

# Australia: Queensland Teachers Union “pauses” strike threat

Our reporters  
8 September 2025

Less than a month after 50,000 public school teachers took strike action in the northern Australian state of Queensland—the first such stoppage called by the Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) in 16 years—the union leadership has halted any further strikes.

The QTU informed its members, who had voted almost unanimously for a “series of 24-hour strikes,” that further strike action will not be considered until early October. The union bureaucrats are defying that vote, in order to finalise a sellout deal with the state’s Liberal National Party (LNP) government.

Without any further vote by members, the QTU dropped the 14-day ultimatum the union had given the government to make a better pay offer. Due to the school holiday timetable and draconian anti-strike laws, the QTU’s four-week “pause” means no potential industrial action could occur until mid-October.

On August 6, in what was widely described as the largest teachers’ strike in the history of the state, backed by much of the population, teachers rallied in Brisbane, the state capital, and in dozens of cities and towns.

The walkout occurred after teachers rejected Premier David Crisafulli’s enterprise bargaining offer of an 8 percent nominal pay rise over three years—the same below-inflation deal offered to nurses and other public service workers.

As they marched through Brisbane to the state parliament house, teachers carried placards rejecting the offer, demanding that the state government fix the teacher shortage and address intolerable working conditions.

The day after the August 6 strike, the union officials rushed into closed-door conciliation discussions at the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC), following directions from the LNP government.

At the time, QTU president Cresta Richardson attempted to foster illusions that workers’ demands could be met through the QIRC. She said she “looks forward to

presenting (the QTU’s) claim before the commission.”

The union has since doubled down on its promotion of the QIRC, a pro-employer government tribunal, as an “independent umpire.” Richardson said the “pause” decision “clearly demonstrated the QTU’s commitment to conciliation, good faith bargaining, and securing a timely deal members see value in.”

The union apparatuses promote the QIRC and its federal and state counterparts because they rely on the repressive powers of these instruments of big business to intimidate workers and shut down struggles. As well, the protracted timelines of tribunals serve to drag out disputes interminably, allowing the energy of workers to dissipate.

Many teachers are outraged. On a Queensland teachers Facebook page, a poll was taken asking: “Do you agree with the decision of the QTU State Council to delay consideration of any further industrial action for at least a four week period.” The result was that 91 percent (1,255 teachers) disagreed, compared with just 8 percent (124) who agreed.

The *World Socialist Web Site* warned from the outset that the QTU officials only called the August 6 strike out of fear that the hostility among public school teachers to a real wage cut and further attacks on their conditions would erupt out of their control.

At a one hour live-streamed meeting broadcast to venues across the state before the strike march, Richardson refused to set a date for the next strike or allow any debate and discussion among the 4,000 QTU members who attended.

We predicted that the QTU would shut down industrial action as quickly as possible as it prepared to come to an agreement with the government that would do nothing to address the dire situation confronting educators.

In over 18 meetings with the education department since the beginning of 2025, the QTU had refused to outline any concrete demands on pay, working conditions or

increased staffing levels. The refusal to lodge a concrete log of claims, the WSWS explained, sought to create the conditions where even the most paltry “improvements,” which would do nothing to address the depth of the crisis facing teachers, could be hailed as a “win.”

The nurses’ union is currently attempting to foist a similar betrayal onto the state’s 57,000 public sector nurses and midwives. The agreement between the government and the Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union (QNMU), billed by the media as the biggest pay rise in a decade, would see nurses pay “increase” by the same 8 percent over three years, with another 3 percent in December 2027, locking in sub-inflation wages.

The QTU is trying to contain teachers’ anger by asking them to wear maroon QTU t-shirts to school on Mondays and attend after-school rallies in regional centres. In response, a teacher posted on Facebook: “Do we really think wearing maroon is going to do anything? Let’s strike again and again. How is everyone not so disappointed in the union right now? They haven’t done anything!”

Teachers should be in no doubt. The primary concern of the QTU officials is to keep a lid on opposition to the government’s state budget, focused on “fiscal repair” and “budget restraint,” that is, cuts to social spending.

The QTU’s proposed EB11 agreement with the state government will continue the escalating crisis of public schools.

- Impossible workloads are resulting in teacher resignations increasing by over 50 per cent on previous years. In 2023, 2607 teachers resigned, yet the money allocated in the state budget to address this crisis will hardly touch the sides of the problem.

- There is no money allocated in the 2025-6 Queensland budget for the Comprehensive Review of School Resourcing (CRoSR). In 2022, the QTU struck an enterprise agreement with the then Palaszczuk Labor government which put off any possible improvements to staffing, workloads and the funding crisis until the CRoSR was released, supposedly by the end of 2024. The LNP government has since refused to release the findings of the review.

Capital works in the state’s crumbling schools has been cut by 12-15 percent.

Together with their fellow bureaucrats throughout the Australian Education Union (AEU), the QTU officials are also keeping teachers isolated, state-by-state, to avoid any unified action that could threaten the federal Labor government. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese’s

government is also cutting public education and social programs while boosting military spending to prepare for war, as is the Trump administration in the US and governments around the world.

The AEU has hailed the Albanese government’s promised funding increases to schools under the misnamed Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. Compared to what public schools need, the amount is a pittance—\$16.5 billion over the next 10 years. The vast majority of the spending is backloaded into the 2030s, with only 2.4 percent scheduled in the next four years.

In order to defeat yet another sellout deal, teachers have to take matters into their own hands. The Committee for Public Education (CFPE), the rank-and-file educators’ network, calls for new organisations of struggle to be built in schools—rank-and-file committees democratically run by workers themselves, independent of the union bureaucracy.

Both Labor and the LNP, with the crucial assistance of the union apparatuses, are intent on imposing the insatiable profit requirements of the corporate and financial elite, at the expense of what is spent on public education, health and all social spending.

This raises the need for an alternative socialist perspective. A full-funded, high-quality public education system, with decent pay and conditions for teachers and staff, requires nothing less than the reorganisation of society to meet social needs.

We urge teachers interested in discussing these crucial issues to contact the CFPE:

Email: [cfpe.aus@gmail.com](mailto:cfpe.aus@gmail.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/commforpubliceducation](https://facebook.com/commforpubliceducation)

Twitter: [CFPE\\_Australia](https://twitter.com/CFPE_Australia)



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