



positivelypublic
don't contract out my job



Parents & Citizens Kit

A kit designed by the QPSU and the LHMU to promote the interests of school communities and better public services.

Background

In February, the Queensland Government announced that they were seeking to build seven new schools under "Public Private Partnership" (PPP) agreements that include the contracting out of cleaning and "hard" and "soft" maintenance for the next thirty years.

The state government has so far only announced this plan for seven new schools, but it is to be expected that once adopted it will become the norm for all newly constructed state schools in Queensland, and all state schools shortly thereafter.

The introduction of contracting out for building and maintenance of any schools poses a threat to all school workers, from cleaners and schools officers, to teacher aides, administration staff and teachers. Contracting out removes the autonomy and accountability of schools and hands it to multi-million dollar consortiums.

Under private arrangements, in Australia and abroad, companies ultimately seek to do more with less, for less, in order to maximise their profit margins. This leads to dirty and unsafe schools, and unfair wages and conditions.

What's more, educational outputs are not increased. Contracting-out of services breaks down our school communities. Cleaners and schools officers are important members of the school community and are essential to maintaining an environment where students can learn safely. Under private contracts distance is created between the school and these workers. The end result is a reduction in quality of service.

That is why LHMU and QPSU members are campaigning with school communities to fight these plans.

How to use this Kit

This kit is designed to make it easy for QPSU and LHMU members approach

the P&C at your school and ask for their support in the campaign to keep quality public services in Queensland schools.

This is in the face of threats to contract out all cleaning, maintenance and grounds services in all new schools and potentially have this happen in every school in Queensland.

We have drafted a letter from the school staff to the P&C and another letter for the P&C to send to Education Minister, Rod Welford.

The following goes through a process to use the kit – if you would like to vary steps to suit your school please do so.

1. Read the first letter and sign it. Ask other school staff at your school to sign the letter too.
2. Once all the school staff who are willing to have signed the first letter, designate one person or a group of people to attend the next P&C meeting to present the letter.
3. At the P&C meeting present the letter to the committee and explain what the letter means and why we are asking for the support of the P&C. At the bottom of this page are some speaker's notes for this meeting.
4. After you have explained why you want the P&C's support and what for. Ask them to sign the prepared letter and send it to the Minister. The name and address for the Minister are on the letter.
5. After the meeting fill in the form at the end of the kit reporting on how the activity went and fax it back to the LHMU Office on 1800 065 885 or the QPSU Office on (07) 3017 6224.

Continued over...

Speakers Notes

What's happened so far: The Government announced that all new schools built will have building maintenance and cleaning services contracted out to a private company for thirty years. This company will determine if staff are based at the school or offsite and will be more interested in the profit margin they can generate out of the contract rather than providing a quality service to the students and school community. In every other state where this has occurred the standard of cleaning and maintenance services has dropped significantly. We expect this will flow on to schools across the state, and eventually every Queensland state school will work under these conditions.

Breakdown of community: Contracting-out of services breaks down our school communities. Cleaners and schools officers are important members of the school community and are essential to maintaining an environment where students can learn safely. Under private contracts distance is created between the school and these workers. The end result is a reduction in quality of service.

Kids' safety: Because they are part of the school community, cleaners and schools officers believe that kids' safety is important. Cleaners and schools officers offer an extra layer of security because of the hours they work. Under the government's plans, schools have no control over who the private contractor hires.

What we are asking: We are asking that you as the P&C write to the Minister for Education and/or our local MP and ask them to reconsider contracting out these key public services that directly affect the experience and safety of your children at school.

What we want you to do: Please read and sign the letter we have here. We can take it and post it or provide you with an envelope tonight. We need to make sure that the Government are clear on what we will not compromise on as a community – clean, safe schools for our kids with publicly funded and provided services – services that are accountable to the community.

Any questions?

Thank you: Thank you very much for your support – we sincerely appreciate it. If there's anything that our union can assist you with please let us know.

**Here is a copy of a letter to the Minister.
Email tcd@qpsu.org.au for an electronic copy.**

The Hon. Rod Welford
Minister
Department of Education and the Arts
Level 22
30 Mary Street
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Mr Welford,

Contracting Out of Services

We as the Parents and Citizens Committee of _____ school write to you to request that all plans to contract out cleaning and maintenance services in state schools be stopped.

We are committed to having the very best learning environment for our children and hope that the energy and tax dollars we invest in educating our children contributes to a publicly funded, publicly provided school system.

We have reviewed the documentation about what has happened in other states like Western Australia and do not support the contracting out of services that will most likely result in a reduced level of cleanliness and safety at school.

We ask that you do not support any plans to contract out services in schools and do whatever you can to ensure the tender process is not completed for the new schools currently planning to be serviced in this way.

Thank you for considering our request.

Yours Sincerely,

P&C President

www.positivelypublic.com

positivelypublic 
don't contract out my job

