

ThePoint



GENERAL SECRETARY
DEBRA JAMES

The toughest year

In this column at the end of last year, I called 2020 a 'truly extraordinary year'. Little did we all know that 2021 would provide even bigger and more unprecedented challenges.

Repeated and prolonged lockdowns forcing everyone to work from home were tough enough, but this year widespread COVID-19 infections, school closures, and anti-vaccination campaigns added a new degree of difficulty.

Once again, overworked and under-resourced Victorian teachers and Education Support staff conquered new technology and systems to run classes from makeshift home offices, whilst combatting lockdown fatigue and often grappling with other family members studying and

working from home. We salute and applaud all education staff for ensuring the best possible outcome for our students.

Thanks to everyone who pitched in to keep the union running smoothly in 2021. The pandemic created new and sometimes difficult enquiries

for Organisers, administrative staff, industrial officers, and leadership to field, particularly as unions became a target of organised misinformation campaigns. Opposition to our position was dealt with

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The Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania acknowledges the Indigenous people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

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IEU office summer hours

The IEU Victoria Tasmania Offices in Melbourne and Hobart will be closed for the summer break from 4.00pm on Wednesday 22 December.

The IEU Switchboard will re-open with reduced hours of 9.00am to 4.00pm from Monday 10 January and a Duty Officer will be available to assist with urgent member enquiries.

Normal office hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday will resume as of Wednesday 24 January.

For non-urgent enquiries over the holiday period, email info@ieuvictas.org.au or finance@ieuvictas.org.au if the matter relates to your membership and fees.

Fee freeze 2022

Due to our solid membership growth this year, IEU Committee of Management has decided to again freeze membership fees – so they will remain at the rates set for 2020 right through to the end of 2022.

Please make sure you are in the correct income-based fee category by visiting Member Access at <https://member.ieuvictas.org.au>

Graduate membership

Kick start your career. Get your teaching career off to the right start by becoming an IEU Graduate Member.

Join the collective voice of our profession, be protected at work, make the most of our great Professional Development opportunities and have the peace of mind of knowing that you've got the experts in your corner!

Graduates in their first year of employment can join at our special rate of \$228.21 for the year, a discount of over 60%. Further discounts apply for student members who convert to graduate membership by the end of January.

IEU Pride shirts now in stock!



Show your union pride with a NEW IEU Pride tee!

Get yours and browse other great IEU gear in our online shop at www.ieuvictas.org.au/shop – and take 15% off your order with the code IEU15, valid until 15 December.

Find the IEU stall at Midsumma Festival!
23 Jan in the Alexandra Gardens. www.midsumma.org.au

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Contact us

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) @IEUVicTas

IEU INDEPENDENT
EDUCATION UNION
VICTORIA TASMANIA

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

T: (03) 9254 1860
F: (03) 9254 1865
FreeCall: 1800 622 889
E: info@ieuvictas.org.au
W: www.ieuvictas.org.au

CONTRIBUTIONS & LETTERS

from members are welcome and should be forwarded to: *The Point* PO Box 1320, South Melbourne 3205, or by email to: ThePoint@ieuvictas.org.au

MELBOURNE OFFICE:

120 Clarendon Street,
Southbank 3006

HOBART OFFICE:

212 Liverpool Street,
Hobart 7000

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EDITORIAL CONTENT:

Responsibility for editorial comment is taken by D James, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank 3006. Views expressed in articles reflect those of the author and are not necessarily union policy.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

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David Brear

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Catholic bargaining updates

Two-thirds of our membership await new Catholic Agreements in Victoria and Tasmania to protect and improve their pay and conditions. Your union is working hard to overcome significant obstacles to get you the results you deserve!



Victoria

Negotiations for a new Agreement covering all staff in Victorian Catholic education are progressing – but not at the speed we would like. After our intensive period of member consultation in late 2020, we tabled our Log of Claims with employer representatives back in February. Since then, progress has been... slow. Just one example of this is the fact that, despite receiving our Claims right at the start of the school year, it took Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools until Term 4 to issue the paperwork necessary to commence formal talks.

Of course, COVID outbreaks, lockdowns and shifts to and from remote learning have occupied a huge amount of everyone's time, and the implementation of a new governance structure in Catholic education has also made negotiations more complicated. On top of that, we've seen negotiations between the AEU and the Victorian government drag on significantly longer than anyone had hoped for and given our claim for pay parity with the government sector we understand that at this stage there is a limit to how far we can get discussing salaries.

However, the unwillingness of employer representatives to meaningfully progress discussions of our many non-salary related claims throughout the year has been deeply frustrating. Not just for us, it turns out: the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd in September informed us that they wished to pursue a separate Agreement to the other three

Dioceses. As a result, since then we have been running our negotiations in tandem – we're at one bargaining table with the Dioceses of Melbourne, Ballarat and Sandhurst and all other employers, but at another with Sale (including Catholic College Sale). While this has greatly increased the workload for the IEU team, at least the pace of discussions has picked up a bit with the Sale Diocese.

