

29 May 2024

Hon Dianne Farmer MP  
Minister for Education  
1 William Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Ms Farmer

I write on behalf of the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland (TPAQ) in light of the roundtable you held with 'key stakeholders' in the education sector on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May.

As per the Courier Mail, you "wanted this roundtable to meet to bring fresh ideas and feedback on things that they are seeing on the ground and any opportunities to expand current initiatives."

What about the 20% of teachers in Queensland who were not represented there?

The TPAQ is formally requesting to be part of these discussions and any similar stakeholder meetings in future as the representative of those teachers who don't contribute financial support to your political party.

Let me be clear here - we have no objection to teachers joining the Queensland Teachers Union (QTU), which is a philosophical and financial wing of your political party. They do so with the clear and open knowledge that a significant portion of their membership fees will be used to support the Labor Party.

Let me further emphasise that we are opposed to any future government changing the ability of democratic membership associations to determine how their funds should be allocated.

We estimate, based on what it costs to service our members, that up to \$500 per member per year could be available to support the Labor Party. We do not oppose the QTU's ability to do this.

Our concern is only for your denial of the right of those teachers who do not wish to support your political party to have a seat at the table to determine future education policy.

Let me reiterate, we believe that all teachers should have exact equality of access to the law and the education policy development process, irrespective of their particular choice of representation.

For all intents and purposes, this could be construed as "pay for play" - we are sure that is not your intent.

However, if you don't arrange representation at the policy development table for the thousands of teachers who choose not to financially support you, what else are parents and teachers going to think?

We have thousands of members across the state and our advocacy within the education sector is well established. Our members are hardworking and dedicated teachers who certainly consider us to be a major stakeholder when it comes to schooling in our state.

These teachers were equally disappointed that their views were ignored when we weren't consulted in the initial drafting of the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (2024)*. The Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) were seemingly given free rein to contribute.

We understand that this is what serves you best, but it's not fair to 20% of teachers in Queensland that are being cut out of negotiations, roundtables, and consultation purely on the basis that they aren't part of the QTU. Teachers should not be punished simply because they choose not to support the Labor Party.

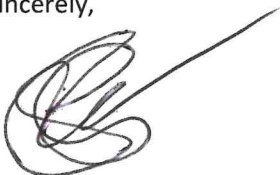
Despite this, **we welcome the opportunity to meet with you** and your team to speak on the existential issues in our education system: workload burden, student discipline and centralised control.

The Teachers' Professional Association of Australia (TPAA) has commissioned extensive research that shows Queensland's dysfunctional education system can be fixed if we follow the lead of what is now a majority of parents who now send their children to largely autonomous independent non-government schools.

By returning control to a local schooling level, it becomes clear that we do not need one bureaucrat for every two teachers. That funding alone could be reallocated to increase teacher salaries by approximately \$40,000 per year. This reform would enable decisions on staffing, curriculum, and student discipline to be made at a local level, where principals and teachers are accountable to parents.

I anticipate a timely response and look forward to the opportunity to meet with you in good faith.

Sincerely,



Edward Schuller

**Secretary, Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland**

CC: Dr Christian Rowan, Shadow Minister for Education