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## QASEL Newsletter Edition 19, 2021

### President's Update

#### Leading

**We advocate for equity and influence for positive change.**

#### 2021 Position Brief Update

QASEL's Strategic Plan identifies the need to – *proactively put forward positions on issues that impact leadership or student learning* (Leading – Teaching – Intentional Advocacy).

To that end, QASEL members have been intentionally collaborating throughout the year on a range of position briefs that are in various stages of development. I'm very pleased with the progress and impact of the briefs completed and delivered to date, and also mindful of the impact they can have while still under development.

Our two most recently completed briefs have focused on the impact of teacher aide maximisation and infrastructure in special education settings. Below is a brief summary of some of the key points from these briefs.



#### Impact of Teacher Aide Maximisation

- QASEL values the critical role TAs play in providing support to all students in schools and believes they play a particularly vital role within special education contexts. QASEL supports the notion that TAs need to be recognised and valued through the provision of employment conditions and wages that reflect their high levels of skill and the positive contribution they make to our schools.
- No change in the allocation of TA hours was made to special schools or special education programs as a result of Enterprise Bargain changes introduced in 2015 and 2018, which mandated maximisation of TA hours to existing permanent Teacher Aides when hours become available at the school level up to 6 hours per day or 30 hours per week.
- A TA maximised to 30 hours/week spends around 17% of their total working hours employed outside of student learning time.
- Many Special Schools, Special Education Programs and Early Childhood Development Programs (ECDP) report that they have TAs working a significant number of hours outside of student contact time.
- Special School Principal members report that at times they have the teacher allocation and classroom space to form additional classes but are unable to do so due to a lack of TA time.
- QASEL believes that the current system of maximising TA hours to 30 hours/week without a corresponding change to the students with disability staffing allocative models has led to:

- a substantial reduction in TAs being available to support students during learning time.
- a direct negative impact on student learning.
- decreased student and staff safety and increased exposure to occupational violence.
- increased workload for school leaders managing and supervising TAs outside of regular school hours.
- a decrease in the flexible use of TA time to support student learning and wellbeing.
- QASEL believes that due to the sessional-based nature of their programs, our ECDPs are particularly disadvantaged by TA maximisation.
- QASEL understands that many schools utilise their general grant and I4S funding to overcome the shortfall created by TA maximisation.
- QASEL believes the allocation of TA hours to all schools should factor in the increased hours expended by schools to meet maximisation expectations (i.e., each time a TA maximises outside of student contact time the allocation of funding to that school should increase to meet that additional cost).
- QASEL acknowledges that there have been some positives to come from TA maximisation. Many TAs have had opportunities for professional learning and upskilling while others have taken on tasks that reduce the workload of teachers and school leaders, and overall TAs also have an increased take home wage. However, the current TA allocations to special schools and special education programs is inadequate to meet the growing demand of hours to support TA maximisation. We just haven't got the balance right.

### Infrastructure in Special Education

Since the introduction and implementation of the Department of Education's *Inclusive Education Policy* many primary and secondary schools have significantly changed the way in which they utilise their designated Special Education Program buildings.

- QASEL supports the provision of dedicated and purpose-built, flexible space/s to support the inclusion of all students with disabilities in primary and secondary schools. These spaces should support the ability of school leaders to make localised decisions based on the use of school facilities consistent with their current and developing model of inclusion.
- QASEL supports school facilities planning for students with disability in all schools that is informed by evidence-based research, best practice and the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#), and the [Disability \(Access to Premises – Buildings\) Standards 2010](#).
- QASEL supports the prioritisation of extensive renewal and upgrades to all schools that are no longer fit for purpose for people with disability to ensure they meet current requirements for accessibility.
- QASEL supports the inclusion of ECDP facilities in the infrastructure planning and funding model.
- Special schools have experienced significant enrolment growth in recent years. In addition to new buildings in existing special schools, three new special schools have been built in recent years.
- QASEL strongly recommends the development of a design standard for special schools that sets out the minimum standard and inclusions for the refurbishment or building of new facilities or schools and commits to actively engaging in the process to collaboratively develop these design standards.
- QASEL supports the prioritisation of extensive renewal and upgrades to special schools that are no longer fit for purpose.
- QASEL supports the introduction of a collaborative process to identify the real site capacity of every special school in Queensland, and an early planning process which includes community consultation to identify a way to respond to schools that are over or near that capacity.

