



‘Building the Education Revolution’

The federal government’s proposed injection of \$14.7 billion into new and updated infrastructure and facilities for schools will do much to address issues of school infrastructure; however, we are still waiting for a funding announcement on funding professional rates of pay, support for professional development and inclusion funding for special needs students (see page 3 for details of the funding package).

At the core of any meaningful ‘education revolution’ is support of teaching staff and the many other education workers who enable the provision of quality

education in schools.

In a complementary sense, students need to be well equipped with appropriate resources and support, at home and at school, to ensure that our schools are making a difference to these students.

The social disadvantage experienced by some students and the impact this has on their social and education experiences also needs to be addressed.

The education revolution must go beyond ensuring that schools have good facilities, and ensure that they also have the

best possible teachers and support staff to provide high quality educational outcomes for students.

The absence of an agenda which ensures professional wages and conditions and access to professional development not only devalues the work of education professionals, it sends a negative message to the community about the significant and difficult work being undertaken by education professionals in our schools.

Funding to support an agenda which ensures professional wages and conditions for education

professionals remains an unmet priority.

Such funding towards an explicit agenda which recognises the critical role of quality educators will not only encourage the best graduates to the profession but also ensure the more experienced remain in the profession.

Furthermore, ready access to appropriate professional development goes to the heart of deepening the quality of education in our schools and teachers would welcome funding which extends the provision of support staff in schools to enable them

to spend more time on the task of teaching rather than administrivia.

The provision of funding for support of special needs students is currently at woefully inadequate levels and denies in large part a quality educational experience for such students.

‘Building the education revolution’ is a noble slogan but the on-going lack of a genuinely considered strategy and agenda which goes to the heart of the nature of schools and their capacity to provide quality education continues to be an indictment of any such noble intentions.

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POSITION VACANT

Part-Time Librarian

Expressions of interest are sought for a part-time librarian in the QIEU Brisbane office.

The position is one day per fortnight and would suit a retired teacher librarian or school officer with cataloguing experience.

For an information and application package please contact nmorris@qieu.asn.au

**Applications close
4 March 2009**

President's Report

Opportunities and challenges ahead in 2009

Welcome back colleagues to a new year which provides us many opportunities and challenges.

I hope your break was enjoyable and restful.

The year ahead sees many sectors negotiating collective agreements.

As we look ahead to the challenges that the year presents it is appropriate in our 90th year to stop and reflect on the many enhancements that members in various sectors of independent education have gained.

Since starting teaching in the 1990s I have witnessed enhanced superannuation, paid maternity leave, paternity leave and significant improvements to the school officer awards, to name a few.

I know many members would be able to tell a story about how conditions have improved and the campaign that went with achieving the outcome.

Although we have achieved a lot there is still many areas that we continue to seek to enhance.

Your union council has sought again to put at the front of the debate a considered and structured framework on how to appropriately recognise accomplished teachers.

It is an attempt to cut through all the media hype and teacher bashing and to actually deal with a significant issue.

We will celebrate our 90th year with various events throughout

the year, including a conference; this conference will continue the professional issues agenda that was a focus of last year, whilst also reflecting on our past achievements.

I ask of you in our 90th year to take the time to participate in some way in our union; nominate for a position on your Chapter Executive, or ask if you can assist the Chapter Executive.

Nominate to be part of one of the various committees our union convenes, or make a commitment to attend Labour Day this year and enjoy the celebration of all union achievements especially our own.

I hope you have the opportunity this year to take time and celebrate what



our union has achieved.

It also a reminder that for a union to be effective it needs to have a membership that is growing, educated and willing to take the action necessary to improve the conditions of its industry.

I look forward to meeting with as many members as possible throughout this year.

**Kind regards,
Andrew Elphinstone
QIEU President**

General Secretary's Report

The meaning of Union - 90 years on

There is an ever-present character to the work we do as a union.

Our 90th Anniversary Year Celebrations encourage us to review not only our achievements but the industrial and social context in which those were made.

From very small origins in 1919 and 1921 our antecedent unions established a commitment to represent with persistence and dedication, the industrial and professional interests of our members.

While my membership of our union barely covers one third of our 90 year history, even a cursory view of those decades points to the essential role that we as a collective of teachers and education workers have undertaken.

Indeed, one has only to review the pages of this journal to distil the essence of what we do as a union.

