



Grad News

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The newsletter for graduates

In this edition

- Professional Rates of Campaign
- My Graduate Year
- Where To Find A Job
- Teacher Registration
- Benefits Of Membership
- Member Profile

Professional Rates of Pay Worth Fighting For

The professional rates of pay campaign has been fundamental in highlighting the need for better wages to attract graduate teachers and retain quality teachers within the teaching profession in Queensland.

The Catholic member action day on 28 October, the Lutheran sector action and the recent outcome in the public sector negotiations shows what the teacher collective can achieve.

Negotiations in the non-government sector continue for accessible wage structures which maximise professional rates of pay.

QIEU General Secretary Terry Burke said professional rates of pay are imperative not only to attract graduates to the profession, but also to retain the quality teachers we already have working in the profession.

"High quality education relies on having high quality teachers; and professional rates of pay have been urgently needed to continue to attract and retain these teachers to the profession," Mr Burke said.

"The absence of professional rates of pay by employers devalues the excellent work done by educational professionals in our schools," Mr Burke added.

Early career teachers and IEUA-QNT members Christina Ong and Melissa Favero from St Rita's College said taking part in the Catholic protected action day was essential and necessary to secure their future as teachers.

"Being only in my second year of teaching I haven't been a part of protected action before. Our day of action showed solidarity amongst those within our profession," Christina said.

"It was heartening to hear my colleagues who were coming towards the end of their careers, saying they were taking the action to secure the financial future of graduate and early career teachers," Christina added.

"The day highlighted our collective in action."

"At that stage of the negotiations, when our employers continued to balk at negotiating professional rates of pay, it was important to stand up and be heard," Melissa said.

"Queensland graduate teachers have wage rates less than those in other states. Employers need to realise that to retain graduates and early career teachers parity of wages needs to exist," she said.

"Statistics show that some graduate teachers are only staying in our profession for around five years and this is another reason why employers must pay professional rates of pay."

Christina stressed the importance of union membership.

"It is important to be a member of our union, not only for legal protection but to be well informed on the issues concerning education as a whole," she said.

"But with this, graduates should also realise it is equally important to be actively involved within your chapter."

"After my graduate year I became the Chapter Representative at my school, when the position became vacant and I love my responsibility."

"I am supported in our Executive by two other early career teachers. We are a young team, but we are respected by our colleagues because we get the work done. It is evidence that graduates and early career teachers can take on Chapter Executive roles successfully," Christina said.

Following the recent announcement of a settlement in the public sector the onus is now on the employers in the non-government sector to negotiate professional rates of pay.

Members in each non-government employing authority will be involved in the relevant discussions to determine a wage structure position as negotiations continue.



Christina Ong and Melissa Favero from St Rita's College at the Catholic member action day, 28 October 2009.

MY GRADUATE YEAR

QIEU GRADUATE MEMBERS
TELL THEIR STORIES

"At the conclusion of my teaching practicum last year my supervisor commented, 'Mr Baines, if you want to be rich, then don't be a teacher; but if you want a life full of rich experiences, then this is the job for you!' In 2009, seven months into my first year as a Religious Education and English teacher, I am happy to endorse his words. From receiving my first roll, set of whiteboard markers and a key to the classroom, the teaching experience has proved to be positively challenging and rewarding. I had never even considered a rural experience for my first year; however, after visiting the school in September later that year, I was sold. I will never forget the sunset that welcomed me on arrival, it was as warm as the hospitality extended to me by the people of Roma. Since arriving I have visited over 30 surrounding townships and have fallen in love with the natural beauty of the Carnarvon Gorge, situated in the Central Highlands. However, no matter how organised you are on the first day, adjusting to the rigour and routine of school life in a P-12 school was a significant challenge. Memos, faxes, timetables, rolls, a myriad of documents and policy to implement in a range of contexts, in the classroom and in the playground. Making fair and equitable teacher judgements upon student scholarship as well as catering for student diversity would have been a significant challenge without the expertise of fellow staff members. Being a member of QIEU imparted a sense of reassurance. I feel I've had a voice in shaping the profession at the grassroots level."



Ryan Baines
St John's School Roma

"If I'd been asked what I thought of teaching in my first term I would have been too stressed and tired to even think about a coherent answer. Time management was the biggest challenge. In first term it didn't seem to matter how many hours I worked, there just wasn't enough time to do everything. After first term, I had a better understanding of the priority of different tasks and this helped with the stress levels. Just being more familiar with everything the job entails means that I have systems in place now that I was still developing in first term. I've been blessed with really great students and building my relationships with them is the most rewarding aspect of the job. I have a superstar mentor who has been worth more than gold this year for my professional development. She shows me on a daily basis that the rewards of teaching are endless even after more than 30 years. Keep records up-to-date and well-organised; it saves a lot of time and stress when you need them. Ask for feedback from experienced colleagues on planning and lessons. Going into second year I feel that I have a clearer focus and I'm excited that I get a chance to build on what I have learnt this year. It gave me a sense of security to know that even before I signed a contract, our union could give me impartial advice on remuneration and working conditions. I have taken advantage of our union's professional development opportunities, their considerable support with our negotiations and their contract advice as I take up further study."



