

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES & FORUMS — A DELEGATE'S GUIDE



Authorised & printed Alex Scott Together Branch Secretary



Dear Member,

Having a say in the workplace is an important part of having a happy and healthy work environment.

When any new initiatives are being introduced or there is a workplace health and safety risk in your school, it is important that staff can let school management know what they think and how they could see things working better. This is achieved by having a proper vehicle or mechanism for consultation in your school.

In order to have a better say in the workplace every school should have a Local Consultative Committee, or LCC. This approach to consultation is supported by Together, the Queensland Teachers Union, United Voice and also Education Queensland.

The only way to create, continue or debate proposed 'Workplace Reform' in the school is by having an LCC process that enables all unions to vote on whether or not that reform is acceptable to their members in their workplace. This is a very important stage in the Workplace Reform process.

Following this letter is some information about how to establish an LCC, what an LCC does, who can be a member of an LCC and some terms of reference for an LCC. There is also a nomination form for LCC representatives and some information about what support is available to LCC representatives.

Without local representatives talking about local issues, some issues may never be resolved. With strong consultation and dispute resolution mechanisms on the ground we can have a say and talk to local decision makers who can then also refer problems to higher levels where needs be.

If you require any additional information or advice about starting an LCC, becoming a representative or any other union issues please contact your Together Education Team via email at schools@together.org.au or phone 1800 177 244.

Yours in union,

Alex Scott
Secretary

What is an LCC?

A Local Consultative Committee is a representative group of union representatives and management representatives that should meet regularly to discuss work related issues. The LCC is a consultative body for the purposes of informing staff about new initiatives, restructures or any changes including Workplace Reforms and then allows for feedback from staff, through their union representatives, about the proposals.

The LCC can also discuss any work related issues such as:

- Occupational health and safety matters
- Staff training or professional development
- Employment conditions negotiated locally, e.g. starting and finishing times, break times (including PD days, Student free days and ADO)
- Planning and negotiating changes
- Raising any issues of concern to employees.

This list is by no means comprehensive and issues may be raised at the LCC that are appropriate to the circumstances of the individual workplace.

How are LCC's created?

LCC's are created under the collective agreement that covers school employees, in Appendix 7

These are the relevant sections:

3.2 Consultative Arrangements and Mechanisms

3.2.1 Introduction

The following sets out details of consultative arrangements and mechanisms that will be adopted by the parties within DET.

Quality consultation mechanisms are a vital ingredient in progressing the workplace reform agenda, as prescribed in 3.4 Workplace Reform Initiatives and section 3.5 Workplace Reform in Schools Program.

The parties are committed to the continuation of appropriate consultative arrangements so that employees are consulted in the initiation, implementation and evaluation of workplace reform initiatives.

DET's ability to obtain optimum outcomes from workplace reform, including enterprise bargaining, will be significantly influenced by the consultative processes that are established.

The geographical and operational diversity of the Department's work units would make it difficult to implement workplace reform or gain employee commitment to workplace reform from one central committee. Recognising the range in the size of schools, local consultative committees are normally established in schools with 20-25 employees or more.

DET acknowledges the role of Local Consultative Committees (LCCs) as prescribed in 3.2.5 Local Consultative

Committee and the Education Consultative Committee (ECC) as prescribed in 3.2.4 Education Consultative Committee are mechanisms to facilitate workplace reform initiatives.

The parties are aware that alternative procedures to ensure effective implementation of the certified agreement and employee consultation in smaller schools are in place.

It is recognised that cooperation and consultation in the development and implementation of change initiatives place obligations, duties and responsibilities on principals, managers, union officials, delegates or their equivalent.

The parties acknowledge that the processes of educational, professional, administrative and organisational change and workplace reform are broader than the specific matters detailed in this agreement

The parties agree that changes occurring outside of the terms of this agreement shall be facilitated in a manner that involves timely consultation and discussion of all relevant issues.

State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2015, Appendix 7, Section 3.2.1.

Why are LCC's important?

LCC's ensure that all staff are provided every opportunity to be kept informed and have input about proposed changes at the local level. Without a local voice, issues which are important locally but not prioritised by Regional Office, might not be attended to quickly. By raising things locally they can be dealt with in an efficient and timely way and in a manner that is relevant to that workplace.

Further, it is workplace staff who have general knowledge of what the workplace is like and know the people involved, therefore it makes for better decision making as all local circumstances can be considered.

If issues cannot be resolved locally, then matters can be referred from the LCC to central committees. This means that these matters gain a public standing in a formal venue with formal meeting timeframes for responses. Any disputed matters can be resolved more formally and generally more quickly.

3.2.5 Local Consultative Committees (LCCs)

Terms of reference

1. To monitor workplace reform issues, especially enterprise bargaining initiatives, and make recommendations to the ECC.
2. To provide a forum for generation and consideration of local workplace reform initiatives through regular structured meetings.
3. To consider and prioritise Best Practice initiatives relevant to the local environment.

4. To endorse local level changes capable of local approval, and to recommend to the ECC changes to be processed through the facilitative provisions.
5. To evaluate and report to the ECC on pilot and trial projects conducted under the Workplace Reform in Schools Program.
6. To assume a dispute settling role on workplace reform matters related to this certified agreement and to refer to the ECC those issues which cannot be resolved locally.
7. To act as an avenue of communication between local employees and the ECC.
8. To develop strategies for encouraging contributions from all staff, including non-teaching staff and employees from target groups identified in the Public Service Act 2008.
9. To contribute to a culture of participative management within the workplace.

