



QUEENSLAND
TEACHERS' UNION
OF EMPLOYEES

QTU Policy
2023 - 2025

Women education workers

Booklet

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Queensland Teachers' Union Policy

QTU policy is adopted by the Union's Biennial Conference. Amendments to Union policy may be made at the intervening meetings of State Council.

Guidelines for changes to existing policy

Motions designed to change or create policy should be sent to Council. Under Rule 7.5 (Decisions of Conference), policy adopted by Conference remains in effect unless amended by Council, where a two-thirds majority decision is necessary. Thus, a proposal to contradict the sense of, or change the wording of existing policy, needs a two-thirds majority, ie 66.6 per cent, for such a proposal to be successful. A proposal to change existing policy should:

- be presented as an amendment to existing policy, and
- state its location in the existing policy.

If no policy exists on a matter, a simple majority decision, ie >50 per cent, is needed for such a proposal to be added to policy.

Implementation of existing policy

Motions to implement existing policy are usually directed to Executive for consideration. However, where the implementation would involve a significant allocation of QTU resources (eg a major campaign), or where a branch wishes a major emphasis to be put on an aspect of policy, it would then be appropriate to direct such a motion to Council. These guidelines are designed to facilitate debate on policy issues. If branch officials require explanation of these guidelines or assistance with the formulation of policy motions, they should contact the QTU office in Brisbane.

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QTU women education workers policy

2023 – 2025

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1. Preamble

The QTU recognises that women form the vast majority of the Queensland teaching service and the majority of our union membership. Women continue to make significant contributions to the profession, the Union and the broader community. Leaders and activists that are women create opportunities and ensure accountability for the educational outcomes for girls. Women experience discrimination and inequality in the wider community, their homes and their workplaces. The QTU is committed, through its policies, practices and campaigns, to achieving equality for all women and girls.

2. Women at work

2.1 Women in leadership

The vast majority of education workers are women. Women teachers make up approximately 75 per cent of all teachers in schools. By contrast, the majority of educational leader positions continue to be held by men. Women are significantly under-represented in senior and executive roles, which is the result of direct and indirect discrimination.

The employer

There is an urgent need for the Department of Education and TAFEs to include an affirmative action program to redress the imbalance.

In particular, the employer should:

- set up training seminars for women seeking promotion, especially in the areas of application writing and interview techniques
- train its interviewers, selection panels and all those involved in the promotion system in equal opportunity practices and strategies to mitigate against the impact of unconscious bias
- ensure gender balance in selection panels and in chairs of selection panels
- redress the disadvantage caused by broken patterns of service and/or relocation due to circumstances external to employment with the Department of Education and Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- ensure diversity in leadership teams including but not limited to gender balance and First Nations people
- appoint women to acting promotional positions in a proportion that reflects the proportion of women in the workforce
- actively promote, appoint and value permanent part-time promotional positions
- monitor and make available, to the QTU and other interested parties, statistics on all promotional positions, substantive and non-substantive, by gender and by region
- build accountability into central and regional office strategic plans and performance agreements, with measurable performance indicators, for example: the gender breakdown of those applying, being short-listed for or succeeding in promotion, including acting school-based classified positions, Leading Vocational Teacher (LVT) and Education Team Leaders (ETL)
- ensure that a transparent balance between relocations and merit appointments is applied in each region across the state
- introduce long-term plans to minimise the mobility factor in promotions, by targeting, encouraging and training teachers who reside locally in rural, regional and remote centres

- encourage leaders to mentor women aspiring to leadership roles and provide opportunities for leadership and management experience in higher duties positions
- organise and resource formal work shadowing and mentoring programs.

In the QTU

The QTU recognises that it has a role to play in this process of reform, and commits itself to:

- undertaking an annual gender audit within the QTU
- monitoring the number of women appointed to various promotion positions within the Department of Education
- seeks to monitor the number of women appointed to various promotion positions within TAFE
- advocating and negotiating with the department to achieve affirmative action in this important area
- facilitating membership awareness campaigns on this issue
- providing women teachers with the chance to share information and strategies, through relevant networks and facilitating information sessions for women members
- implementing programs designed to achieve leadership representative of the education workforce.