The Principal sacked and her industrial rights ignored is represented by our union and an appropriate compensation achieved (page 9); the cleaners about to be outsourced with probable loss of permanency of employment and certainly loss of current conditions have, with our intervention, their employment status and terms of employment preserved (page 16); members trained in minimum workplace health and safety laws (page 5) so that they can

encourage the achievement of a safe place to work; representations on curriculum changes (page 4) and advocacy on quality education and appropriate resource levels (page 1); bargaining for real wage increases to ensure employees in our sector maintain and enhance their standard of living (page 4); and most significantly co-ordinating a collective response to the attempts by employers to assert that they have all the rights and employees should acquiesce even in the face of offensive, stupid and unreasonable employer actions.

The actions of the Townsville Grammar School (page 3) in unilaterally determining that staff who left the school in 2008 should be denied backpayment to 1 May 2008 is but a contemporary example of why we always need union and how union empowers the individual.

Alone, an individual has but the power of their argument and in the face of an obdurate employer, the individual can achieve little.

However, the collective gives the individual, in concert with their colleagues, a power that moves employers.

Aberrant and offensive behaviour such as that at the Townsville Grammar School has and will continue to be called for what it is and action taken.

We have done this in our history and we will continue to do so with vigour, purpose and determination.

Our history as a union is replete with examples of the commitment to enforce our collective power in support of our members; whether it is the achievement of wage increases generally, gender pay equity, enhanced entitlements to long service leave, sick leave and superannuation contributions.

As a union we have been part of broader campaigns for minimum entry standards for teachers, teacher registration and curriculum reform.

As a union we have brought proper and appropriate classification structures for school officers recognising their skills, responsibilities and contribution to the work of schools.

As a union we have provided support and advocacy for social justice, both at home and abroad and pursued the recognition of human dignity and the most fundamental human rights.

As a union we have also been part of the Your Rights at Work campaign which changed a government to win back our working rights and conditions.

Considered and well counselled employers know that they never win in the face of the power of



the collective.

Employees, for their part, suffer an angry acquiescence in the face of employer intimidation until they too discover the power of the collective.

In this, our 90th Anniversary Year, we can look forward with confidence to what we will achieve as a union knowing that our fundamental values will stand the test of time.

Foolish and inadequate employers will come and go; employer stupidity and intimidation will try to claim a place but when their impoverished contributions are long gone there will always be union, because there will always be employees united in common spirit to do what is right and good and through their union to assert fundamental human values of justice, fairness and respect of the human condition.

**Kind regards,
Terry Burke
General Secretary
tburke@qieu.asn.au**

Fair Work Bill - what will it mean for us?

The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) has argued in its submission to the Senate inquiry into the Fair Work Bill that while issues of unfair dismissal, collective bargaining with the employer 'in good faith', flexible working conditions and a safety net of terms and conditions are generally appropriately addressed, education workers would experience considerable problems concerning multi-employer bargaining if the Bill is legislated in its current form. In its submission the IEUA commended the greater legal entitlements under the Fair Work Bill compared to the Howard government's laws. The proposed legislation proposes to establish a new framework for workplace relations to commence on 1 July 2009. It would:

- establish a guaranteed safety net of minimum terms and conditions;
- ensure that the safety net cannot be undermined by the making of statutory individual agreements;
- provide for flexible working arrangements;
- recognise the right to freedom of association and the right to be represented in the workplace;
- provide procedures to resolve grievances and disputes;
- provide effective compliance mechanisms;
- deliver protections from unfair dismissal for employees;
- emphasise enterprise level bargaining underpinned by good faith bargaining obligations and rules governing industrial action; and
- establish a new institutional framework to administer the new system comprising Fair Work Australia and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

In the new Bill, unfair dismissal rights for employees will no



ABOVE: QIEU Officers attend the Fair Work Bill hearing in Brisbane recently

longer be limited to workplaces with 100 employees or more. This is significant for our members, as many schools in the non-government sector operating in the federal jurisdiction, such as colleges that provide English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and early learning centres fell well short of this size. Furthermore, dismissals for 'operational reasons,' will no longer be allowed. The Bill also provides for an employer to be ordered to meet and bargain in good faith if 50 per cent of employees request negotiation of a collective agreement. Unions will also have the right to be involved in these negotiations of behalf of their members and there will no longer be artificial limits on the content of agreements. Therefore, provisions requiring unions to be consulted in cases of redundancy for example, can be included.

