

STATEMENT ON **SAFETY AND RESPECT**



QUEENSLAND
TEACHERS' UNION
OF EMPLOYEES

for QTU members

March 2022

The QTU is committed to ensuring that all gatherings and forums convened in its name are free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and racism.

This statement relates to expectations of conduct towards and between all QTU members and employees, whether involved in a QTU gathering or forum at a workplace, branch, committee, special interest group, network, Area Council, Executive, Council and Conference meeting, or taking part in any other authorised QTU forum, whether physical or in the online space. This includes, but is not limited to, QTU social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

The QTU Constitution and Rules, specifically Rule 3.3, provides a mechanism for dealing with misconduct by members at meetings of the QTU convened under the rules. This Statement on Safety and Respect is intended to inform the operation of meetings convened under the QTU's rules. The statement also outlines considerations for dealing with concerns regarding conduct in contexts not covered by the rules.

The QTU is committed to:

- fostering the goodwill and trust necessary to protect the rights of all individuals
- promoting mutual respect, understanding and cooperation as the basis of interaction among all participants
- supporting participants' right to fully express their democratic privilege to participate in QTU meetings, forums and events, free of all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and racism.

The QTU will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of individuals or the integrity of relationships. All members must feel safe to express their own views, and elected representatives must be empowered to express the views of the members they represent.

The QTU has appointed two contact officers who are the designated first points of contact for anyone who wishes to report that they have experienced or witnessed any form of harassment. All such concerns will be taken seriously and treated confidentially to the extent possible while the situation is assessed.

Each matter will be assessed on its own merits and, where appropriate, dealt with according to the process outlined in Rule 3.3 of the QTU Constitution and Rules or such alternative process as may be required to deal with matters not covered by the rules.

From bystanders to upstanders

A bystander is someone who sees or knows about bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation that is happening or has happened to someone else. It is generally accepted that a bystander does not act to protect a victim of inappropriate behaviour.

We all have responsibilities to respect and protect the rights of others. An upstander will use words and/or actions that can help someone who is being subjected to inappropriate behaviour.

You can find a copy of the QTU Constitution and Rules at www.qtu.asn.au/constitution-rules

In the first instance, any specific concerns are to be reported to:

- 1. The Chair of the meeting; or**
- 2. A QTU Organiser or Officer attending the meeting.**

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If upstanders are confident in taking safe and effective action to support victims, then there is a greater possibility that the inappropriate behaviour will stop and the victim can recover.

People respect those who stand up for others, but acting can be tough. Upstanders who witness behaviour that is inconsistent with QTU expectations, including bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, racism and/or unlawful discrimination (in person or online), are encouraged to speak up, take appropriate action if safe to do so, and report their concerns.

Definitions

The following definitions are not exhaustive and are given here for guidance.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that upsets or troubles someone and/or causes them physical, mental or emotional suffering.

- This includes (but is not limited to): insults, threats, offensive language, touching or repeated unwanted contact which may be physical or made through some other means, such as email, social media platforms – commonly referred to as cyber-bullying – or telephones, among others.
- Harassment also includes harmful or offensive verbal or written comments related to race, ethnicity, religion, colour, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, clothing, ancestry or other forms of discriminatory expression.

Sexual harassment

- Sexual harassment refers to unwanted, unwelcome or unasked for behaviour of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of intimidating, coercing, excluding or degrading another person.
- This includes (but is not limited to) sexual comments, gestures or jokes, taking or displaying sexually graphic photographs or other images – including posts of a sexual nature on social media – propositions and sexual advances, whether requesting or demanding.
- It also includes intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life, spreading rumours related to sex about a person, unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing, criminal behaviour, including sexual assault, stalking and indecent exposure.
- Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the same or different sex or gender; it may be witnessed by a third party or more than one person.

Racism

- Racism occurs in many forms – it includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin.
- Racism does not need to involve violent or intimidating behaviour. It can include racial name-calling, jokes or exclusion from groups or activities because of where a person comes from.
- Not all racism is obvious but can be revealed through people's actions as well as their attitudes. Racism is more than just words, beliefs and actions.
- Racism includes all the barriers that prevent people from enjoying dignity and equality because of their race.

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