2.2 Superannuation

Women in Australia are at a superannuation disadvantage due to factors such as broken service, pay inequity, inequity of access to promotional positions and the greater uptake of part-time work and their role as carers. Women nearing retirement are the fastest growing group experiencing poverty and homelessness. Superannuation benefits and contributions should apply equally to male and female members and should not discriminate.

The QTU believes that at least 50 per cent of the membership of superannuation boards must be women.

The QTU supports the ACTU and community campaigns to make superannuation fairer for working women and calls for national policy to address:

- superannuation on the Commonwealth paid parental leave scheme
- unfair tax concessions

The QTU supports a reduction in the wait time for employees to access income protection cover.

2.2.1 Financial education

The QTU calls on the Government and Australian Retirement Trust to provide paid leave to access free financial advice to ensure women can maximise their superannuation and retirement benefits. This should be made available at the following times:

- on entry to the workforce
- parenthood
- loss of partner
- significant life event
- transitioning to retirement
- retirement.

Financial advice on these issues should also be made available on a regular basis through a range of communication methods.

2.2.2 Recognition of previous Crown service

The QTU calls on the government to recognise that previous Crown service should be available on repayment of refunded contributions, particularly for those members who were forced to resign from the service on marriage or for child-rearing duties.

While preservation of benefits has gone towards addressing this problem in recent years, there are many women members who are still impacted financially as a result of past discrimination. Women members should be encouraged to consider the advantages of salary packaging their superannuation, to enhance their superannuation retirement benefit.

2.2.3 Addressing breaks of service

The QTU advocates for the Government to investigate options to address the impact of broken service on the compounding nature of superannuation.

2.3 Employment issues

The QTU recognises that there are high quality teachers of all genders. There should be no discriminatory recruitment practices on the basis of a perceived lack of male staff in education workplaces.

The QTU calls on the government:

- To significantly increase permanent employment for First Nations women.
- To increase the number of First Nations women leaders in schools by setting targets across all regions.

2.4 Leave entitlements

The QTU will continue to campaign and advocate for flexible work and leave options, recognising the changing nature of work in schools and caring responsibilities.

Family responsibility leave

2.4.1 Extended special leave

Extended special leave for family responsibilities should:

- be available for up to seven consecutive years at any one time
- be available equally to teachers who are primary care givers
- not prevent teachers, when returning from two years leave, from resuming work at their previous school (or, if this is impracticable, from working at an agreed school taking their subject/specialist area into consideration)
- be accessible to teachers who have caring responsibilities that includes school aged children, partners, parents, family members and members of their household.

2.4.2 Parental leave

Parental leave should:

- be available to pregnant teachers or primary carers of an infant, or a child (i.e the circumstances of adoption), with 12 months' service
- allow two years parental leave for each child

- include 20 weeks paid parental leave maternity leave on full pay (with a move to 26 weeks over time) for the primary care giver of the new born infant
- ensure that both parents can share paid parental leave
- enable access to both employer entitlement and the Commonwealth paid parental leave scheme, including superannuation
- have the timing determined by the teacher concerned and be exclusive of payment for any vacation period
- have no minimum period requirements
- be available at half-pay for double the time
- recognise foster and formalised care arrangements, including adoption, guardianship and kinship carers for children
- Commonwealth paid parental leave (CPPL) should include superannuation on top of the minimum wage rate
- be credited as service for classification increments and should attract appropriate transfer points
- be available to two primary carers upon the birth, fostering or formalised care arrangements, (including adoption, guardianship and kinship carers) of multiple children.

The department should:

- facilitate a transfer to safe duties for pregnant teachers who, under medical advice, are at risk of contracting a communicable disease (e.g. Parvo virus, Rubella, CMV, Hepatitis A) which may have a negative impact on her pregnancy
- consider a transfer to duties at a school of distance education or regional office, if professional medical advice recommends this
- grant teachers leave on full pay (for the period covered by a medical certificate) if such positions are unavailable.
- develop clear policy to determine regular systemic patterns of employment to ensure long term casual teachers maximise their access to paid parental leave
- actively promote and encourage keeping in touch days (K.I.T).

