

**Form 73A – Notice of WHS dispute***Work Health and Safety Act 2011, s 102B***Information**

- Use this form to notify of a WHS dispute.
- Once filed, this notice must be **immediately** served on all other parties to the dispute.
- **This Notice will be published on the QIRC website pursuant to s 102B(3) of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.**
- If a relevant union for a worker affected by the WHS matter not already named as a party wish to participate in the resolution of the dispute, they may notify the Industrial Registrar in writing.
- Please read this form carefully and complete all relevant sections.
- Documents which are longer than 30 pages in length must be provided to the Industrial Registry in hard copy before it will be accepted for filing.
- For further information on please refer to the website www.qirc.qld.gov.au or contact the Industrial Registry on 1300 592 987 or via email at qirc.registry@qirc.qld.gov.au.

Notification

Notice is hereby given of a dispute in accordance with s 102B of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Has a *Form 74 – Application for WHS review* been filed in relation to the matter/s in dispute? ☒ No ☐ Yes [Matter No. WHS/____/____]

Notifier**Queensland Teachers' Union****AND****Respondent****State of Queensland (Department of Education)**

If there are more parties to the WHS dispute, please complete a **Form 1 – Parties List** and file it together with this form.

1. Particulars of the party notifying of the dispute

Name:	Queensland Teachers' Union of Employees		
Postal/Service address:	21 Graham Street		
	Suburb/Town	Milton	Postcode 4064
Phone number:	07 3512 900	Mobile number:	
Email address:	qtu@qtu.asn.au		
Name of contact person:	Kate Kermode & Chris Smith		
Direct phone number:	07 3512 900	Mobile number:	0400 684 697 / 0400 500 393
Direct email address:	kkermode@qtu.asn.au / csmith1@qtu.asn.au		

2. Particulars of the other party to the dispute

Name:	State of Queensland (Department of Education)		
Postal/Service address:	PO Box 15033		
	Suburb/Town	City East QLD	Postcode 4002
Phone number:	13 74 68	Mobile number:	
Email address:	correspondence@qed.qld.gov.au		
Name of contact person:	Stacie Hansel		
Direct phone number:	07 3513 5803	Mobile number:	0420 947 212
Direct email address:	Stacie.hansel@qed.qld.gov.au		

3. Workplace where dispute exists

Department of Education Queensland Special Schools

4. WHS matter subject of the dispute

This dispute (as defined in s 102A of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*) is in relation to:

[Please pick one or more of the options below]

<input type="checkbox"/>	A work group determination matter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A work group variation matter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to information by a health and safety representative under s 70(1)(c) of the Act.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The giving of a notice or information to a health and safety representative under s 70(1)(cb) or (cc) of the Act.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A request by a health and safety representative for a person assisting the representative to have access to the workplace under s 70(1)(g) of the Act.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A matter mentioned in s 72(2)(aa), (a) or (b), or s 72(4)(a), (b) or (c) of the Act relating to training for a health and safety representative.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A health and safety committee matter.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A matter about work health and safety that is an issue to which Part 5, Division 5 (Issue Resolution) of the Act applies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	An issue about cessation of work under Part 5, Division 6 (Right to cease or direct cessation of unsafe work) of the Act.

Does this dispute relate to any of the following decisions made by an Inspector?

<input type="checkbox"/>	s 54(5) – Negotiations regarding an agreement
<input type="checkbox"/>	s 76(6B) – Regarding a health and safety committee

5. Compliance powers

Has an inspector been appointed to assist the parties reach an agreement or resolve the dispute?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, was a decision made by an inspector to exercise, or not to exercise, compliance powers under Part 10 of the Act subject to review under Part 12 of the Act?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

6. Issues in dispute

Please outline the issues in dispute between the parties:

[Please note that any details you provide will be published as part of this Notice]

Please attach a schedule if more room required

See Schedule A.