Though there are some strengths to the introduction of the Bill, the IEUA argues there are still some problems concerning award structures. The IEUA's submission points out that, '...even where market rates may be paid for wages, staff are dependent on the award for all

other conditions such as parental leave, personal leave, long service leave redundancy payments.' In relation to this, one of the main recommendations the IEUA made to the Inquiry was that, 'Fair Work Australia needs to be empowered with greater flexibility in relation to the content of Awards where that flexibility is required by the industry which is subject to the Award.'

Educators have patterns of work which are not replicated in any other industry. They are subject to intensive face to face responsibilities associated with students and are required, because the loaded curriculum deems it, to work outside normal working hours. Preparation and marking of curriculum as well as the expected involvement in extra-curricular activities are generally not subject to any form of Award regulation. The IEUA's submission advocated that the new Bill should recognise that, '...modern awards do not suit the working environment which applies to teachers and educators.' Therefore, four weeks annual leave is of no relevance to employees who work in schools. The submission also states that, '...similarly, a maximum of 38 hours

work per week is not a limitation which is suitable to the industry of education.' The quantum of work is a consequence of the curriculum which is required by the employer, which the IEUA believes the Bill should be extended to allow.

In regards to industrial bargaining the IEUA feels that there are disadvantages in the Bill regarding agreements covering multi-employer bargaining. One 'loop hole' in the Bill is that employers can effectively deny employees the right to take industrial action in support of bargaining claims by simply insisting on remaining within the multiple employer stream. In the multiple employer stream, employees are not permitted to take protected industrial action or to apply to Fair Work Australia for good faith bargaining. The IEUA supports the ACTU and other unions who have also submitted suggestions that the Bill needs to ensure employees in all streams of bargaining are treated equitably. The Senate Inquiry into The Fair Works Bill will conclude on 19 February and the new framework for workplace relations is to commence on 1 July 2009.

Unjust wage fight at TGS

Townsville Grammar School employees have made a clear statement that staff who left the school at the end of 2008 should receive back payment from 1 May 2008 of increased salary and wages under the terms of the recently balloted agreement.

In a separate ballot conducted by staff in conjunction with the formal ballot on the proposed agreement, employees voted strongly in support of back payment to their colleagues who left at the end of 2008.

In a further significant sign of protest nearly 40 per cent of staff voted NO to the agreement.

Such high levels of rejection of a ballot are rarely seen and the result says much about the view of staff on the exclusion of their former colleagues from the back payment and the disregard of the commitment and contribution of these staff by their employer.

Staff had been advised late last year in a cursory comment in an end of year briefing that in the event of a successful ballot on the proposed agreement, that only continuing employees would receive the back payment from 1 May 2008.

No mention had ever been made in the negotiation of the proposed agreement that the school would adopt such a position.

The obvious lack of respect to these dedicated and committed staff is offensive and the school's arguments in its defence are arguments of convenience, attempting to disguise the inadequacy of their position.

Chapter members at the school late last year endorsed a resolution calling on the school's Principal and Board members to alter their decision and instead move to fairly recognise all staff, both past and present, with the negotiated 4.5 per cent wage increase.

Members at the school have been joined in their campaign with support from Chapters across the state and the Northern Territory and with the conduct of the ballot, the campaign moves into a new phase to overturn the school's disrespectful and dismissive attitude towards professionally committed staff.

Building the education revolution: what this package means for schools

continued from page 1...

The federal government proposal is for an allocation of \$12.4 billion to build or upgrade large-scale infrastructure such as libraries and multipurpose halls in primary schools, special schools and K-12 schools. Funding priority will be given to construction of new buildings. However, funding will also be available for schools with recently constructed buildings for refurbishment or additional construction.

There will be funding caps for schools who wish to access this funding and determined according to the size of the school (see table 1: Caps for large scale building and infrastructure funding at right). As a condition of this funding, schools will be required to provide low or no fee community access to these facilities. A further \$1 billion will be spent on building 500 new science laboratories and language

centres. Funding allocations for this component of the Nation Building and Job Plan will be made based on need as well as a readiness and capacity to complete construction by the 30 June 2010. The final \$1.3 billion will be used to refurbish existing infrastructure and undertake minor building works in schools. Schools will be eligible for up to \$200,000 worth of funding. Funding caps will also be in place and determined by school size (see table 2: Caps for school refurbishment and minor works funding at right). There will also be enhanced funding to fund proposals under the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program. This will allow for 110 additional schools to build trade training facilities, upgrade existing facilities and purchase trade-related equipment.