2.4.3 Special parental leave

A teacher should:

- be entitled to both employer entitlement and Commonwealth paid parental leave if their pregnancy ends due to their child being stillborn, or if their child dies after birth
- have access to special paid maternity leave during the period of paid maternity leave should the pregnancy end, not in the birth of a living child, from 12 weeks gestation.

2.4.4 Pre-natal leave

Entitlements to pre-natal leave should:

- be increased to 10 days paid leave for the teacher and two days paid pre-natal leave for the partner
- not be deducted from sick leave entitlements.

2.4.5 Pre-adoption leave

- Two weeks paid pre-adoption should be available to the primary care-giver and two days paid pre-adoption leave for the secondary care giver
- Pre-adoption leave can be accessed (with supporting documentation) in a confidential manner through either the principal or regional HR and is entered into the system as a code of Special Leave Pay for confidentiality of prospective parents.

2.4.6 Fertility program leave

Teachers and their partners should be given special consideration in relation to access to leave benefits and work arrangements. They should:

- have access to paid sick and emergent/compassionate leave
- have access to up to 10 days additional paid special leave for IVF treatment per cycle.

2.4.7 Partner leave

The QTU believes that partner leave should:

- be for a period of six weeks on full-pay or 12 weeks on half-pay
- be available to a support person helping with a sole parent birth
- have the timing determined by the teacher concerned
- be automatically approved by the employer
- be shareable between both parents
- have the ability to extend their leave should there be birth or formalised care arrangement complications.

2.4.8 Returning to work

The QTU believes that returning to work should be available to:

- members who have an ongoing post-partum medical condition, who should be provided with flexibility and support
- parents and carers through access to flexible work options
- allow parents and carers to return to the same school.

The department should promote and provide KIT (keeping in touch) days to all parents and carers on parental leave.

2.4.9 Sick leave

The QTU believes that the two-week waiting period for accessing incapacity benefit leave should be waived in these circumstances, to enable women, where necessary, to access two or three days at a time and then return to work.

The QTU believes that paid sick leave should:

- be available to teachers who are on unpaid parental leave
- be given where paid sick leave is exhausted, so that the teacher can apply for incapacity benefits from Australian Retirement Trust for pregnancy-related/formalised care arrangements (i.e guardianship, kinship, adoption and surrogacy) illnesses
- be paid to women who need to access additional sick leave entitlements to undergo specialist medical treatment, sufferers of dysmenorrhoea, endometriosis and those experiencing the adverse effects of menopause, and peri-menopausal women.

Australian Retirement Trust income protection should extend to carer's leave.

Single parents should be able to access additional sick leave.

2.4.10 Sick leave credit for meritorious service

Sick leave credit for meritorious service should:

- be based on a total of 26 years of service, without any reference to breaks in service of more than 12 months
- be aggregated for those women who were forced to resign and who did not receive any cash equivalent
- not require teachers to "apply", the leave balance should be credited when the anniversary is reached.

An individual should be informed when they become eligible for meritorious sick leave.

2.4.11 Sick leave for family purposes

An increase of ten days per year sick leave entitlements should occur once an employee is identified as primary carer for another person.

Compassionate use of sick leave should:

- be granted to allow access to **all** of an employee's accrued sick leave in the case of illness of family and household members.

2.4.12 Depletion of sick leave

When a teacher has depleted their sick leave due to care responsibilities and is subsequently diagnosed with a significant long term health issue, the QTU believes the department should have the capacity to provide additional sick leave.

In exceptional circumstances the department should provide the opportunity for employees to transfer sick leave between departmental employees.

2.4.13 Pre-natal leave

Entitlements to pre-natal leave should:

- be increased to 10 days paid leave for the teacher and two days paid pre-natal leave for the secondary caregiver
- not be deducted from sick leave entitlements.

2.4.14 Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave recognises that many women shoulder the major responsibility for looking after dependants, aged relatives and sick friends. All teachers should have access to:

- 10 days paid emergent leave per teacher per annum, and the leave should be cumulative (in addition to normal sick leave entitlement).