The table below is a summary of progress on position briefs this year. All completed and endorsed briefs are available on the QASEL website in the members' section. My thanks to all members who have contributed. I also invite any members to put forward suggested briefs either through their regional councillor or email me directly at [president@qasel.org.au](mailto:president@qasel.org.au)

Topic	Initial collaboration	Draft out for feedback	Finalised	Endorsed (on website)	Presented	Impact
Early Childhood Development Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented to ADG D&amp;I.</li> <li>ECDP subcommittee collaborating with D&amp;I to produce best practices guidelines for ECDPs state-wide.</li> <li>Planning underway for ECDP PD day in 2022.</li> </ul>
Workforce Capability: Special Education Teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented to DDG PACS, ADG HR, and Minister.</li> <li>Shared with other associations.</li> <li>Special education identified as a priority area in the Turn to Teach Program.</li> <li>Follow up meetings scheduled with HR and D&amp;I teams.</li> <li>Early stages of developing a program in partnership with USQ.</li> </ul>
Impact of TA Maximisation on Special Education Settings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial meeting with ADG HR to discuss concerns.</li> <li>Submitted to DDG PACS.</li> <li>Submitted for consideration as part of EB planning negotiations.</li> </ul>
Leadership Structures in Special Education	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritised as next position paper to draft</li> </ul>
Occupational Violence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented to DDG PACS, ADG HR, and Minister.</li> <li>QASEL president represented on stakeholder group.</li> </ul>
Students with Disability Resourcing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented to DDG SS, ADG D&amp;I, DG and Minister</li> <li>QASEL represented on the stakeholder group</li> <li>QASEL has ongoing input into the review.</li> </ul>
Senior Schooling	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next step - Small group meeting in 2022 to consider feedback - is it more than one position paper?</li> <li>Broader representation of QASEL on QCE reference group.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure Issues in Special Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial meeting with ISB to discuss concerns.</li> <li>Establishment of ministerial working party with representation from Minister's Office, ISB and SS D&amp;I.</li> <li>Establishment of Special School Principals group to collaboratively develop design standards for special schools.</li> <li>Continued input into infrastructure needs for SEPs.</li> </ul>

## Linking

We collaborate with purpose and support each other's wellbeing.

### Friend of QASEL Award: Deb Dunstone

It was my great pleasure last week to present Deb Dunstone with a Friend of QASEL award. Following the Department of Education Queensland's Review into Disability conducted by Deloitte in 2017, Deb Dunstone was appointed as the foundation Assistant Director-General, State-Schools, Disability and Inclusion Branch.

Deb successfully led a team that has worked to deliver on the recommendations of this review, and in doing so furthered the inclusion culture across all areas of our department. She has stood before the

Friend of QASEL




**Deb Dunstone**

- Foundation Assistant Director-General, State-School Disability and Inclusion
- Delivered on commitments of the Qld Disability Review
- Established a productive partnership between QASEL and the D&I branch

Royal Commission and a Senate enquiry to talk proudly of the work of special educators in our schools, while acknowledging the system challenges that lay ahead.

During her time as ADG Disability and Inclusion, Deb has been a true friend of QASEL. Regularly meeting with both of the QASEL presidents during her time in the role, Deb has always been generous with her time and support.

Deb has also been a great supporter of QASELcon as a regular speaker, and has attended a range of other QASEL meetings, events and collaborative opportunities. In her role on the DoE Emergency Response Team throughout the challenges of COVID-19, Deb has and continues to ensure that the unique needs of our special education settings are not forgotten.

The partnership forged between the Disability and Inclusion Team and QASEL is truly a unique and powerful one that continues to grow today, and to deliver the best possible outcomes for all students with disabilities and those who support them.

## **Road Trip – Darling Downs and South West Region**

(Insert photos of Toowoomba visit – I'll probably email or text you these from the road as we will be cutting timeline pretty short)

Terrific to get out to the Darling Downs and South West Region this week to meet with members. Thanks for taking the time to connect and discuss a range of issues impacting on your work including, the review of allocation of SWD resourcing, the impact of trauma in schools, infrastructure, leadership development and much more.

Special shout out to Dan at Pittsworth State School, Corina at Clifford Park Special School, Glen at Toowoomba West Special School, Stephanie at Drayton State School, Lisa at Wilsonton State School and Cassie at Middle Ridge State School. I grew up in Toowoomba so it was lovely to spend some time in my old stomping ground. Great also to connect with Leanne Wright, Regional Director while I was in town to discuss how QASEL can support the DDSW region in their work.