7. Briefly state the relevant industrial instrument/s affected (e.g. award, agreement, determination) OR the industry in which the dispute arose and/or type of work being undertaken by those in dispute

Teaching in State Education Award - 2016
Department of Education State School Teachers' Certified Agreement 2022

8. Signature of the party notifying of the WHS dispute

Signature:



Name:

Kate Kermode

Position/Capacity:

Industrial Officer

Date:

05/12/2025

SCHEDULE A

ISSUES IN DISPUTE

Preliminary Matters

1. This dispute exists in all State Special Schools (**special schools**)

a) Red Hill Special School	q) Mackenzie State Special School	gg) Nursery Road State Special School
b) Mount Isa Special School	r) Ipswich West Special School	hh) Western Suburbs State Special School
c) Maryborough Special School	s) Cairns State Special School	ii) Caboolture Special School
d) Rockhampton North Special School	t) Ipswich Special School	jj) Currimundi Special School
e) Mackay District Special School	u) Aspley Special School	kk) Southport Special School
f) Gympie Special School	v) Lee Street State Special School	ll) Redland District Special School
g) Narbethong State Special School	w) Toowoomba West Special School	mm) Townsville Community Learning Centre - A State Special School
h) Kuraby Special School	x) Darling Point Special School	nn) Coomera State Special School
i) Hervey Bay Special School	y) Geelong Special School	oo) Rosella Park School
j) Mitchelton Special School	z) Nambour Special School	pp) Burdekin School
k) Rockhampton Special School	aa) Woody Point Special School	qq) Logan City Special School
l) Sunnybank Special School	bb) Clifford Park Special School	rr) Beenleigh Special School
m) Palmview State Special School	cc) Mount Ommaney Special School	ss) Goodna Special School
n) Redcliffe Special School	dd) Mudgeeraba Special School	tt) Pine Rivers Special School
o) Bundaberg Special School	ee) Claremont Special School	
p) Currumbin Community Special School	ff) Calamvale Special School	

Background

2. Since late 2024, Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) members (**members**) including principals of **special schools** have contacted our union regarding the adverse impact of the 2025 Reasonable Adjustment Resourcing (RAR) allocations on the ability of schools to maintain safe systems of work.
3. The indicative allocations released in November 2024 showed significant reductions in teacher, teacher aide, and leadership allocations across many **special schools**. The reductions were raised immediately by the QTU (**Appellant**) with the Department of Education (**Respondent**) as posing a foreseeable risk to:

- a. the health and safety of staff (including school leaders), through increased workload, exposure to occupational violence and aggression, and psychosocial harm arising from unsafe staffing levels; and
 - b. the health and safety of students, particularly those requiring medical support or complex care, due to reduced staff-to-student ratios and diminished supervision capacity.
4. These risks were formally communicated to the **Respondent** in correspondence dated 6 December 2024 and again on 23 April 2025 to the Minister for Education and the Arts, the Hon Paul Langbroek MP. The **Appellant** further raised the issue at a meeting with al officers on 22 October 2025.
5. While the 's subsequent announcement on 3 November 2025 (**Attachment 1 – Special School Factsheet**) included minor increases to allocations for certain sites, these changes were inadequate to mitigate the identified risks, and **members** continue to report unsafe staffing levels and increasing incidents of occupational violence and psychological injury.
6. After the announcement on 3 November 2025, the **Appellant** had multiple concerns raised from **special school** principals noting that the minor increases would not lead to enhancements to core safe systems of work and in fact these changes still leave **special school** inadequately staffed.
7. The **Appellant** can confirm that the proposed increases do not change the broader concerns raised.
8. The **Appellant** highlighted the 3 November 2025 changes to RAR was inadequate to allow safe systems of work in a meeting with al officers on 4 November 2025.
9. The **Appellant** has raised significant concerns from **members** about the inadequate consultation regarding the changes to work practices and the identification of hazards and risks associated with the reduction in staffing levels as required under section 47 – 49 of the WHS Act QLD 2011.
10. The **Appellant** has continued to provide opportunities to address these matters with the **Respondent** highlighting their primary duty of care as per section 19 of the WHS Act.

Principle Issues

11. The principle issues related to this dispute continue to be that the changes to staffing allocation to **special schools**, effective from January 2025, has resulted in significant risks to worker health and safety, notably:
 - a. the health and safety of **members**, through increased workload, increased exposure to occupational violence and aggression, and increased psychosocial harm arising from unsafe staffing levels and safe systems of work; and
 - b. the health and safety of students, particularly those requiring medical support or complex care, due to reduced staff-to-student ratios and diminished supervision capacity.