While we have always had a separate Agreement for Xavier College, the rest of Victorian Catholic sector has previously been covered by one Agreement, and it is likely that the shift to two will raise a host of issues. One of our key aims will be to ensure that even if there are slight differences between Agreements, there is functional consistency as well as clarity that staff moving between schools covered by different Agreements will maintain all their entitlements.

As we end the year, we hope that 2022 will bring refreshed enthusiasm for productive bargaining to the representatives of the larger employer group. Equally, we hope that the Victorian state government will be digging deep to work on an offer to our AEU member colleagues that properly reflects the extraordinary efforts of all school staff.

Tasmania

While the process is at a far earlier stage in Tasmania, unfortunately we can't say that it's been significantly less frustrating. Though the previous Agreement expired in September, the

Tasmanian Catholic Education Office initially indicated that it did not intend to commence bargaining until the middle of next year. It also appeared to be trying to cut the IEU out of bargaining: its proposed timeline did not mention the union or anticipate receipt of a Log of Claims, instead proposing that it would conduct its own 'conversations' with employees and develop a 'summary of employee requests' as the basis for the new Agreement. Needless to say, this set alarm bells ringing very loudly!

Determined to lay the groundwork for good-faith bargaining, the IEU commenced a period of member consultation and developed a Log of Claims which was served on the TCEO on 1 November. Deeply concerned by the TCEO's apparent plans to obstruct and delay bargaining, we also prepared a campaign to force them to the bargaining table should this become necessary. This would have required a state-wide push to get the majority of all employees to sign a petition calling for the commencement of bargaining, on which basis the Fair Work Commission could issue a Majority Support Determination, a binding order on an employer to negotiate in good faith.

In the meantime, we also continued to liaise with other Catholic employers in Tasmania who had the good sense to see the value in constructive negotiations with the legal representatives of their employees.

While the TCEO could not bring themselves to respond to our Log of Claims by deadline, the prospect of

a state-wide campaign leading to the humiliation of being forced to the bargaining table by a Fair Work Commission order clearly got some cogs turning: within days they had agreed to commence good-faith negotiations with the IEU in February 2022.

While the TCEO's approach to date has not been promising, we are prepared for the time being to overlook the error of their ways and to work towards timely and productive negotiations in 2022 as we seek to improve the working lives of our members in Tasmanian Catholic education.

Finally, action on discrimination in our schools

The IEU has campaigned for over a decade to curtail the legal right to discriminate in faith-based schools. This year, we saw a major step forward.



In July 2021, the IEU's Discrimination Survey received over 1200 responses. The stories and data gathered helped propel the campaign to close a gap in Victorian anti-discrimination laws, with *The Age* quoting the union's demands for changes in a series of articles about discrimination in religious schools.

Our survey indicated a broad range of experiences across our sector, and confirmed that many schools actively foster a welcoming and inclusive culture. However, this is not universally the case: 45% of respondents reported witnessing or being subjected to discrimination in their workplace, up to and

including the withholding of promotions or even sackings based on sexual orientation or parental status.

Currently, Victorian faith-based employers have the legal right to discriminate against staff on the basis of factors including marital, relationship or parental status, religious belief or activity, sexual orientation and gender identity. The IEU's long-held position is that it should only be legal for these factors to be considered where they are inherent to a particular role – for example, religious activity could be an acceptable factor to consider in recruitment of a religious educator. Otherwise, staff should be treated fairly

and hired or promoted based on merit, not on irrelevant personal, relationship or family factors.

We have long campaigned for workers in faith-based schools to be entitled to the same rights and protections as other workers, pushing for Victoria's laws to reflect contemporary community expectations and lobbying successive governments to curtail this right to discriminate.

On September 16, the Victorian government announced the introduction of legislation to end discrimination 'on the basis of sexuality, gender and marital status'. The IEU strongly endorsed this long overdue legislation and partnered with Equality Australia to launch a community petition

calling on Victorian MPs to support its passage.

While there has been a significant amount of push-back from some faith leaders to this legislation, we know from our own conversations with principals that the majority are proud to lead inclusive, welcoming institutions and do not want the right to discriminate against staff on the basis of irrelevant personal attributes. Other jurisdictions, including Tasmania, have removed discrimination-law exemptions without plunging faith-based education into crisis.

Unfortunately, just as victory is in sight, we face a new hurdle: the Federal

government's proposed *Religious Discrimination Bill*. This would override Tasmania's nation-leading protections against discrimination and negate the gains won in the proposed Victorian legislation, as well as 'protecting' sexist, homophobic and discriminatory hate-speech under the guise of safeguarding religious freedom. While it currently appears likely that the third attempt to introduce this deeply flawed legislation will fail (just as the previous two did), we cannot afford complacency, and will actively campaign alongside other IEU branches and anti-discrimination advocates against this Bill.

