour strikes and more. At an average of more than one Newsflash per school week, that is unprecedented, before or since.

This Newsflash is the 33rd of 2020. What will the new record be at the end of the year?

Authorised by:

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