2.4.15 Special leave for other exceptional circumstances

Teachers should have access to paid leave for varied circumstances, including but not limited to:

- matters arising from family or domestic violence
- undergoing intensive medical treatment
- dealing with a terminal illness of a close family member or friend (recognising kinship for First Nations peoples)

- mourning the death of a close family member or friend
- home and property disruption from natural disaster
- being impacted by crime.

Other leave need not be exhausted prior to accessing this leave.

2.5 Domestic Family Violence Leave

The QTU supports the use of specific leave to address domestic family violence. DFV currently allows for principals to approve 10 days of leave however in order to access additional leave this needs to be approved by the Chief Executive, this process does not recognise the time sensitivity of these requests. The QTU calls on the Department to expedite this process by allowing for approvals to occur at a Regional HR level.

2.6 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment refers to behaviour that is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which erodes individual rights, debilitates morale and interferes with the work effectiveness and learning ability of its victims.

Sexual harassment is defined as any conduct, verbal, physical psychological, implied, online or via intimidation, of a sexual nature which is:

- unsolicited or unwelcome
- implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment
- implicitly or explicitly a term or condition for decisions which would affect promotion, course completion, salary, or any job condition
- creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment for one or more employees
- results in people being defined in terms of their sex/sexuality and their contribution and worth being denigrated or ignored.

In educational institutions, sexual harassment can occur between student/student, student/staff, staff/student, staff/staff, staff/parent and within the wider school community.

The QTU calls on the department to introduce reporting tools that allow the employer and union/s to monitor the levels of reported sexual harassment within the department. Student behaviour should be able to be recorded separate to "harassment" as gendered violence and sexual harassment in OneSchool reporting systems.

Sexual harassment is an industrial issue in that it inhibits a member's right to a safe work environment. It is the responsibility of the employer to provide a safe work environment.

The QTU calls on the Department to provide clear policy and processes to educate, inform and protect employees who have experienced sexual harassment in the course of their employment. Clear and unthreatening processes for advice and reporting should be included in induction materials.

The QTU condemns the department and TAFE for the lack of continued training for and provision of, sexual harassment referral officers.

2.6.1 Equity contact officers

The QTU condemns the Department of Education for abolishing the roles of equity contact officer (ECO) and sexual harassment referral officer and calls on the department to reinstate these positions. The ECO in schools should be fully trained and supported by a network of regional ECOs.

These contact officers would act as a confidential information contact for employees who experience sexual or workplace harassment, violence, discrimination or equity issues in the workplace.

All employees should receive training to build awareness of sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

2.6.2 Gender based violence

The QTU will not stand for gendered violence and sexual harassment in the workplace and takes the following positions. The QTU:

- insists that gendered violence and sex-based harassment must be eliminated from all educational settings by teaching about the construction of gender, effective communication and relationship skills, conflict management, and resolution skills with staff and students in public education settings
- rejects victim blaming and excuses for violence on the basis of perceived differences between people and genders
- supports whole school approaches to identifying and eliminating gendered violence and disruptive behaviours, which should never become simply the responsibility of individuals in educational settings
- recognises that the nature of gender based violence has changed through the emergence of new technologies impacting on the safety of staff and students, and believes that appropriate policies, strategies and professional development should be in place to allow staff in education workplaces to respond effectively to new challenges as they emerge.

2.7 Part-time work – job sharing and flexible work arrangements

The QTU recognises the necessity for many members, particularly women, to work part-time and/or flexibly at any stage in their career. The QTU rejects the ongoing and engrained systemic barriers to accessing part-time and/or flexible working arrangements and calls on the employer to engage in training and education for HR, managers and school leaders in their obligations and inherent responsibility to support this type of work.

All Part-time positions should:

- be encouraged as a viable employment option by departmental officers and administrators
- be truly accessible to all members, including those in classified positions.