Stay tuned for updates...

IEU wins pay rise at Woodleigh College

IEU members at Woodleigh College have won decent pay increases after a challenging five-year battle. It took a successful Protected Industrial Action Ballot, but the College agreed to everything in the union's claims.

This includes increases of 7.5% for teachers and 9% for general staff over the life of the Agreement, plus provision for a bonus if the school records a significant surplus.

Back in the first lockdown of 2020, when the school was facing financial uncertainty and was proposing a significant round of redundancies, the IEU agreed to a temporary wage freeze. By the end of the year, it was clear that the school was in a strong position, bolstered by significant JobKeeper payments.

By the middle of this year, progress was slow, and members determined that they would need to take action to bring the negotiations to a successful resolution. A protected industrial action ballot was organised through Fair Work and the Australian Electoral Commission.

The result was more than 90% of members approving various forms of industrial action, including bans on meetings and report writing and strike action. This got management's attention, as did stories on the ballot result published in *The Age* and *Herald Sun*.

It was at this point that management accepted the bargaining team's fair and reasonable claims. When informed that members were on the verge of taking strike action the school quickly agreed to accept their claims. It was a clear demonstration that

union members, united and strong, can take decisive action and win a good result.

The result was more than 90% of members approving various forms of industrial action, including bans on meetings and report writing and strike action.

Membership of the IEU has grown strongly at Woodleigh because of the successful campaign and all staff there can now see the power of solidarity.

Woodleigh timeline

- **July 2017** bargaining starts, claim developed.
- **2018-2020** bargaining continues but is frustrated by management delaying tactics such as drafting wording and then fighting over it rather than substantive issues.
- **2020** COVID crisis sees bargaining halted and a negotiation around a wage freeze. Members agree

to a wage freeze, but Woodleigh receives JobKeeper and gives parental fee discounts.

- **2021** Bargaining resumes but little progress is made, and management seeks to re-negotiate items already agreed to (days of attendance). Membership grows over this period with talk of industrial action.
- **July 2021** Members vote in a survey to undertake a protected action ballot.
- **September/October 2021** Ballot run, with over 90% of members voting in favour of action. Employer representatives agree to all substantial items in the IEU claim. A final meeting is held to confirm our deal.
- **Now** Drafting continues.

The highlights of the win:

- Improved consultation clause
- Music teachers made ongoing, and their service counted properly with all entitlements due to other staff, such as personal leave
- Attendance days for teachers reduced to 190 days per year
- Improved definition of face-to-face hours
- Protection of lunch breaks
- Improved natural justice provisions and appeal mechanisms relating to 'reportable conduct' allegations.

Organise for power

The approach taken at Woodleigh was informed by Organising for Power (O4P), a free global online training and networking program for organisers run by Harvard Law academic educator and author Jane McAlevey through the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. More than 10,000 workers from six continents and 70 countries have joined O4P training sessions in the past 18 months.

'Progressives have plenty of good ideas. The issue is that we win too few campaigns because we lack the power required. Organising, at its core, is about building the power to win,' says McAlevey.

The program's focus is on 'building supermajority participation in structure-based organising environments...'

The IEU Organiser who worked on the Woodleigh campaign says the O4P course introduced him to new ideas and 'solidified some of his thinking'.

'I considered the source of the workers' power and how they could exercise it. I recruited new members to the union which was difficult to do during an extended lockdown in Melbourne. I'm now regularly using O4P principles in other schools.

At Woodleigh, the membership did not form a majority of the workforce, but it was united in its purpose and possessed a bargaining team who were good leaders. IEU Organisers used the 'six-step structured organising conversation' to help achieve the outstanding 90% strike ballot result.

O4P's first pilot workshop attracted thousands of organisers from dozens of trade unions and organising groups across thirty countries. Participants practice essential skills including organic leadership identification, one-on-one conversations, and the role of structure tests in building strong organising bodies.

The courses rely on small-group practice and role playing, allowing participants to 'learn through action'. Guest speakers from across the world use real-life examples from their organising battles to inform participants.

Jane McAlevey's book *No Shortcuts* concludes that reversing today's inequality requires a robust embrace of unions that are 'focused on bottom-up rather than top-down strategies, that place the agency for change in workers acting collectively both at work and in the communities in which they reside'.

2021 Win: Ilim College and fixed-term contracts



In late 2020, an IEU member working at Ilim College whose employment had continued beyond an initial fixed-term into ongoing work was told by the school that she was in fact still fixed-term and there was no work for her in 2021. When we investigated, it seemed apparent that the school was in breach of terms of the Teachers Award requiring written confirmation of fixed-term employment along with genuine reasons for offering fixed-term contracts.