Nicola Gordon
Islamic College of Brisbane



Melissa MacDonald
St Edward's Primary School Daisy Hill

"It sounds clichéd but I have wanted to be teacher all my life. Being a teacher goes beyond just having a job. It is being involved in a school community, in striving to teach and inspire and in continuing to learn with and from my students and from teachers and professionals around me. My first year of teaching has been an exceptional journey. When I began I was filled with a mix of nervous anticipation and ambitious expectations. I find that I am challenged every day by my students, who bring to the classroom such a wide array of ability, personality and thirst for learning. Sometimes it is easy to feel that there are not enough hours in the day to achieve everything that I want to do in the classroom. I have been exceptionally lucky in that I have had a wonderful support system both in my family and in my colleagues. They have given me a great deal of encouragement. With their support, I feel more confident and capable when it comes to achieving the goals that I have set for myself. I feel being part of a union Chapter has given me another source of support as I set out on the journey of my career. Being involved in our union has empowered me as a beginning teacher. On my first day as graduate, everything was new, from the colleagues and students that I had just met, to the inner workings of the school, to how my classroom was going to run. A new year will bring a new group of students and a new set of challenges. I feel more prepared to meet those challenges."



Steve McKay
St Patrick's Bundaberg

"My first year of teaching has been full of challenges, learning and reflection. Like most first year teachers I felt a certain level of enthusiasm mixed with naïve idealism. In my first year I have been teaching a Year 6 class. Familiarising myself with the curriculum and collaborating with my teaching partner was the best way to learn. Providing colour printing and laminated resources for assessment pieces within the classroom, has enabled the students to produce quality work of which they are justifiably proud. I feel that one of the main issues is to keep up to date with the increasing advances in technology and pedagogy, whilst simultaneously keeping in touch with the complexity of the lives of our students. The most rewarding aspect is to see the development in your students' abilities and personalities over the course of the year, and to feel a sense of accomplishment that you have assisted each student in some way. Being a member of a union Chapter has provided me with a 'sense of comfort' to know that there was a supportive network available to me. It has often been said that teaching is a 'calling', and I feel that this is true for me. Those magic 'light bulb' moments when a student finally grasps a concept, or utters words of pure insight and wisdom beyond their years, are precious - as are their creativity, laughter and smiling faces as they explore and investigate the miraculous world in which we live. To share in the learning journey of my students and to assist in developing their potential is the gift of being a teacher."

WHERE TO FIND A JOB

Regardless of what stage of your career as an education professional you are at, securing your career and maintaining ongoing employment are vital.

Advances in technology have taken the search for employment ahead in leaps and bounds. Newspapers are still a favourite forum for employers to advertise their vacant positions.

However, advertisements for employment opportunities are found in a variety of places.

Checking the employment section of both major and local newspapers in the area where you want to find employment is a useful activity.

Numerous websites offer employment services. You just need to search the web to find one that will provide the career opportunities you require. Some excellent generic sites are:

- www.careerone.com.au
- www.seek.com.au
- www.teachers.on.net

If you have identified a specific non-government education sector you would like to work in, the following websites might be a helpful starting point

- www.catholicjobsonline.net.au (Catholic)
- www.ascqld.org.au (Anglican)
- www.lutheran.edu.au (Lutheran)
- www.csa.edu.au (Christian)
- www.aisq.qld.edu.au (Independent Schools)
- www.candk.asn.au (Early childhood)

More information about finding employment, putting together a resume, writing a cover letter and preparing for an interview can be found on the QIEU website under "Membership Sectors."
www.qieu.asn.au

TEACHER REGISTRATION

As you complete the first year of your career one of the issues to consider is the move from provisional to full teacher registration. The requirements to make this conversion are:

- Completion of one year of teaching; that is, 200 days or 1,000 hours.

You do not have to have completed all this teaching in one location, but a principal will need to have sufficient knowledge of your successful practice to make a judgement and complete the recommendation report.

- Ensure the Provisional to Full Registration Recommendation Report is completed

This recommendation report is completed by the principal and indicates how you met the Professional Standards for Teachers requirements.

Information can be found at www.qct.qld.edu.au.

The final decision to grant full registration is made by the Queensland College of Teachers.

If a recommendation is made by your principal for the continuation of provisional registration or a cancellation of registration, you are able to appeal this with the Queensland College of Teachers and QIEU can provide its members advice and assistance if dealing with this situation.