Issue-Resolution Procedure Engagement

12. On 10 November 2025, the **Appellant** formally notified the **Respondent** under s 80(1)(e) of the WHS Act that the **Appellant** seeks to be a party to the issue and progress the matter through the statutory issue-resolution procedure. (**Attachment 2**)
13. The **Appellant** and the **Respondent** have been engaged in extensive discussions concerning these risks throughout 2024 and 2025, including meetings on 3 December 2024 and 22 October 2025, which the **Appellant** regards as discussions within the meaning of the issue-resolution procedure.
14. In the 22 October 2025 meeting, the **Appellant** outlined a set of necessary measures to eliminate or minimise the risks to health and safety (see paragraph 15). These were reiterated in the 10 November 2025 notification letter (**Attachment 2**).
15. The proposed measures are:
 - a. Sufficient staffing to enable safe systems of work in all **special schools** from the staffing census date (day 8) which is at the commencement of the 2026 school year.
 - b. Urgent review of RAR and related grants, with **Appellant** participation, to determine adequate staffing levels in **special schools**.
 - c. Systematic workplace risk assessments for hazards in **special schools** to establish and monitor safe systems of work.
 - d. Establish a Special School Sector Health and Safety Committee in accordance with ss 75–79 of the WHS Act.

- e. Appointment of Work Health and Safety Officers and adequate resourcing for Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) to perform their functions.
 - f. Confirmation that all students enrolled in **special schools** automatically meet the 'Extensive Plus' criteria, ensuring placement and support arrangements align with safe service delivery.
16. The **Respondent** provided a response to the **Appellants** 10 November 2025 letter (**Attachment 2 and 3**). The **Respondents** response did not adequately address the concerns raised or proactively commit to engage in further issues resolution process.
17. The response provided on the 19 November 2025 (**Attachment 3**), identified increases to the core allocation announced on 3 November 2025. As previously stated in paragraphs 6 and 7 of this schedule, this does not address nor change the principle issues noted which relate to the adequate staffing for **special schools** to operate safely.
18. Despite these discussions, no agreement has been reached, and the issue remains unresolved.

Resolution Sought

19. The **Appellant** seeks that the **Respondent** resolve the matter by:
- a. committing to implement the six measures outlined above in paragraph 15;
 - b. undertaking urgent consultation with the **Appellant** to review and revise RAR allocations and commit to providing the additional staffing needed to safely operate **special schools**;
 - c. provide a written commitment that no further reduction in **special schools** staffing allocations will occur without authentic consultation with the **Appellant**, the affected workers and their health and safety representatives; and
 - d. agreeing to quarterly review of risk controls for identified hazards and foreseeable risks and these reviews to be reported to the proposed Special School Sector Health and Safety Committee to action.
20. Given the ongoing and foreseeable risk of physical and psychological harm, the **Appellant** requests that the matter be listed for conciliation at the earliest opportunity, noting the **Appellant** (QTU) Officers are available up until and including 12 December 2025.

IN RESPONSE PLEASE QUOTE: krj:cds:pb:kk:kos RAR Issue Resolution Special Schools

10 November 2025

Sharon Schimming
Director-General
Department of Education
PO Box 15033
CITY EAST QLD 4002

e: sharon.schimming@qed.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Schimming

We write to you regarding a work health and safety issue affecting Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) members in Special Schools across Queensland, and we provide notification pursuant to s 80(1)(e) of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) that we seek to be a party to the issue.

Since the end of 2024 the QTU has been inundated with concerns from members about the impact of the 2025 Reasonable Adjustment Resourcing (RAR) Allocation and Indicative Staffing Planner. Special School Principals reported significant reductions in teaching staff, teacher aides and, in some cases, even leadership positions under the indicative allocations. At the time the QTU raised concerns regarding the reduction of teacher and teacher aide positions in the 47 Special Schools across Queensland regarding foreseeable risks to:

- The health and safety of staff (including school leaders) in terms of the potential risk to both physical and psychological harm due to fewer resources and
- the health and safety of students, particularly those requiring medical support.

After further consultation with QTU members across all Special Schools in 2025 our concerns have been realised. Members have indicated:

- resourcing no longer meets baseline safety thresholds
- safe systems of work are increasingly impossible to put in place for workers and others due to shortage of staff and loss of leadership team members and
- a foreseeable risk that occupational violence and aggression will continue to increase due to the reduction in resourcing.