After we tried to sort it out amicably – the usual first step – the IEU lodged an unfair dismissal case on our member's behalf. Unfortunately, we were not successful in arguing that our member was unfairly sacked, as the Fair Work Commission found that she was never a permanent employee.

However, we suspected there were

many similar fixed-term positions across the school – more than would be permitted under the terms of the Award, which places strict limits around legitimate reasons for fixed term employment. So, we sought penalties for the suspected breaches of the Award in the original case above. We then requested that the employer provide access to the current contracts of all current IEU members in the workplace to enable us to confirm the legitimacy of fixed-term employment arrangements.

The school advised us in response that only two current IEU members were fixed-term – however in the meantime, a very significant number of other IEU members were asked by the school to quickly sign new permanent contracts!

The original Award breaches are an ongoing matter.

2021 Win: Australian National College of English

Nine IEU members at the Australian National College of English received over \$190,000 in backpay and unpaid leave and redundancy entitlements after the Fair Work Commission found they had been paid below-Award rates and misclassified as 'casuals', despite several years of regular, systematic work arrangements.

A significant portion of the underpayments occurred during the Victorian lockdowns, when the employer made the 'interesting' decision (completely unfounded in law or basic common-sense) to cut their hourly rate of pay by \$10 – simply because classes were being conducted online!

Because they were misclassified as casual employees, the employer had dismissed them with no entitlements when business took a down-turn. The

IEU's victory in having them recognised as ongoing employees at the Fair Work Commission means they are now collectively entitled to over \$50,000 in redundancy payments.

Our members report a working atmosphere of fear and intimidation, and we congratulate them for having the strength, unity, and courage to stand up and demand their lawful entitlements.

The toughest year *(continued from front page)*

professionally and with empathy, but we were also heartened by many messages of support from members.

There wasn't an aspect of our operations not influenced by the pandemic. We had more interactions with the media and put out more updates to members, and nearly every interaction from training to school visits to student conferences went online.

I'd like to thank our staff for finding ways to continue our support and advocacy for members while largely working from home. It's taken flexibility, determination, and good humour to get through a second year of remote work.

In Victoria, bargaining in the Catholic sector has started with two sets of employer representatives at two separate bargaining tables, an historic change as there was previously only one Agreement in Victorian Catholic education. This modification and drawn-out negotiations in the government sector have delayed the process, but meetings are well underway.

In the Tasmanian Catholic sector, a refusal by employer representatives to agree to commence bargaining led to lots of work with our membership preparing for a Majority Support Determination campaign. Fortunately, a last-minute backdown by the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office has brought us back on track, and formal negotiations will commence early next year.

Recruitment numbers for the year remained encouraging, despite the lack of face-to-face contact in workplaces for Reps and Organisers, with 2068 members joining and net growth of over 2%.

There was plenty to celebrate during the year, with members at Woodleigh College winning a long overdue pay rise after they overwhelmingly supported a protected action ballot.

At Ilim College, we secured permanent employment status for many staff wrongly left on fixed-term contracts.

We had significant successes in challenging the standing-down of staff in several Victorian independent schools last year. Most of these were

resolved rapidly and in favour of IEU members, however our issues with Peninsula Grammar continues. We quickly won the most significant aspects of this dispute. All our affected members were rapidly reinstated and had their fee discounts credited, but the school continues to resist our claims to backpay wages. This matter is ongoing in the Federal Circuit Court.

And after a decade of campaigning from the IEU, lately in partnership with Equality Australia, we were delighted to see the state government announce legislation to end loopholes in anti-discrimination laws to stop faith-based organisations discriminating 'on the basis of sexuality, gender and marital status'.

The full stories of these wins follow later in this edition.

With new School Operations guidelines and other pandemic regulations coming thick and fast, we all had to get our heads around such new topics as masking exemptions in classrooms, the implications of required vaccinations and the toll of hours of livestreaming lessons.

Despite these novel challenges, the usual work of the union continued without lull.

The Industrial team continued their vital work in both bargaining and representing members in matters ranging from reportable conduct investigations to underpayment disputes and Workcover claims. The union directly represented members with more than 600 issues and disputes. Thanks, team: your expertise, and wise counsel has never been more important to the union and its members.

Pandemic or not, we also continued to advocate on behalf of members at state and national levels, at VIT, submitting policy recommendations to relevant authorities and committees and providing input to key government and employer forums and advisory bodies.

We have also defied COVID-19 to expand our training and professional development to members through online webinars. The Learning Hub provided

free programs live or on-demand to members, covering a huge range of relevant topics and helping fill the professional development void created by remote learning and working from home.

