

School Officer
Classification Review
Joint Working Party
Final IEU Report

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Clause 8.11 of the following collective enterprise agreements (approved by the Fair Work Commission on 25 November 2020) established the School Officer Classification Joint Working Party (JWP):

- a) *Catholic Employing Authorities Single Enterprise Collective Agreement – Religious Institute Schools of Queensland 2019 – 2023 (AG2020/2035)*; and
- b) *Catholic Employing Authorities Single Enterprise Collective Agreement – Diocesan Schools of Queensland 2019 – 2023 (AG2020/2030)*;

collectively, the collective enterprise agreements (Agreements).

A copy of clause 8.11 is provided in [Attachment 1](#).

Employer and employee representatives exchanged alternative School Officer classification structures for consideration by the JWP in the meeting of 7 October 2020. The respective models were based on the following:

- a) *Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award 2020* (employer representatives) (the 'Award'); and
- b) *Australian Public Service (APS) role evaluation tool* (employee representatives) – ('APS model').

Employee representatives tabled a set of principles which they argued should underpin the review and/or development of the school officers classification structure, as provided in [Attachment 2](#). These principles were based on the Terms of Reference provided in accordance with clause 8.11 of the Agreements.

The employer and employee representatives considered and identified the strengths and weaknesses of the current school officer classification structure, as required in the JWP Terms of Reference. These are provided in [Attachment 3](#).

Transitional arrangements were also considered as part of the discussions between employer and employee representatives (see clause 8.11.3 (a) (iv) of the Agreements). Employer and employee representatives identified a number of considerations regarding transitional arrangements and/or issues, for example, timeframes for implementation of the new structure and education for employers and employees on a new structure.

Employee representatives proposed, by email on 16 October 2020, a pilot program for the above alternative structures to both be piloted in ten schools.

In the JWP meeting of 28 October 2020, the employer representatives verbally outlined their position on the above alternative classification structures and the proposed pilot of alternate school officer classification structures in schools. (See 2.4 below.)

At the meeting on 28 October 2020, employee representatives requested the position of the JWP employer representatives be provided in writing. It is noted that the JWP was not "authorised to make decisions" and this report outlines that position and provided in accordance with clause 8.11.5(e) of the Agreements. (See 2.4 below.)

1.2 Membership of the Joint Working Party

The membership of the Joint Working Party is listed in the table below.

	Name	Position	Employing Authority/Site
Employer Representatives	Ray Kelly	Manager - Workplace Relations	Queensland Catholic Education Commission
	Kathleen Jones	Senior Workplace Relations Advisor	
	Julia Cassidy	ASO – Governance, Strategy and Corporate Services	
	Colin O'Neill	Manager - Employee Relations	Brisbane Catholic Education Office
	Andrea Alchin	Employee Relations Officer	
	Deborah Crotty	Manager Human Resource Administration	Cairns Catholic Education Service
	Gary Cooper	Employee Support Services Manager	Rockhampton Catholic Education Office
	Claudette Perrett	HR Compliance Manager	Padua College
	Nicole Spohn	Payroll Manager	Edmund Rice Education Australia
Employee Representatives	Terry Burke	Branch Secretary	Independent Education Union of Australia – Queensland and Northern Territory Branch
	Paul Giles	Assistant Secretary/Treasurer	
	Brad Hayes	Assistant Secretary	
	John Spriggs	Senior Industrial Officer	
	Monique Roosen	Industrial Services Officer	
	Ian Hughes	Network Coordinator	Lourdes Hill College
	Annette Gregory	Laboratory Technician	Ignatius Park College
	Leanne Wheeler	Support Aide – Inclusive Education	St Mary's College, Ipswich

1.3 Meeting Schedule

The School Officer Review Joint Working Party met via Zoom on the following dates:

- Tuesday, 4 August 2020;
- Wednesday, 9 September 2020;
- Wednesday, 7 October 2020; and
- Wednesday, 29 October 2020.

1.4 Consultation with Constituents

Both employer and employee representatives were responsible for the consultation of their respective constituencies. Information obtained by employer and employee representatives of their respective constituencies informed the discussions of the Joint Working Party.

PART 2 – CONDUCT OF THE JOINT WORKING PARTY

2.2 Alternative School Officer Classification Structures

2.2.1 Employer Proposed Model

The employer proposed a model based off the *Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award 2020*.

2.2.2 Employee Proposed Model

Employee representatives looked at various alternate models and proposed a model based on nine classification factors. The nine classification factors are:

- a) Knowledge Application
- b) Accountability
- c) Scope and Complexity
- d) Guidance
- e) Decision Making
- f) Problem Solving
- g) Contacts and Relationship
- h) Negotiation and Cooperation
- i) Management Responsibility/Resource Accountability

Employer representatives noted that the model was primarily based off the Australian Public Service Model ('APS model').

Employee representatives indicated during the course of the discussion that they were open to constructive feedback from employer representatives in relation to its application in a school setting, and Catholic ethos.