All departmental, TAFE and Union positions, both substantive and acting, must be advertised and promoted with the capacity to be undertaken in a full-time and/or part-time capacity, and with flexible work options. The QTU calls on the department to:

- ensure the guaranteed right of return to full-time work for permanent part-time employees who moved from full-time employment to permanent part-time employment
- in-service principals on the equal employment opportunities policy during induction, **particularly on the accessibility of permanent part-time work and other flexible work options**
- recognise clause 8.2.1(f) in the Teaching in State Education Award – State 2016, which requires that an involuntary return to full-time work be negotiated with the member, who must agree to this return
- ensure all regional directors, assistant regional directors and HR staff, and school leaders are aware of their legal and industrial obligations to support part-time work

- where a part-time fraction is required because of primary care arrangements that the FTE be provided as full days only (unless half days are sought by the employee)
- part-time for primary care be supported by the employer until such time that the employee's youngest child has completed their primary schooling
- when a part-time fraction is requested, because of primary care arrangements, that the fraction provided must be the one requested by the employee unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated by the employer.

A part-time teacher should not be expected or required to replace their absent teaching partner on their non-rostered working days. Such decisions should be voluntary.

A part-time teacher should not be required to work or participate in work-related activities on days or times other than their regular rostered duty time.

A part-time teacher should not be required to work half-days unless it is teacher initiated.

The QTU recognises the systemic disadvantage part-time workers experience in regards to their rate of accrual of entitlements, pay progression and accumulation of superannuation.

2.8 Childcare and travelling costs

In exceptional circumstances, where a teacher elects to work at times other than on their regular rostered days (e.g. a part-time teacher working a student free day which is not their normal rostered day), the department should refund the cost of the additional childcare and travelling expenses incurred.

3. Women in the Union

3.1 Introduction

The QTU acknowledges its responsibility to ensure equality and industrial rights for all its women members. It will continue its affirmative action programs to achieve this objective.

3.1.1 Employment of Women's Officer

The QTU Women's Officer position is a permanent position.

The officer's duties will encompass the responsibility:

- to promote and provide opportunity for the active involvement of women in the Union
- to assist other Officers in providing advice on issues particularly affecting women
- to support the Women Teachers and Girls Education Committee
- to perform such other duties as the General Secretary may require
- to advocate for and ensure the industrial and professional rights of women members
- to support QTU Women's Contacts

3.1.2 Training and organisation

The QTU will continue to provide:

- seminars on issues of particular relevance to women members
- sessions on specific women's issues embedded into courses and seminars run by QTEC
- annual participation in the QCU's Anna Stewart Memorial Project, Emma Miller Award presentation and International Women's Day

- maintenance and expansion of the equal opportunity resources collection in the QTU library
- the use of e-newsletters to provide specific information for Branch and Area Council Women's Contacts
- workshops and QTU information in regional settings
- the insertion of relevant material of importance to women in Organiser newsletters and QTU Journal
- the strategy of focusing on the education of girls as an issue of particular concern
- the use of the women's pages on the QTU website as a means of communicating information of importance to women
- a Biennial Women's Conference in a non-conference year
- a women's event as part of Conference.

3.1.3 Campaigns and issues

The QTU will continue to:

- campaign around issues of particular concern to women
- seek to involve women members actively, and thus have an affirmative action objective, as well as seeking to achieve particular policy goals
- monitor any changes to working conditions which may impact on the lives of teachers with family responsibilities and insist that these changes should be the subject of a workload impact statement.

The QTU Women's Officer should be involved in any negotiations which may impact on teachers with family responsibilities.

3.1.4 Non-sexist language and meeting practices

All Union publications will use non-sexist language and graphics.

Where appropriate, the Union will use non-gender specific pronouns (eg they instead of he/she) and will encourage pronoun acknowledgement in meetings and communications.

Meeting procedures, the use of standing orders and participants' behaviour should be sensitive to the need for equal participation by women.

Strategies for the greater inclusion of women in meetings and debates will be included in relevant Union documents.

All meetings must begin with the Statement of Respect after the acknowledgement of country.

3.1.5 Decision-making structures

The proportion of women in various decision-making positions should continue to be monitored and reported to Council.

Except for the Women's Committee, where the *raison d'être* for such structures/delegations is gender-based, the QTU will have at least 50 per cent women with every effort being made for these delegations to reflect the membership composition:

- AEU Conference delegation
- QTU Executive members
- QTU standing committees

- Deputy General Secretary
- appointed Union Officers
- acting Union Officers.

Ideally, the gender make-up of the structures and delegations will be representational of the membership.