2021 was also a Rep election year, and we were glad to welcome a big cohort of new Reps to join those who had successfully sought re-election. We hope that you have found the role rewarding, despite the difficulty in missing face-to-face contact with members in workplaces. As primary contact for your Sub-Branch, you have faced searching tests of your communication and negotiation skills this year. We really appreciate your attendance at councils, your advocacy on behalf of your members and your feedback to the union. You are the bedrock of the organisation, and your contribution is crucial to building the strength of the IEU.

After what we've experienced in the last two years, we should probably expect the unexpected in 2022. Let's hope we can get together more, and converse less via computer screens. However, we will enter the new year with renewed confidence in our resilience and certainty that nothing will stop us advancing the interests of our members.

At the end of another tough year, I must applaud the camaraderie, resolve, and sheer persistence exhibited by our Reps and members and the broader education community. Your selflessness, ingenuity, adaptability, and generosity over the past two years ensured the best possible outcomes for tens of thousands of students and their families and honoured the brave efforts of frontline workers during the toughest time our community has faced in generations.

Your role is amongst the most important in our society, as many more people now know, and we offer our respect and thanks for the incredible work you have done during the pandemic.

The IEU is its members



DEPUTY SECRETARY
DAVID BREAR

Educators are used to implementing change, but who'd have guessed back in March 2020 the extent of the changes we'd be asked to adapt to?

As the school year draws to a close and as the double-vaxed numbers creep over 90%, can we finally safely hope that the lockdowns are over and life will go back to something like it was, albeit forever changed into a reality called COVID normal?

Right now the IEU is at the negotiation table at 37 independent schools in Victoria and four in Tasmania. We are also negotiating two new Agreements with Catholic employers in Victoria and will commence negotiations with Catholic employers in Tasmania in February.

We have taken on and won many cases for members at the Fair Work Commission and in the courts and we continue to advocate very successfully for members in their workplaces. We have also worked to promote the interests of our members with employer bodies, regulators, and the Victorian, Tasmanian and federal governments.

We are a growing union with over 20,000 members which is important because it means that our collective strength continues to increase and we have the resources to do our work effectively. Our team is flat out supporting members.

The reason we can do all of this is, of course, you! The union is every member. In 2022 we will continue our work, with the immediate challenge being to conclude negotiations on new Agreements covering members in Catholic and independent schools.

We know that the biggest issue confronting members is workload and work intensification and we have made several claims in negotiations to tackle it.

Every term staff are asked to take on new and additional work and somehow fit it into their working week and while each new task may only take an hour or so to complete, when you add up each new task people have been asked to take on, the total adds up to hundreds of hours over a school year. If this work is important, schools need to get serious about reducing face-to-face teaching time and class sizes so it can all get done without burning people out.

I hope you all have a great break over summer – it goes without saying that you've earned it! Fingers crossed that the worst of this pandemic is behind us, and we can all move on with some confidence.

2021 Win: fee remission reductions ruled unfair

Teacher denied pandemic fee reductions for her daughters wins Federal Court case.

The IEU secured another significant win in mid-November, with the Federal Circuit Court holding that Peninsula Grammar School engaged in unconscionable conduct by seeking to deny a fee discount to a staff member with two daughters at the school.

Judge Riley found that the school's 'unilateral' reduction of the fee remission for teacher Melissa Newham was unfair under section 23 of the Australian Consumer Law.

IEU General Secretary Deb James said the school made 'multiple attempts to pass the costs of lockdowns on to staff, from standing down employees without pay to dishonouring negotiated fee discounts'.

'These were knee-jerk, unethical and, as it turns out, unconscionable and

unlawful moves by a school which had no shortage of capital funds it could have relied on to weather the storm.'

On 9 April 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and online learning, Peninsula Grammar sent an email to parents, saying the tuition fees of all students would be reduced by at least 30% from May to August 2020, but students who already received a higher remission would not be eligible for this reduction.

Judge Riley said the reversal of the decision to reduce the level of staff fee remissions, and credit the accounts of any staff members who had paid the additional amounts, outlined in a letter a letter dated 1 April 2021, demonstrated that reducing the level of staff fee remissions had not been reasonably necessary to protect the legitimate

interests of the school.

Deb James said the school's actions 'are indefensible and frankly embarrassing'.

The vast majority of schools did the right thing by employees over the course of the pandemic – it's a real shame to see a wealthy institution like Peninsula Grammar display such little loyalty, regard or care for hard-working staff.'

The costs hearing is on 17 December, and the IEU's costs will be paid by the school. A separate case regarding the underpayment of support staff is due before court in February 2022.

From the President



UNION PRESIDENT
MARK WILLIAMS

A BIG shout out to our wonderful staff in schools for again going above and beyond in terms of workload and commitment, preparing and executing learning in the most challenging of times any of us will ever witness.

To our teachers and support staff, your resilience, flexibility, and skill in adapting to an ever-changing environment has been exemplary.