It is also essential that you notify the Queensland College of Teachers if your details have changed; such as your name, address or place of employment. You are also required to advise the Queensland College of Teachers about any changes to your criminal history.

Requirements for moving from provisional to full registration can be found on the Queensland College of Teachers website.

THE BENEFITS OF UNION MEMBERSHIP

As you come to the end of your first year as a graduate, you would be aware of the challenges that professionals working in the non-government education sector face.

Being a member of QIEU ensures that you are adequately protected and supported as you and your colleagues face these challenges. It also ensures that you remain well educated about the profession and able to be part of change and improvements to our sector.

There are many issues to consider as an education professional, but legal issues continue to be one of the most concerning for QIEU members. As a member of QIEU, you have access to public liability/professional indemnity insurance which provides legal protection for members in the event of an issue arising.

QIEU members also have access to expert and professional advice on a range of matters. Some of the more common issues encountered by education professionals include:

- Concerns about defamation for statements contained in student reports;
- Liability for student injuries while on playground or other supervisor duty;
- Legal requirements for reporting suspected child abuse

- Legal implications relating to the administration of student medications; and
- Copyright ownership of internet materials or other materials prepared while at work.

In addition to access to legal advice and assistance, there are many other benefits associated with QIEU membership, including:

- Access to QIEU publications including *The Independent Voice*, *Independent Education* and *Grad News*;
- Access to professional development and training opportunities;
- Access to member benefits such as Teachers' Union Health, Members Equity and Union Shopper;
- International teacher exchange opportunities; and
- Representation of key industry bodies such as the Queensland College of Teachers and the Queensland Studies Authority.

Discounted rates are also available to members who pay their membership fees prior to 21 December 2009.

If you have any questions about QIEU membership, please contact your organiser or the QIEU office on (07) 3839 7020.



MEMBER SNAPSHOT

Glenys Fraser - Year 5 Teacher
St Francis Xavier School - Runaway Bay

What have been the highlights of your graduate teaching year?

Before becoming a teacher I was a school officer for many years where I supported teachers and students. Therefore, finally having my own amazing class of 28 students is simply heaven and I love every day.

What issues have you identified as concerning you as a graduate teacher?

Having worked with numerous students, and being a parent myself, I am probably luckier than most graduate teachers as I have had some experience with dealing with students. However, teaching is an enormous responsibility and every day I am aware of how fragile children are and that teaching is only a minor part of truly "teaching and caring" for students. Therefore, having a supportive cohort of teachers and administration personnel that I can turn to and ask advice is an important issue.

Did you have a mentor this year? If so, how has this relationship helped with your professional development?

I have not had an individual mentor; however, the administration team have been very supportive of me and other new teachers. They led us through an induction programme and have kept regular tabs on us to make sure we are okay.

What type of professional development would you like to undertake over the next year?

With regards to professional development I would like an in-service on middle school literacy and grammar as I have found students have wide ranging difficulties in these areas.

Has teaching lived up to your expectations?

Teaching has certainly lived up to my expectations as I knew that it would be a busy, exciting and demanding role. However, I don't think I truly appreciated how many extra hours each week that teachers devote to planning and extra curricula school activities. Having said that, I wouldn't swap teaching for anything else!

How has your union chapter made you feel included?

The union representative at St Francis Xavier School is a wonderful lady. She is very knowledgeable about our union and supportive of issues that are being addressed.

Why do you believe it's important for graduate teachers to join QIEU?

I believe it is important for graduate teachers to join our union because teachers are so busy teaching and pastorally looking after the welfare of their 25+ students, and parents, that they often neglect their own interests. Knowing that our union is working away is of great relief.

What are the major industrial and professional issues do you think concern graduate teachers?

Major industrial issues that concern graduate teachers are the same as for the general public being: will I have sufficient remuneration to meet my mortgage, support my family and meet my financial commitments. Professional issues of concern: Am I doing enough to support my students? What more can I do to help my students? Are parents happy with what I am doing in my class? Are my students happy? As a graduate there are too many issues to name, but hopefully over time I will gain in confidence and perspective.

What do you see as your biggest challenges now as you move towards your second year?

I believe the biggest challenges as I move into my second year will be in trying to improve my own teaching methods to meet the demands and challenges of a totally new group of students.

What's the best thing about teaching?

The best thing about teaching is teaching a new concept and actually seeing that the students "get it" and when that light turns on how excited they are, and how confident they become.

JOIN YOUR UNION TODAY

Help build strength in order to enhance the working rights and conditions of all GRADUATES and EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS in schools.

To join QIEU, download a membership form from www.qieu.asn.au or call our membership department on freecall 1800 177 937.

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