Where the quota of 50 per cent of women is not met, those positions are re-advertised and remain vacant until a woman applies for this position.

3.1.6 Affirmative action

The QTU is:

- committed to anti-discrimination, which does not mean or imply opposition to affirmative action
- supportive of affirmative action programs which seek to remove discriminatory practices and promote the participation of all members in democratic decision-making processes
- supportive of affirmative action as a means of systematically dismantling barriers which have directly or indirectly discriminated against women's involvement and participation in unions.

3.1.7 Allies on the journey towards gender equity

The WTGEC encourages and supports those allies on the journey to equality, and aims to educate and facilitate others in becoming allies.

4. Naming conventions

The QTU recognises the importance of visibility and inclusion when it comes to providing permanent structures and institutions titles and names.

The QTU calls on the Department and TAFE to ensure diversity and inclusivity when selecting titles and names in education settings including, but not limited to:

- schools,
- buildings,
- sporting houses and teams,
- statues,
- sporting ovals
- awards.

5. Women teachers as citizens

5.1 Issues affecting women teachers

The QTU recognises that its members' working and non-working lives interact, and that the Union has a role to play in publicly lobbying and campaigning on issues affecting the lives of women teachers, particularly where these issues affect their capacity to participate equally in the workforce. Such issues include the following.

5.1.1 Women's log of claims

The QTU commits to the inclusion of a women's log of claims as part of its EB priorities, thus recognising the distinct needs of women as workers who make up the majority of their membership.

5.1.2 Anti-discrimination legislation

The QTU:

- supports the principle of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act, which allows workers to seek redress for discriminatory actions taken against them
- recognises that the department is bound to eliminate all forms of discrimination by developing and implementing strategies and policies in line with the Anti-Discrimination Act
- believes that all DoE and TAFE staff must be provided with Anti-Discrimination training
- will continue to keep its members informed of any changes to anti-discrimination legislation that may impact on their working conditions.

5.1.3 Sex and sexuality education

The QTU recognises that all women and girls have the right to access formal sex and sexuality education programs delivered at school. These programs enable women to make informed decisions about their bodies, fertility, relationships, interactions and choices. This enables women and girls to better recognise and gain control over safe and unsafe practices. Where teachers are involved in the delivery of these programs, they must be provided with specialised training.

5.1.4 Fertility control – planned parenthood

The QTU recognises the right of every person to control their own body, including their fertility. This right includes access to adequate health and counselling services, and the removal of all restrictions to safe abortion.

5.1.5 Breastfeeding in the workplace

The QTU commends the Public Service Commission policy on breastfeeding in Queensland. The policy recommends minimum standards for facilities provided for employees to breastfeed/express milk, as well as guidelines to assist the employer and employee to negotiate paid lactation breaks, through the working day.

The QTU supports the introduction of up to one hour per day of paid lactation breaks for members in schools. These should be separate from lunch breaks and should not be taken from non-contact time or preparation and correction time.

The QTU calls on the government to provide funding to support the replacement and backfilling of the paid lactation breaks to regions and schools. Additionally, training should be provided to employees and leaders to ensure an awareness of this entitlement.

5.1.6 Parent's room

A parent's room should be established in all new workplaces and, where feasible, in existing workplaces. This room can be used by staff and parents who need to breastfeed and/or express milk or toilet/change children. Privacy should be ensured when using the room, which should contain the following:

- nappy-change station
- bins
- a sink with both hot and cold water
- paper towels
- two comfortable, firm and supportive chairs and footrests
- a pillow

- immediate access to a refrigerator
- lockable storage facilities
- a microwave/other suitable heating appliance
- quiet calming music
- an available power source
- a small, low table.

5.1.7 Community childcare

The QTU supports the provision of readily available, community-controlled childcare facilities, so that teachers who are parents may have better opportunities to re-enter or remain in the teaching profession.

All students should be educated in the understanding that childcare is the responsibility of all members of the community.

All parents should have the right to high-quality, free, government-funded, community-run childcare.

The right to childcare is an industrial and educational issue which should be actively pursued by unions in order to ensure:

- equality of opportunity in the workplace for men and women
- equality of opportunity in education
- a stimulating and caring environment for the children of members.