Perhaps I'm biased, but such recognition should also be extended to Principals and other school leaders for their fair and reasonable direction when implementing guidelines seemingly made up on the spot. Leaders also exhibited incredible organisational skill in carrying out contact-tracing exercises on an almost daily basis while also managing their school community's educational and emotional needs.

These efforts have been seen and recognised across our communities like never before. I only wish that I could segue into a comment on how well Agreement negotiations are proceeding, in the light of all this extraordinary work...

In Victoria, we've seen great words from our state government about the efforts of our colleagues in government schools – but not much action at the negotiating table! Given the workload feats of school staff in recent years, you'd think the Victorian government might show some empathy and flexibility and improve its miserly 2% wage policy. It's a disgrace that at a time like this staff in government schools have had to commence industrial action just to get reasonable progress in their negotiations.

Equally disappointing is the response of Victorian Catholic employer representatives to Agreement negotiations. Yet again we see a real unwillingness to meaningfully progress negotiations until the government sector outcome is finalised. Delay is the aim of the game – and unfortunately we've also seen a gold-medal-winning performance from the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, who have had to be brought kicking and screaming to the bargaining table!

Let's hope this strategy is not mimicked by independent schools, where many Agreements have already been seriously delayed by lockdown interruptions.

Incredible efforts go into bargaining across our sector – benefiting us all, paid for and made possible by IEU members. Please respectfully remind non-members of this fact, and of the injustice of taking a free ride on the work of others!

Hall of Shame 2021

In 2021 the Education Hall of Shame is less like an awards hall and more like a secondary school corridor during a rainy lunchtime: packed and chaotic.



The judges regret that there is no room for so many of the employers who engaged in unbridled stupidity – we just can't reward all the astonishing entries. But then turpitude is its own reward, isn't it?

Once again, we have had to exclude reportable conduct and underpayments. If the judges had to wade through all the stupid, petty allegations of 'reportable conduct' they would be busier than an HR manager in sacking season. And the collection of dodgy private training companies underpaying tutors looks like an aerial photo of the NSW mouse plague. It has been suggested that we need a separate award ceremony for these, but so far not one person has volunteered to be a judge. So, on with the show ...

Bronze medal

This year, turd place is awarded for fear and loathing: Congratulations to the secondary principal who loathes staff so much she can't face meeting them in person and fears what she might say if she does. She has such a famous incapacity to communicate

with staff she made a bargaining claim to have performance and conduct matters dealt with wholly in writing. Maybe teaching could be done that way as well? Perhaps managing the school could be done remotely? Anyway, that's for next year's awards.

Silver (30 pieces)

The Catholic Education Office in Tasmania is back in the fray. Apparently, they have forgotten that taking a confrontational approach in 2013 led staff across the state to go on strike for the first time in 200 years. After a period of working mostly co-operatively with the Union to improve Catholic education, the new hostile approach is yielding great results – for the TCEO's lawyers. While losing one dispute after another, the TCEO are tipping more and more money into fighting the unwinnable. Instead of settling a redundancy for a few weeks' pay back in July, the TCEO coughed up many months of pay and it's still unresolved. Their lawyers are planning the biggest Christmas party ever on the proceeds. Keep your eye on this lot – a hot tip for gold in 2022.

Going, going, GOLD!

What about Ritzy Girls Grammar who reprimanded a member for seeking Union advice on a fixed-term contract that the school's lawyers had drafted? Apparently unaware of the power imbalance and the irony of the school 'lawyering up' while threatening the fixed term for doing the same, the school made it very clear that they resented the utter impertinence: 'Trust the school and make an appointment to see the principal if you have concerns.'

Strangely, the member learnt more towards the Union's advice: there were multiple errors and over-reaches in the contract. The member resigned from Ritzy Grammar. She is very happy with her new school and is on significantly more money and fewer contact hours. All reports are that Ritzy Grammar has lost another great teacher.

That's the way to improve education GOLD!

Mask mandate ruled lawful and reasonable

The Fair Work Commission recently dismissed a cabin crew member's claim that Qantas unfairly terminated her employment when she refused to wear a face mask at work.

The Commission found that Qantas did not constructively dismiss the former flight attendant despite the fact she had a doctor's medical certificate to exempt her from a work requirement to wear a face mask or shield before it was required under public health directives.

The Commission found that the work requirement to wear a mask constituted a 'lawful and reasonable direction in the context of the COVID pandemic.'

The flight attendant resigned from Qantas after being directed by the employer to wear a surgical mask during her shift and to attend an independent medical examination. She had presented a medical certificate from her doctor purporting she was unable to wear the mask due to anxiety and other medical conditions.

The attendant brought a claim against her former employer alleging that her resignation constituted a constructive dismissal, however the Fair Work Commission dismissed the claim, finding that the attendant resigned at her own initiative and was not left with no choice but to resign.