A reminder to all members across the state that if you are having an event or a significant meeting that you would like me to attend in the new year please let me know. Where ever possible, I'm keen to take every opportunity to connect with members in groups to talk about their work and how QASEL can support them.

## **Learning**

**We learn together to build our individual and collective capability.**

### **Successful Pathways Programs**

Does your school have innovative and effective programs in place to support students with disability to transition to a successful future beyond school? Perhaps a successful industry partnership that supports this work? Or a great career education program for students with disability? If the answer is yes to any of these questions then I need to hear from you – urgently!

Can you just shoot me a quick email ([president@qasel.org.au](mailto:president@qasel.org.au)) with some dot point details of the program and your willingness to share further information about it? Thanks.

### **Conflict Resolution Podcasts**

The Principal Hotline and Complex Matters Referral Team have developed a 3-part podcast series around managing conflict in schools, featuring real life experiences and information on the impact that conflict and disputes have had on the health and wellbeing of a number of our principals.

Although the podcasts have been created for Principals, they are highly relevant and useful to all school leaders including HOSES, Deputy Principals, and department leaders.

Links to the three podcasts are below. They run for about 12-15 minutes each. I'd recommend them to all

members as a useful resource.

[Podcast-1 Conflict is inevitable](#)

[Podcast 2-Positive Outcomes](#)

[Podcast 3 - Using mediation to help with conflict](#)

## **New QASEL Co-ordinator of Professional Learning**

As part of QASEL's ongoing commitment to building individual and collective capability, I am pleased to advise members that from 2022 we have engaged (Coach) Caroline de Hennin as a co-ordinator of professional learning for one day per week.

Coach Caroline will work closely with our regional state councillors to help develop and deliver professional learning opportunities that are responsive to regional needs. My thanks to Steve Roberts, Principal Kuraby Special School, for facilitating this wonderful opportunity. I look forward to sharing more information with you in the new year around this work.

## **Sponsors and Business Partners**

**QASEL wishes to thank and acknowledge our Gold Business Partner:**



**QASEL wishes to thank and acknowledge our Silver Business Partner:**



## **QASELcon22**

**Date Claimer: 16 – 18 June 2022**

On the back of the tremendous success of QASELcon21, the conference planning committee are hard at work to make sure QASELcon22 is even bigger and better. Watch this space for more information coming soon.

## **New and Returning Members**

A massive welcome and thank you to the following new and returning members;

- Annalise Taylor - Redland District Special School
- Sam Leigh-Cooper - Sunnybank Special School

We look forward to linking, leading and learning with you throughout 2021 and beyond.

## President's Diary

If you have any thoughts or feedback on any recent or upcoming events in the President's Diary, please don't hesitate to send me an email. Your feedback is always welcome.

### Meetings and events in recent weeks:

- Meeting regarding Teacher Aides' EB negotiations
- Meetings regarding Students with Disability Resource Allocation Review
- Presentation of Friend of QASEL award to Deb Dunstone
- COVID stakeholder update
- Discussion on School Audit Review Framework
- Meeting DoE Pathways Initiatives
- Meeting with QSPA
- Meeting with NDIS
- Minister's Infrastructure Working Group
- Digital Learning Project Board meeting
- Special School Data Project meeting (Metro)
- SBMAQ meeting
- Road Trip - Darling Downs and South West Region

### Upcoming meetings and events

- Safety Framework Review Project - Risk and Governance Working Groups
- Students with Disability Resource Allocation Review Stakeholder Reference Group
- QASEL meeting & Jigsaw visit with DDG State Schools, Peter Kelly
- School visits with ADG D&I, Dion Coghlan - Bremer State High, Forest Lake State High
- Meeting – Upskilling Program for special education teachers
- Joint QASEL/QTU executive meeting
- Principal Health and Wellbeing Implementation Group
- 1-1 Meeting with Acting Director-General, Craig Allen
- COVID stakeholder meetings
- QCE System Principals' Reference Group
- Respectful Relationships Education Advisory Group meeting
- Association Presidents meeting

## Other Messages

### Message from Lorena Clayton

A short message below from a good friend of QASEL and conference presenter (in both Brisbane and Townsville) Lorena Clayton.