Who can be on the LCC?

The agreement says:

3.2.5 Local Consultative Committees (LCCs)

Composition

Membership of LCCs shall comprise equal representation of management and union nominees. The size of the committees is not prescribed but will usually be 8, that is 4 union and 4 management representatives providing that 2 union representatives be Queensland Teachers' Union of Employees members in school settings and 2 union representatives of Together Queensland, Industrial Union of Employees in non-school settings. Decisions of the LCC are to be made by consensus wherever possible."

LCC representatives can be any financial union member. As there will generally be at least three union representatives on the LCC – one from the QTU, one from United Voice and one from Together, we recommend having at least two people trained in sitting on the LCC as a Together representative in case the first nominee is away from school when the meeting is held.

If there is a particular issue for one group of staff within the office it is good practice to have a union representative from that section attend the meeting to discuss issues for that area - even if they are not usually a member of the LCC. That way the people directly affected are explaining what they see as the issue themselves.

LCC union representatives should be people who feel comfortable expressing the views of members on subjects discussed – sometimes these views may be different to their own personal views; however, if a majority of members

want that position put to management then that is what is required.

How do I get elected to the LCC?

To be elected to the LCC as a Together representative, you first need to fill in the nomination form attached to this information kit, have another member sign it in support of your nomination and then email back to schools@together.org.au or call us on 1800 177 244.

It is important to remember that other unions may not have the same processes as Together, and they are under different collective agreements, so the details provided in this brochure may not be the same as in their agreements.

If there are more nominations in your school than vacancies on the LCC an election will be held. The Together official in your region can coordinate this election, or you can run it yourself, or ask another member to – each financial member of the union gets a vote in the election. Arrangements may also be made to have rotating representatives on the committee – particularly if nominees come from different sections within the school and have different issues their area.

The LCC representatives will all be expected to present the views of their members from all areas of the school during meetings.

What should an LCC representative do?

3.2.5 Local Consultative Committees (LCCs)

Operating principles

1. The LCC is to ensure that the views of all staff members and work groups are considered regardless of whether the work group is represented on the LCC.
2. Meetings will be held regularly and timed in a way that minimises disruption to student learning.
3. Decisions of the LCC are to be made by consensus wherever possible.
4. Decisions of the LCC are to be communicated to all staff.
5. All LCC members will be provided with a training package as determined by the ECC

An LCC representative's job is to represent the views of Together members to the school management representatives, no matter what their own workplace title is or role. To do this, strategies need to be developed to gather views and ideas from union members in the office. These might include:

- Send around the meeting agenda a week ahead and call for comments, questions and additional agenda items;
- Do a survey of union members on issues affecting them in the workplace;
- Hold informal meetings of small groups to discuss issues;
- Union workplace meetings / staff meetings;

Then, at the LCC meetings, the LCC representative presents the views of the union members to management representatives in a considered way. If you need industrial advice you can contact the union office prior to the meeting on 1800 177 244 or email schools@together.org.au.

What support can I get as an LCC representative?

As a Together representative you can get advice or assistance at any stage from the union office by phoning 1800 177 244 or emailing schools@together.org.au.

You can also register for union delegate training by emailing schools@together.org.au.

If you have any questions about training please do not hesitate to contact the union office for more information.

Working with other Unions

A key component of the LCC process is supporting other union members on the committee and within the school. If there is an issue that affects teachers, then support the QTU on the basis that this is a matter important to them. It is often useful to talk to the other union delegates before the meeting to check what issues they want to raise and let them know of your support or Together members' views on the issue. It is essential that wherever possible all union representatives from the three unions present a united front to the Principal and other school management.

If there is a conflict between one union group and another over a particular issue and you need advice, please call 1800 177 244 or email schools@together.org.au.

Workplace Reform

Workplace Reform is the process that enables the "flexibility in staffing" provisions of Education Queensland policies and other certified agreements to be enacted. Essentially this process allows schools to put forward proposed changes on where staff resources are allocated within the school, when professional development occurs, changing some positions from one role and classification stream into another role and perhaps different stream, and sometimes upgrading positions.

Workplace Reform is often a difficult exercise but the important thing with any proposal is that all Together members should vote on whether or not they support the proposed Workplace Reform, particularly those directly affected by it, and then as the representative you communicate the outcome to the LCC. Some Workplace Reform matters may create, albeit inadvertently, a workload impact on other areas within the school or for other staff.

Particular attention should be paid to consulting with affected staff before approving or endorsing a proposed Workplace Reform – this may involve talking to the other union representatives about how their members feel about the proposal. If you have any questions about Workplace Reform please call 1800 177 244 or email schools@together.org.au.

LCC Nomination Form

If you would like to nominate to be an LCC representative in your school please complete the details below, have another Together member sign your nomination in support of your nomination and send this form back to your Together Schools Team via schools@together.org.au or call 1800 177 244.

Thank you for standing up for having your say in the workplace!

Name: _____

Member Number: _____

Work Unit: _____

Office: _____

Work Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Signature of Nominee: _____

Name of Seconder: _____

Member Number: _____

Signature of Seconder: _____

Would you like to attend Together training on how to be a representative? Yes No

Have you attended any Together Delegate training before? Yes No

Send this form back to your Together Schools Team via schools@together.org.au.