The Commissioner found that the attendant had a 'number of options', such as attending work as directed or having an independent medical examination, but that the attendant 'chose not to

do either of those things, but instead instructed her lawyer to communicate her resignation'. The Commissioner also found that the attendant was not discriminated against.

In October last year, the attendant applied to Qantas for an exemption from its mask-wearing mandate with her medical certificate stating that it made her 'extremely anxious'. However, the medical certificate also declared that she had 'no medical condition of note', but that 'she finds she has trouble performing her job safely' and that the GP's 'advice and opinion is that she not be required to wear masks at work'.

Qantas denied her an exemption, as it did not accept that she suffered a medical condition making it unsafe for her to wear a mask. Qantas offered to let her wear a face shield, yet the Commission heard that the attendant continued to work without wearing a mask or shield, resulting in at least one customer complaint.

When the attendant disclosed to her former employer that she also had Hashimoto's Disease and a benign frontal lobe tumour, Qantas Medical's occupational health national manager declared her temporarily unfit for flying duties. The employer booked an appointment with an independent medical examiner to

find out if she could perform her role safely and offered her alternate duties in the interim. However, the attendant refused both to attend the appointment or to perform the alternative duties.

When Qantas directed her to return to flying duties in May of this year and comply with the mask or shield requirement, warning it might otherwise dismiss her, the attendant resigned from her employment through her lawyer.

At the Commission, the evidence was clear that the attendant did not have a medical restriction affecting her ability to wear personal protective equipment.

Ultimately, the case turns on its facts, and had the attendant been able to demonstrate that she in fact had a medical condition which prevented her from safely wearing a mask or other personal protective equipment, then the outcome may have been different. However, in the circumstances, it was found that the requirement to wear a mask was a lawful and reasonable direction.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Understanding your holiday pay

Holidays can be expensive, especially over the long summer break for school staff if they are only entitled to pro-rata leave.



Most education workers have school holidays for six weeks, and some will not be paid for the whole period. It's not a problem for most who were employed for the whole school year: they are entitled to be paid up until the start of the new school year. But some support staff don't get full pay for the holidays and any teacher who started after the start of the school year, or took unpaid leave during the year, may only be entitled to pro-rata school holidays.

Under the Award, and most Agreements, teachers are entitled to 'school holidays without loss of pay'. You work 40(ish) weeks of term time and are paid as normal for the 12(ish) weeks of term holidays. But those who have worked less than 40 term weeks don't get the full 12 weeks: they get a 'pro-rata payment'.

Here is an example:

- *Giulia started a new teaching job at the beginning of term 2. She worked 30 term weeks (terms 2-4*

inclusive) out of the 40 terms weeks in 2021. She is entitled to be paid for ¾ of the year's school holidays, or 9 weeks. She has already been paid for the term 2 and 3 school holidays (4 weeks) so is entitled to 5 weeks' pay over summer – so she will have one week unpaid.

That is how it works for teachers at independent schools with no Enterprise Agreement, and for teachers at Catholic Schools in Victoria.

In Tasmania, if Catholic teachers have worked more than two terms in the year, they get the same pro-rata rate as other teachers, but if they have worked two terms or less, they only get a proportion of four weeks' annual leave. This leaves some Catholic school teachers without pay for a significant part of the summer holidays. The IEU's claim for the next Agreement seeks to fix this anomaly.

Sometimes Support Staff can also be unpaid for part of the summer

holidays. Term-time employees in Victorian Catholic Schools (Category B) are in the same position as teachers - if they don't work the full school year they get 'pro-rata' payment over the school holidays. Support staff in Tasmanian Catholic Schools get a full 4 weeks' annual leave, but are mostly required to have up to 8 weeks unpaid each year. Most 'average' their salary over the year, so they get 44 weeks' pay averaged over the 52 weeks of the year. Support staff in schools that have no Agreement mostly get the same: 44 weeks' salary averaged over the 52 weeks of the year.

Other independent schools have Enterprise Agreements. Most follow the Awards, but some have their own arrangements. If you suspect that you may have been underpaid for the summer holidays, get in contact with your Organiser.

Pay increases in the teachers Award

Teachers being paid under the Award are about to get the benefit of significant pay increases.

The IEU has won increases of up to 13.6%, largely thanks to years of work by our NSW/ACT Branch. While the current pay rates range from \$53,731 to \$74,344, the new rates will be from \$61,034 to \$84,452.

Since we last reported on this there have been several developments:

- It seems there will not be any waiting period or 'phase in'. The pay increases will become payable from the date the Fair Work Commission signs the order.
- There had been concerns that access to Level five would only be for teachers with 'HALT' accreditation (which doesn't exist in Victoria and is only a trial in Tasmania). There is now an alternate pathway that will allow experienced teachers access to this top pay rate (currently \$84,452).
- Teachers on the Award will generally require full registration to progress above level 1 (currently \$61,034). However, if not fully registered after one year of teaching, they can progress to level two without full registration by undertaking a separate assessment.

