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QUEENSLAND  
TEACHERS' UNION  
OF EMPLOYEES

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IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE: **gim:amm**

10 May 2019

Hon Grace Grace MP  
Minister for Education and  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
PO Box 15033  
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Via email: [education@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:education@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Re: Election commitment – review of school leader and classroom teacher workload**

In response to the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) state election claims the Deputy Premier, Hon Jackie Trad, advised the QTU in a letter received 20 November 2017, that during this term of office the government would conduct a review of teacher workloads to address excessive and unproductive work for teachers. The Union seeks to have this commitment enacted.

In 2018, the QTU commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to conduct a survey of teacher and principal workload. The report of that survey was provided to the QTU late last year and is available on the QTU website.

The problems of excessive workload for teachers and principals is not limited to Queensland. ACER had previously conducted equivalent surveys for our teacher union colleagues in Victoria and Tasmania. The New South Wales Teachers Federation adopted a different approach with research conducted by the University of New South Wales. The QTU is also very aware of significant research internationally. In England, for example, priorities in addressing teacher workload were identified as planning, marking and data management. These may offer insight into the processes for the review and for addressing this phenomenon.

The review should have the following characteristics as a minimum:

1. it should be a joint review managed by the department and the Union – an opportunity to work in partnership to address this issue
2. the review itself should be teacher and principal led to support the practical reduction of workload
3. the review should broadly canvass submissions or ideas from throughout the workforce, as well as academic or management contributions
4. the scope of the review must extend beyond “red tape reduction” remedies or remedies that address the health effects of overwork but do not address its causes.

The Union believes that a joint review is preferable to other alternatives, such as a parliamentary committee review or an academic exercise.

Without seeking to limit the scope of the review, it should canvass the impact of cascading, sometimes contradictory, expectations on the work of principals and teachers; realistic evaluation of workload impacts in the decision-making for introduction of initiatives; unproductive or low value contributors to workload that should be removed; and mechanisms to challenge the imposition of excessive workload at a local and systemic level.

The QTU's enterprise bargaining log contains a number of claims to address elements of workload. Of themselves, they will not be sufficient to systematically address teacher and principal workload - hence the need for a review.

While the Union's first concern is about the health and well-being of teachers and principals, addressing workload will also address the needs of the department to attract and retain teachers. If workload can be reduced, not only to acceptable and manageable levels, but to free-up time for collaborative interaction - one of the casualties of excessive workload - students will directly benefit through improved outcomes.

Can you please advise me at your earliest convenience of the means by which you would seek to implement the review? I am happy to be contacted for any clarification or discussion that you require.

Yours sincerely



Graham Moloney  
General Secretary

c.c. Tony Cook, Director-General