2.3 Consideration of Alternate Classification Models

2.3.1 Consideration of Employee Proposed Model

Employer representatives considered the alternative structures under consideration of the JWP and the employer representatives believe:

- a) on a preliminary basis, there is merit in the 'APS model';
- b) the 'APS model' may also have additional resources that are available and could be adopted to support the model (e.g. development of position descriptions relevant to the model, how to use the model, explanation of the language used in the model);
- c) aspects of the employer proposal also have merit in providing necessary referencing or guidance in relation to:
 - i) the school/education context;
 - ii) typical roles/activities; and
 - iii) a qualification framework.

2.3.2 Consideration of Employer proposed Model

Employee representatives identified a number of concerns in relation to the employer proposed model.

2.4 Proposed Pilot on Alternate Classification Models

2.4.1 Employee Representative's Proposal

At the meeting on 7 October 2020, employee representatives recommended that employer and employee representatives conduct a pilot on the alternate school officer classification models under consideration by the JWP.

Responses from the pilot participants could be utilised to inform the JWP of the positives and the negatives of each of the proposed models. Thus, allowing the JWP to make recommendations on the alternate classification structure models to Catholic Education Employing Authorities, and employees in schools.

2.4.2 Employer Response at Meeting on 28 October 2020

Employer representatives considered the Pilot Programme recommended by employee representatives and the employer representatives did not support the proposed pilot due to the following:

- a) to send out the existing proposals in their current state to schools would cause confusion, particularly in relation to the 'APS model' given the nuanced language used, with no educational context;
- b) to use the 'APS model', there would first need to be consideration to the development of position descriptions that can take account of the language used in that model and ensure it is relevant to schools;
- c) without first having appropriately developed position descriptions aligned with the 'APS model' (including information for employers and employees to assist in drafting such position descriptions), the value of the feedback received from the pilot would be questionable (essentially, it would be placing the "cart before the horse"); and
- d) given the above, the timeframes were not considered realistic and a pilot should not be rushed given the important feedback that can be obtained.

PART 3 – Recommendations

3.1 Joint Recommendations

The employer and employee representatives gave consideration to a further process as part of the review of the school officer classification structure.

At a meeting on 10 December 2020 the employer and employee representatives agreed on the following recommendations:

It is agreed that:

Tasks:

- 1) A Working Group of representatives from the employers and the IEUA-QNT be formed;
- 2) The Working Group will work collaboratively with the aim of developing a consensus on an alternative classification structure as described in point 5 below;
- 3) The structure will be trialled in a limited number of schools.
- 4) The starting point will be an 'in principle' adoption of the Australian Public Service (APS) classification levels and role evaluation model, which the IEUA-QNT drew heavily on in its tabled position on 7 October 2020;
- 5) The Working Group will identify, *inter alia*, relevant APS resources that can assist in developing:
 - (a) the model into an alternative classification structure;
 - (b) the trial of the alternative classification structure;
 - (c) appropriate position descriptions;
 - (d) resources that explain how the alternative classification structure is used;
 - (e) support for school personnel as part of the trial.
- 6) Further, the Working Group will:
 - (a) review the model to ensure compatibility with a school/education context; and
 - (b) consider the inclusion of typical roles/activities and a qualification framework for guidance.

Operations:

- 7) The working party will consist of between 2 to 4 representatives from each of the employer group and the IEUA-QNT;
- 8) The Working Group will not be a decision-making body;
- 9) The Working Group will meet at least monthly, commencing in November 2020;

Report:

- 10) The Working Group will aim to provide a Report to the employers and the IEUA-QNT for consideration by the end of Term 1, 2021;
- 11) The Working Group will make recommendations in relation to:
 - (a) an alternative classification structure based on the model; and
 - (b) the conduct of the trial of the alternative classification structure.

Trial:

- 12) The employers and the IEUA-QNT will consider the Working Group report with the aim to reach a consensus position on the conduct of a trial of the alternative classification structure in schools during Term 2, 2021;
- 13) Feedback from the trial will be considered by the employers and the IEUA-QNT, with the aim to reach agreement on an alternative classification structure by the end of Term 3, 2021;

Variation of Agreement:

- 14) Where the employers and the IEUA-QNT agree to the alternative classification structure (including implementation of issues such as timing and any transitional arrangements), then they will initiate actions to vary the Agreements consistent with the provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009*;
- 15) The employers and the IEUA-QNT will diligently apply themselves to a collaborative process to achieve an agreed resolution. Where, despite their best efforts, an agreed resolution is not able to be achieved, then either the employers or the IEUA-QNT may seek the assistance of the FWC (consistent with cl 2.4 of the Agreements) to achieve an agreed alternative classification structure for school officers; however, such assistance will be limited to mediation and/or conciliation.

Discussions involving employer and employee representatives, consistent with these recommendations, are now being scheduled for Term 1 2021.

Attachment 1: Catholic Employing Authorities Single Enterprise Collective Agreements - 2019-2023

(Extract from Agreements)

8.11 School Officer Review – Joint Working Party

8.11.1 Title

The name of the Working Party shall be School Officer Classification Joint Working Party (JWP).