The QTU raised these matters with Ms Stacie Hansel, Deputy Director-General (Schools and Student), in a videoconference on Tuesday, 3 December 2024, and in correspondence to you as Acting Director-General on Friday, 6 December 2024. We continued to raise these concerns throughout 2025, including correspondence to the Minister for Education and the Arts, the Hon Paul Langbroek MP, on 23 April 2025 (response received 29 May 2025).

In the meeting held with departmental officers on Wednesday, 22 October 2025, the QTU outlined a series of proposals intended to address the escalating health and safety risks in Special Schools. While the department's announcement on Monday, 3 November 2025 provided some limited increases to staffing levels, significant Workplace Health and Safety(WHS) risks remain unresolved.

To ensure that the risks to the health and safety of our members, as well as others (including students), are appropriately mitigated while the parties engage in the issue-resolution procedure under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*, the QTU seeks confirmation from the Department of Education that the following measures - first raised in the 22 October meeting - will be implemented:

1. Sufficient staff resourcing is provided to enable safe systems of work from the commencement of the 2026 school year.
2. An urgent review - of which the QTU is a party - of RAR and related resourcing grants (e.g. medication support allocations) to inform and deliver sufficient staffing so that safe systems of work are provided as soon as possible.
3. Systematic workplace risk assessments are undertaken in Special Schools to establish, document and monitor safe systems of work.
4. Establish a Special School Sector Health and Safety Committee compliant with ss 75–79 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld).
5. Ensure WHS officers are appointed in schools and that Health and Safety Representatives (HSR/s) are resourced and supported to perform their functions.
6. Confirm that all students enrolled in Special Schools meet the applicable "Extensive Plus" criteria, with placement and support aligned to safe service delivery.

Our members are currently experiencing both physical and psychological injuries at work. The QTU therefore seeks to continue discussions with the department under the issue-resolution framework to reach agreement on practicable measures that will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of our members and others.

For clarity, the QTU regards the meetings held with the department to date as discussions within the issue-resolution process under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*, and genuine attempts to progress a timely, final and effective resolution of the matter.

Please provide a written response to the proposed measures above (and as detailed in our meeting on 22 October 2025) by close of business **Friday, 14 November 2025**.

We therefore request that contact is made with Paige Bousen and Kate Kermode at qtu@qtu.asn.au or on 3512 9000 as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely



General Secretary

Factsheet: Supporting Special Schools – More for the Core

Early Years Equity:

Classroom teaching ratios for early years students will be the same, whether they attend mainstream primary or special schools.

Enrolment Threshold	Year Level	Student Teacher Ratio (STR)
Primary less than 176	Prep to Year 6	1:25
Primary 176 or greater	Prep to Year 3	1:23.475
	Years 4 to 6	1:26.6
Secondary	Years 7 to 10	1:25
	Years 11 to 12	1:20

Increased Teacher Aide Support:

Small special schools (under 100 enrolments) will receive an additional allocation of up to 50 hours per week, decreasing as enrolments increase.

Enhanced Leadership Roles:

Deputy Principal thresholds extended to accommodate growth while Business Manager thresholds will be adjusted to a maximum classification of AO8 consistent with other schools. Special school Deputy Principals will also be granted a two year on-notice period.

Deputy Principals

Enrolment Threshold	Allocation (FTE)	Teaching Load (FTE)
From 0 to less than 40	0.0	0.0
From 40 to less than 75	0.5	0.0
From 75 to less than 110	1.0	0.0
From 110 to less than 145	1.5	0.0
From 145 to less than 180	2.0	0.0
From 180 to less than 215	2.5	0.0
From 215 to less than 250	3.0	0.0
From 250 to less than 300	3.5	0.0
From 300 to less than 350	4.0	0.0
From 350 to less than 400	4.5	0.0
From 400 to less than 450	5.0	0.0
<i>Allocation continues 0.5 FTE per full cohort of 50 student enrolments with no upper limit</i>		

Business Managers

Enrolment Threshold	Allocation (FTE)
Less than 30	Entitled to use AAEP entitlement as AO3 AAEP up to a max. of 1.0 FTE
From 30 to less than 130	1.0 x AO4
From 130 to less than 210	1.0 x AO5
From 210 to less than 290	1.0 x AO6
From 290 to less than 370	1.0 x AO7
370 or greater	1.0 x AO8

Improved Curriculum Coordination:

CCT allocations will shift to an enrolment-based ratio, consistent with other schools.