Schools and colleges can provide an excellent base for government-funded community-run childcare centres. Such centres can cater for the needs of:

- children of students – long-day care
- children of teachers – especially during pupil free days and staff meetings
- the school community – before and after school care and vacation care for school-aged children.

The trade union movement should campaign for services for members which:

- are low cost to parents, with fees being tax deductible
- are of high quality, catering for the emotional, physical, social and diverse learning needs of children
- include parents in their management structures
- support wage justice, acceptable conditions and adequate training for employees
- open at hours suited to the needs of families, particularly working parents
- offer an enriching, non-sexist environment, sensitive to cultural diversity.

Where members are forced to access childcare through private providers, a quality program should deliver services equal to those outlined above.

In addition, private childcare should:

- be available at reasonable cost
- be delivered by appropriately qualified early childhood professionals.

Both community and private childcare providers should offer flexible arrangements that meet the needs of part-time and casual teachers. Considerations should also be made for gazetted school holidays.

5.1.8 Violence against women

The QTU recognises that all women and girls are vulnerable to violence, especially sexual and family and domestic violence, and that fear of violence restricts their activities, life choices and self-esteem.

All staff should have access to paid special leave for matters arising from or as a result of family, sexual and domestic violence. It is the responsibility of the employer to adhere to good workplace practices in this area. These may include time off to:

- seek safe housing
- attend medical and counselling appointments
- attend court hearings
- access legal advice
- organise alternative childcare or education arrangements
- rebuild support networks with children, family and others.

The period of paid leave accessible should be as needed and the approval process should be simple, easily accessed and approved expeditiously.

The QTU will participate in relevant government and community programs which seek to eliminate violence against women and girls.

The QTU will support members gaining access to, and will provide, information about domestic and family violence (DFV) leave and the DFV departmental policy.

5.1.9 Not Now, Not Ever report

The QTU recognises the significance of the Not Now, Not Ever report and the prompt and universal response of the Queensland Government in supporting its recommendations. Specifically, the recommendations that impact on working women and the school curriculum and environment.

5.1.10 Respectful Relationships Education Program

The QTU calls upon the government to mandate the incorporation of age-appropriate lessons in existing school pastoral care programs, in addition to a school-wide program, with the specific aim of preventing all forms of gendered violence, including domestic violence.

The QTU calls upon the Department of Education to continue to provide ongoing funding to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with these materials and participate in quality professional development to support the implementation of this curriculum in all schools.

6. Human rights for women and girls

The QTU acknowledges that women and girls around the world are more likely to suffer from breaches of basic human rights. The QTU will continue to work with the AEU and EI to seek to redress this situation for our sisters around the globe. The QTU recognises the role of the Queensland Human Rights Commission and the introduction of the Queensland Human Rights Act (2019).

Executive, on the advice of the Women Teachers and Girls Education Committee or an Officer, shall have the overall responsibility for determining, from time to time, the details of the Union's position on matters relating to this policy and its content.

The QTU supports the UNESCO rights of the child and the varied factors that limit the access to free quality education globally.

The QTU condemns the act of female genital mutilation (FGM), and practices such as forced marriage, child brides and restricting access to school for girls and menstruating women.

The QTU condemns the detention of refugees in Australia and off-shore detention centres and the shameful assaults on women and girls in these environments, which continue despite the repeated reporting of these assaults to the federal government.

6.1 *Girls uniform*

The QTU supports the departmental policy that ensures all state schools must provide uniform options that include specific shorts and pants options for female students.

All students should be provided with a choice of uniform options that provide freedom of movement and participation in all activities and reflect their identities.

6.2 *Period Poverty*

The QTU recognises the dire impact that period poverty has on access to education across Queensland. The QTU calls on the state government to introduce free sanitary products to all students in state schools and TAFE campuses, removing the need to apply for grants or being reliant on further funding to continue programs already in place. The state should provide these essential items for all students who require them and the burden of requests should not be placed on those in need.

The QTU urges the department to hasten the roll-out of the Share the Dignity roll-out to all schools.

GLOSSARY

Women: Definition – for purpose of this policy, Women refers to all people who identify as women.