

MEDIA RELEASE

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Traffic lights signal 'Stop-Go' on AI

The unions representing teachers and school leaders in both state and non-government Queensland schools have developed an innovative traffic light rating system to guide teachers' use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education.

The Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) and the Independent Education Union - Queensland and Northern Territory Branch (IEU-QNT) have jointly published a set of resources to advise their members on the use of AI in schools.

While AI in schools is a recent development, both unions were committed to ensuring their members had immediate access to guidance and resources.

IEU-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the guidelines covered four key areas: ethical responsibilities of teachers, schools and education systems; curriculum and pedagogy; products and platforms; and, workplace health and safety considerations.

"Within those areas a traffic light framework of green, amber and red has been employed for simplicity and clarity when it comes to teachers' application of new technologies," Mr Burke said.

Green categorises applications that reduce teacher workload and/or support student learning without undermining the role of the teacher or negatively impacting learning.

Applications under the green category indicate autonomous, professional decision-making by the education leader or teacher.

Amber applications are those requiring wider consultation to ensure their adoption does not undermine the teacher's role or negatively impact learning.

Applications classed as red can undermine the role of the teacher and/or negatively impact the learning process and are therefore deemed inappropriate and unsafe.

Such applications include the use of AI in the classroom when it comes to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

For example, a green implementation which preserves teacher autonomy is the use of AI to draft homework questions on a specific topic or generate text for students to critique.

An amber application of AI, which requires consultation, is the use of automated essay scoring and allowing students to research factual information using internet-connected devices.

A red application example, which is problematic and not supported by the unions, is the use of chatbots to enable entirely self-directed student learning.

The resources (discussion points and a decision-making framework) are landmark documents that encourage teachers to think deeply about the various opportunities and ramifications of using AI in an educational context.

"The resources aim to be a guide that considers the legal, industrial, professional and educational issues arising from increased use of digital technologies," Mr Burke said.

"Our unions have participated in various stakeholder discussions and forums regarding AI's potential impact and the proliferation of novel digital technologies in education, which have informed the development of these resources," he said.

QTU President Cresta Richardson said the resources aimed to help teachers frame their professional opinions on how, when and where the technologies are deployed.

"We hope to spark discussion within the teaching profession because current practitioners are best-positioned to decide what applications of AI and other digital technologies are appropriate for specific students and contexts," Ms Richardson said.

"Both our unions are represented on the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (QCAA) AI Working Group and the Federal Education Minister's AI Education Taskforce to ensure the voices of practising teacher union members are heard," she said.

"Teachers and education leaders must be represented at all levels of discussion regarding AI use and its implications.

"Decisions about the use of AI in schools must be informed both by practising teachers as the education experts, and by AI experts," Ms Richardson said.

ENDS

To access copies of the QTU and IEU-QNT's AI resources, please send requests to one of the below contacts.

Media contacts:

QTU contact: Cresta Richardson, QTU President:

During office hours, email: media@qtu.asn.au

Outside office hours, text 0418 789 162 (please include your name, media company represented, the reason for your interview request and any deadline)

IEU-QNT contact: Emily Campbell, IEU-QNT Communications Officer: ecampbell@ieuqnt.org.au / 0400 746 175

The Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) is the professional and industrial voice of Queensland teachers and school leaders in state schools and TAFE for more than 130 years, with over 48,000 members. www.qtu.asn.au

The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 teachers, school support staff, principals, early childhood education and VET and RTO employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory. www.ieuqnt.org.au