Enrolment Threshold	CCT Allocation
0 to 75	0.2 FTE plus 0.016 FTE per enrolment
76 or greater	1.05 FTE plus 0.0046 FTE per enrolment

Reduced Principal Teaching Loads:

Principals of small special schools (fewer than five teachers) will no longer have teaching responsibilities.

Permanent WSS-SLR Top-Up:

Continued annual support for behaviour, guidance, literacy, and numeracy.

19 NOV 2025

Ms Kate Ruttiman
General Secretary
Queensland Teachers' Union
Email: gtu@qtu.asn.au

Dear Ms Ruttiman

Thank you for your letter dated 10 November 2025 regarding resourcing for special schools and the health and safety of staff and students.

To assist all schools to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability, the Department of Education's *Students with Disability – Reasonable Adjustments Resourcing* model provides additional teachers and teacher aides to schools above core allocations.

Schools can also access a wide range of regional and statewide specialist support staff, including advisory visiting teachers (vision, physical, hearing), state school registered nurses, principal advisors for autism and inclusion and therapists. These specialist staff assist school teams to build their knowledge about the barriers students are experiencing and plan for reasonable adjustments to support engagement.

In 2025, over 12,073 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers, teacher aides and specialist staff such as therapists, advisory visiting teachers and regional support staff were allocated directly to state schools, regional offices or through statewide services to support over 106,000 students with disability. This includes 730 teacher and teacher aide FTE provided to state schools in 2025 through the department's Extensive Plus resourcing.

For 2026, all special schools will benefit from the recently announced enhancements to core allocations, including:

- improved student teacher ratio for early years students;
- increased curriculum coordination time;
- updated thresholds for Deputy Principal and Business Manager allocations; and
- teacher aide supplement for small special schools.

Further, the Whole School Support – Student Learning Resource (WSS-SLR) top-up, which was introduced in 2025 will continue, providing ongoing support for behaviour, guidance, literacy and numeracy. Reviews of Extensive Plus resourcing continue to remain on hold, reducing red tape for teachers and school leaders.

The department is committed to conducting risk assessments as needed in special schools to establish, document and monitor safe systems of work. These assessments form a critical part of our risk management framework. By identifying and addressing potential hazards, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment tailored to the unique needs of special schools.

In addition, the department has established Health, Safety, and Wellbeing (HSW) committees that are fully compliant with sections 75 to 79 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. These committees operate at local (school-based), regional and executive levels, ensuring a comprehensive and collaborative approach to health and safety management. Importantly, the executive committee includes representation from a special school principal, ensuring that the specific needs and challenges of special schools are appropriately addressed.

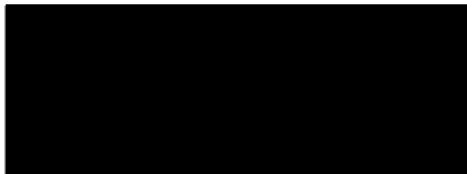
To further strengthen work health and safety (WHS) practices, the department currently has Health and Safety Advisors in place to support schools in meeting their WHS obligations, as outlined in the Health and Safety Advisors procedure. Additionally, the department remains committed to ensuring that Health and Safety representatives are adequately resourced and supported to perform their functions in alignment with legislative requirements as outlined in the department's Health and Safety Representatives procedure.

On 2 July 2025, the Premier and Minister announced an additional \$57 million investment to roll out almost 140 new WHS roles. This initiative is designed to address occupational violence in schools and reduce administrative burdens on teachers, allowing them to focus on their core responsibilities. The roll out of these dedicated WHS roles, beginning in July 2026, will significantly enhance the department's capacity to manage health and safety risks effectively.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, I invite you to contact Ms Stacie Hansel, Deputy Director-General, State Schools Strategy, by email at stacie.hansel@qed.qld.gov.au or on (07) 3513 5803.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



SHARON SCHIMMING
Director-General

Ref: 25/1080955

Your ref: krj:cds:pb:kk:kos RAR Issue Resolution Special Schools