Saturday 13 November was World Kindness Day. Here is a little [video](#) from me on the importance and benefits of kindness, just to brighten your day.

### Able - All Abilities Community: Creating inclusive and accessible workplaces

## Are you interested in helping to create inclusive workplaces through implementation of Able? Valuing talent in all abilities workforce strategy?

You can contribute to creating workplaces where we all belong. We are looking for new **Able – All Abilities Steering Committee** members for 2022.

The Able – All Abilities Steering Committee consists of employees who are committed to leading cultural change through building understanding and creating an inclusive workplace.

As a part of the committee you will contribute to the delivery of actions in the [Able. Valuing talent in all abilities workforce strategy](#), and will be empowered to drive initiatives including but not limited to: coordinating events; building membership and content for the Able – All Abilities online community; and providing guidance and insight into the experiences of departmental staff across Queensland who live with disability.

Nominations are requested by **COB 10 December 2021**.

[2022 Steering Committee Expression of Interest.docx](#)

[2021 Terms of Reference Able Steering Committee.docx](#)

[2022 Nomination template.docx](#)

You can also find the *Expression of Interest, Terms of Reference and Nomination Template* on the [Able - All Abilities Online Community](#) (open via Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge), or email – [weallbelong@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:weallbelong@qed.qld.gov.au)

### Are your communications accessible and inclusive?

It's important our department's communication and marketing materials are accessible and inclusive for everyone.

The Strategic Communication and Engagement team recently launched a new [Accessible and inclusive communication hub](#). The hub provides links to various departmental and Queensland Government resources that are available to support you in creating accessible communications, marketing, events and meetings.

If you're promoting an initiative to internal or external audiences, there are a number of considerations to ensure your communications are inclusive and accessible to people with disability.

No matter your role or involvement in communication and marketing activities, there are some great tips for everyone – including how to run inclusive meetings, use inclusive language or write respectfully in the workplace.

Accessible and inclusive communication is effective communication.

If you have any suggestions to improve this page, please contact Lauren Tapiolas, Senior Communications and Marketing Officer, SCE at [Lauren.Tapiolas@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Tapiolas@qed.qld.gov.au) or 07 3328 6604.

### Awareness sessions

Join a facilitated [90 minute Able awareness session](#) on Microsoft Teams (Offered 08 December, 11am).

In this session, we will explore disability or diverse abilities, accessibility in the workplace and potential barriers to inclusion, and also look at departmental data to understand why disability confidence is vital to inclusion in the workplace.

If you prefer a self-paced option, we also offer an online learning module as part of the [We all belong learning suite](#).

## Occupational Violence and Aggression Prevention Strategy Launch

On 12 October 2021, Minister for Education Grace Grace MP launched the Department of Education's [Occupational Violence and Aggression Prevention Strategy](#) in response to the increasing prevalence of occupational violence and



aggression (OVA) in state schools and departmental workplaces.

The strategy is designed to be incremental in its approach, delivering targeted initiatives through the implementation of the 2021-2023 action plan that focuses on the prevention of OVA across all department workplaces.

To support accurate recording of OVA incidents, new OVA classifications have been added to the MyHR WHS incident reporting module. Incidents of OVA that result in staff injury or illness can now be specifically recorded. A fact sheet for 'recording an incident related to occupational violence and aggression' is available on the [MyHR WHS OnePortal page](#).

Additionally, the Mandatory All Staff Training (MAST) and the Management Foundations Program training platforms have been updated to include OVA specific training and awareness content.

## Management Foundations - Important 2022 planning information

From 2022, we are streamlining the approach to delivering mandatory training programs across the department.

Any staff member **who manages people and/or finances (financial delegation)** completes the **Management Foundations program ONLY**. This group is no longer required to complete the Mandatory All-Staff Training (MAST) program.

**All other staff must complete MAST**, which will be updated and optimised for online delivery via the Learning Place from early December 2021. Face-to-face delivery of the MAST program will be available in some limited instances and a request to receive self-paced workbooks can be made by completing this [form](#).

You may like to refer to the **2022 Mandatory Annual Training Ready Reckoner** available on the department's [website](#) for information about all mandatory programs across the department and who should complete them. Please note, some programs are not yet launched, so links will be updated as the programs come online. Further communications will follow to advise of any additional changes. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact [LearningandPD.HUMANRES@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:LearningandPD.HUMANRES@qed.qld.gov.au).