8.11.2 Background

- (a) School Officer classifications in Catholic schools have been regulated by industrial provisions that were introduced in 1995(c) with some expansion of categories and 'refinements' in the basic structure since then.
- (b) The classification structure reflects the mode of classification based on the 'trades rate' in vogue at the time of its establishment.
- (c) The classification provisions were established using a pre-existing Clerical and Administration common rule award.
- (d) Categories of employees beyond the clerical and administrative were incorporated with descriptors adapted to classroom teaching aides, technical staff, library and reached an apogee with the structure being used for professionally qualified and professionally regulation roles such as school counsellors.
- (e) It is believed that the current classification structure should be reviewed so that:
 - (i) relevant positions can be classified in a way that is better understood by employers and employees; and
 - (ii) it is fit for purpose for contemporary roles in schools.

8.11.3 Terms of Reference

- (a) The purpose of the Joint Working Party is to:
 - (i) review the current School Officer classification structure and associated operations and identify its key characteristics and its strengths and deficiencies in serving employers and employees; and
 - (ii) identify and analyse strengths and deficiencies of alternative classification structures and associated operations; and make recommendations on:
 - (A) a structure and associated operations for a whole of school officer cohort; and/or
 - (B) a structure and associated operations for segments/categories of school officers.
 - (iii) make recommendations on managing the impact of any recommendations on existing structures and existing appointments; and
 - (iv) make recommendations on transitional arrangements.

- (b) The recommendations shall take account of contemporary best practice, developments in classification structures and the emerging context of school officer employment in schools.
- (c) The content and structure of the report while containing clear recommendations could also include background and context framing the recommendations.

8.11.4 Timeframe

- (a) The JWP shall convene as soon as practicable with a final report and recommendation by 31 October 2020.
- (b) Where the parties agree, the agreement may be varied consistent with the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

8.11.5 Membership

- (a) The JWP shall be comprised of:
 - (i) not more than eight (8) representatives excluding industrial advisors;
 - (ii) equal numbers of representatives of both employing authorities and employees;
 - (iii) employee representatives shall be determined by IEUA-QNT; and
 - (iv) a chairperson nominated by employer or employee representatives alternating from one meeting to the next.
- (b) A quorum of members must be present before a meeting can proceed. At least two (2) employee representative and two (2) management representatives must be present for the meeting to proceed.
- (c) A proxy may be nominated by a member of the JWP, with notice is provided to the Chairperson at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date, where practicable.
- (d) Internal or external persons, with the agreement of the JWP, may be invited to attend the meetings by the Chairperson to provide advice and assistance where necessary.
- (e) The JWP is not authorised to make decisions but to review and make recommendations. The recommendations may be reported by consensus; however, minority or separate reports may be made.
- (f) Consistent with the Terms of Reference where necessary, travel and accommodation costs associated for employee representatives will be met by the IEUA-QNT with release time provided by a relevant employing authority.

8.11.6 Vacant Positions

Any vacant positions may be filled by the nominating group once the vacancy is known.

Attachment 2: Principles

Principles

Without Prejudice

The following principles will underpin the review and/or development of the school officers classification structure.

1. The classification structure will be fit for purpose for contemporary roles in schools.
2. The classification structure and process will enable clear understanding by employers and employees.
3. The classification structures and processes are future oriented to enable future roles in schools to be readily classified.
4. The process of classification will be:
 - a. procedurally sound;
 - b. explicit; and
 - c. easily understood.
5. A process of appeal/remediation of misclassification is explicit and straight-forward.

Attachment 3: Analysis of School Officer Classification Structure

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. All school officer positions are classified under the one structure.	1. Accurate classifications depend on contemporary position descriptions that are not always in place in our schools. The position descriptions can also become out of date as new tasks and working arrangements are not included in existing descriptions and no new classification check is undertaken.
2. A clearly documented classification/reclassification process of a position is contained in the document.	2. Career progression is limited for long-term experienced school officers who cannot progress beyond the top step of their specified level.
	3. New or emerging school officer roles (e.g. youth workers, special needs aides) can be difficult to classify given the historical language and examples used within the classification characteristics.
	4. School officer roles can exhibit various characteristics (supervision of employee, supervision of others, competency, qualifications), that correlate with conflicting classification levels. In such cases, there is no guidance as to what weighting should apply to the different characteristics where some indicate one level and others a different level.
	5. People who are engaged as school officers and have very responsible positions but may not actually have supervisory responsibility to rely on to justify the higher level that their position may be worthy of. These are positions in IT, enrolments, PAs working at very high levels for Principals, music tutors we have in instructor roles that are not required to have a teaching qualification to instruct.

Strengths	Weaknesses
	6. In cases of new school officer roles being introduced within a school, there is no automatic review period to assess the appropriateness of an initial classification after a period of time operating within the school.
	7. A generic position description applies to different mix of duties within the possible range of duties which may be asked of SOs which may disguise the significant change in the relative weighting of skills, knowledge and supervision.
	8. The existing characteristics and descriptors do not reflect contemporary understandings of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character of supervision; • The fluidity needed and expected of any persons knowledge and skills
	9. The current classification structure provides for negligible recognition of formal qualifications and is structurally characterised by the notion of lower qualifications at the lower end of the scale; and higher qualifications (i.e. bachelor's degree) is associated with the higher end of the scale.