The provision of this funding will be made by the Block Grant Authority in conjunction with Commonwealth,

state and territory governments and the non-government education sector. The first round of funding is anticipated to be made available to allow construction to commence by June 2009. The short time frames associated with the provision of this funding; six to eight months for minor infrastructure and 15 to 18 months for large infrastructure, are also problematic. Short time frames will provide resource demand

and employment opportunities, particularly in trade area, it may be to the detriment of schools who are in particular need of funding, but do not have the capacity to complete construction and works within the designated times. This would be a particular problem in regional areas where access to trade professionals and materials would be more restricted than in metropolitan areas.

Table 1: Caps for large scale building and infrastructure funding

School size (full time equivalent students)	Funding cap
0 to 50	\$ 250,000
51 to 150	\$ 850,000
151 to 300	\$2,000,000
301 to 400	\$2,500,000
401+	\$3,000,000

Table 2: Caps for school refurbishment and minor works funding

School size (full time equivalent students)	Funding cap
0 to 50	\$ 50,000
51 to 150	\$ 75,000
151 to 300	\$ 125,000
301 to 400	\$ 150,000
401+	\$ 200,000

QIEU takes initiative on stakeholder response

In something of a knee-jerk political reaction to the publication of national assessment of literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) results the Queensland government commissioned a report by Professor Geoff Masters of the Australian Council for Educational Research to provide it with advice on improving the literacy and numeracy outcomes of Queensland primary age students. A broad consultation with the various stakeholders was promised and when this eventuated the structure of the consultation was a continuation of a disturbing trend towards segregating stakeholders into categories: QIEU with QTU; parents groups; professional associations; employer groups and so on. Each group's views are effectively quarantined from the others.

This review has the potential to have far-reaching consequences for Queensland schools and the issues associated with improving student outcomes are shared

across all stakeholder groups. In the face of the government imposed segregation of views, QIEU took the initiative and invited all stakeholders to a meeting to establish that common ground and to enable all groups to have a view better informed by the views of others. This initiative was well received and having been established was in fact assisted with an initial presentation from a representative from the Department of Education Training and the Arts. A forum of the nature we initiated is what that very department should have established itself rather than the ad hoc consultations it had put in place.

The meeting then gave consideration to key issues: resourcing; the content of education courses at universities; attracting the best and brightest to education and retaining our experienced teachers; and the need to ensure appropriate mentoring of beginning teachers in schools.

President of the Queensland Teachers' Union, Steve Ryan,

spoke very strongly in support of the need for more appropriate levels of resourcing. He pointed out that there may well be some co-relation between the fact that Queensland funding is the second lowest in Australia and Queensland's performance being ranked second lowest in the country.

A representative of parents and friends associations indicated that like teachers, parents were alarmed that they too were frequently blamed for Queensland students' "not performing well enough". Both "teacher bashing" and "parent bashing" needs to cease and the real reasons for this perceived "failure" be acknowledged and addressed. All those present at this meeting indicated that they would prefer to have joint stakeholder meetings and it is QIEU's intention to initiate such gatherings when and if this segregation of consultation occurs in the future.

At the later consultation meeting with Professor Masters, it was pleasing to hear him indicate that

Queensland's education results may actually be quite good once these are properly understood. The analysis which found its way into the media failed to properly disaggregate the data and understand peculiar characteristics of the Queensland context. This assessment by the researcher is in stark contrast to the Premier's statement that the "results from the Trends in International Maths and Science Study [TIMSS] are well short of a pass mark." The truth is that Australia ranks substantially above the TIMSS International Median for Maths and Science at both year 4 and year 8. It is also true that Queensland ranks second last out of all the states when this analysis is done. However, there are factors which cloud the waters somewhat. Queensland students are younger at the time of testing and any classroom teacher would point to the relevance of this. The initial report from Professor Masters, however, has done little to inspire practitioners with its 'significant' recommendation that:

Last year's NAPLAN assessment materials – including test booklets,

administration manual, making guides, and details of the performances of last year's cohort on each test question – be made available to all Year 3, 5 and 7 teachers at the start of the 2009 school year for use in establishing students' current levels of literacy and numeracy development and to assist in identifying individual learning needs. This practice has long happened in schools and in itself does little to advocate for the real means of addressing the differential outcomes in the provision of staffing resources and professional development. Furthermore the recommendation has a 'teach to the test' character to it and as educators we know that the narrowing of classroom learning to test instruments may improve outcomes on those test instruments but at the expense of a broad education. QIEU will continue to monitor developments in the review in the interests of quality education provision.

The price to pay for quality teachers

Queensland teachers face the long term prospect of being the second lowest paid in the country following recent wage rises in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

While Queensland teachers have in recent years been the second-highest paid in the country there is now a sizable gap between rates paid interstate and those in Queensland.

A significant wage rise is now needed to get Queensland teachers to at least level with other states and restore remuneration levels to more appropriate comparison levels.

The risks in not doing so are great.

For a decade in the 1980s, Queensland teachers were the lowest paid in the country.

The very sizable gap that existed for those years meant that the wage increases in the decade never addressed the differential. It took a change of Premier within the National Party government and a commitment from Premier Mike Ahern for the wage gap to be addressed.

Failure to win comparable rates with recent interstate wage outcomes would again institutionalise Queensland as the low wage state for another decade.

Currently graduate teachers in Queensland typically earn over \$48,000 per year in their collective agreement, while colleagues in

Western Australia recently received increases which took the graduate annual rate to \$54,000 in 2009.

Victoria and New South Wales graduate teachers will earn over \$52,000 from this year. Under agreements negotiated NSW and WA graduate teachers in 2010 will be the highest paid at over \$56,000.

Experienced teacher rates of around \$80,000 will be achieved in most states in 2010 under agreements negotiated.

In the Northern Territory graduates will receive over \$54,000 this year, increasing to \$56,743 in 2010. Top band NT teachers will this year receive \$76,351 and in 2010 \$80,480 under a restructured salary scale.

Negotiations will commence shortly for a replacement agreement in Queensland public sector schools.

The Bligh government cannot be complacent about the wage issue and must meet or better the interstate outcomes. Employees in the non-government sector will be watching these developments closely and stand ready to support our Queensland Teachers' Union colleagues in sending a strong message to the state government on wages.

In the Northern Territory the public sector outcomes have non-government school employees well placed to argue for what is now effectively national benchmark rates.

State Public Sector Wage Comparisons

NT Public Sector
Graduate teacher
In 2009 - \$54,290
In 2010 - \$56,743

Top band teacher
2009 - \$76,351
2010 - \$80,480

WA Public Sector
Graduate teacher
2009 - \$53,898
October 2010 - \$56,112

Top band teacher
2009 - \$76,944
October 2010 - \$84,863

VIC Public Sector
Graduate teacher
2009 - \$52,571
2010 - \$53,996
2011 - \$55,459

Top band teacher
2009 - \$77,546
2010 - \$79,648
2011 - \$81,806

NSW Public Sector
Graduate teacher
2009 - \$52,745
2010 - \$54,749
2011 - \$56,830

Top band teacher
2009 - \$78,667
2010 - \$81,657
2011 - \$84,760

Annual wage rates QLD Catholic sector (2008)

Graduate teacher
\$48,829

Top band teacher
\$68,839

Northern Territory News



ABOVE: Joseph Hynes of Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School and Tori Phillips of Xavier Community Education Centre have now become members of IEUA-QNT

Bargaining in Northern Territory well underway

Collective bargaining in Northern Territory schools continues apace with proposed agreements in the Lutheran sector and at Kormilda College likely to go to ballot shortly. Negotiations have formally commenced in the Catholic sector following an extensive consultation with employees on a log of claim and The Essington School will commence bargaining negotiations later in the term.

Employees have identified wage outcomes as a high priority with the public sector agreement now settled and benchmark rates established. Negotiations are also providing an opportunity to incorporate into the future agreement a more comprehensive set of workplace provisions ahead of developments with the national

modern award for non-government schools in Australia.

Local organiser Andrea MacDonald was recently joined by officers from Brisbane to conduct an initial round of school visits to encourage participation in the bargaining processes and to invite graduate teachers and those new to the Territory to participate in union activity and take out membership. Employees took the opportunity to discuss various industrial issues, current agreement provisions and the benefits of belonging to our union.

Employees welcomed the visits and with over 35 new applications for membership, the strength of the membership in the Territory continues to grow.