There is no substitute for a union-negotiated Agreement, but in those independent schools where union membership is low, the Award provides a legal minimum. And that legal minimum is about to jump very substantially.



Know Your Country – boost indigenous education

A visionary campaign is calling on all levels of Australian government to fund a locally approved First Nations educator in every Australian primary school.

Know Your Country stalwart Auntie Phyllis Marsh has been a First Nations cultural educator at West Moreton Anglican College in south-east Queensland for three years.

She told the *Teach Starter* webcast that indigenous education needs to be 'embedded' in the curriculum, rather than being set aside in an 'iconic cultural corner'.

She said many well-meaning educators had become 'overwhelmed' by reading reams of material and not knowing how to approach local indigenous communities. 'There was this fear of offending, not doing it right...'

Fellow advocate Dr Scott Winch, a First Nations policy officer with World Vision, agrees that many teachers lack the knowledge and confidence to tackle indigenous education.

'We're not trying to call teachers out on this, we're trying to call them in and say we can hopefully be a resource to equip you with local connections, and local knowledge to support the curriculum with local aboriginal people.'

He says it's important for

indigenous children to have their culture and history and perspectives reflected in the curriculum, but ultimately every student benefits from properly resourced indigenous education.

'It really is also a gift to all Australian children to be able to learn from our culture and history and to truly engage in their local environment and to really know and connect with their country.'

He says the proposal would 'enhance and enrich' schools, support 'extremely overloaded' teachers and link them to local communities with 'authentic locally-based cultural education'.

'This campaign could transform how Australians understand each other and their relationship to this land and the world's oldest living culture.'

KYC research revealed that more than half of Australians surveyed didn't know how long Australia was inhabited prior to the arrival of James Cook and 70 per cent aged 18 to 24 would have liked better First Nations education when they were at school.

ABC News reported in October that research from the NSW

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation found the 26 per cent gap in Year 12 attainment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students could be closed through increasing engagement earlier in high school.

'This campaign could transform how Australians understand each other and their relationship to this land and the world's oldest living culture.'

'It's all about respecting culture and it's about having all of our staff understand the importance of local Aboriginal context and culture, and all students,' NSW Education Minister Sarah Mitchell said.

Auntie Phyllis says her role

works because it is 'holistic' – she builds relationships and trust within classrooms, the workforce, and the community.

In a culturally safe classroom any child 'no matter how they identify or where they're from' enters their learning space 'feeling this is their space where they come to learn'.

That means indigenous materials are accessible all year, not just in NAIDOC week. Indigenous identity is celebrated every day. All students learn that indigenous culture still exists and is still practised.

Auntie Phyllis was taught by her parents to sit and observe, then mimic. She uses the same technique with her younger charges, taking them to a pond where they watch birds and animals, then bring their story alive through dance. She says the 'littlies' are most engaged by dance and stories that are connected to the country where they live.

Older students created their own committee to ensure they learned more about indigenous history. They seek out documentaries then come to her 'to have a yarn about it'

Asked what teachers can do to support the campaign, Auntie Phyllis said: 'Sign the petition. Become part of the ambassador group that's letting the government know this is important and this is what we want for our future generation.'

To sign the petition and browse excellent resources, including an email signature banner generator you can use to acknowledge the country on which you live and work, go to www.knowyourcountry.com.au

Independent bargaining round-up

Membership growth of nearly 2% in Victorian independent schools over the last year means our strength at the bargaining table is increasing.

Victoria

Bargaining continues to generate improved outcomes for our members, and with membership growth of nearly 2% in Victorian independent schools over the last year our strength at the bargaining table is increasing.

The IEU is currently at the table negotiating Agreements at 35 schools in Victoria. Importantly, three of these schools are negotiating for first-time Agreements – **Mt Hira, The Currajong School** and **Al Siraat**. Our branch has also led bargaining for a first-time national Agreement with **Indie School** which is currently awaiting approval.

The most significant development in independent bargaining was the successful Protected Action Ballot Order (PABO) that was achieved at **Woodleigh School**. For various reasons the negotiations at the school dragged on over several years, with members eventually voting overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action. Fortunately, in the days leading up to the first action by members, the school made an overall offer that was acceptable to the bargaining team, and we are now in the process of finalising the drafting of the Agreement. It was a great example of member strength and the power of potential industrial action in helping reach an acceptable outcome.

The IEU has also negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with **Lutheran Education Schools** which

have allowed us to lock in both a wage increase for 2021 and a commitment to pick up bargaining early next year once the schools have finalised their governance changes.

There has been a flurry of finalisation of Agreements towards the end of this year with negotiations finalising at **Christ Church Grammar School, Albury Wodonga Community College** and **The Geelong College** amongst others. Several other employers are also looking to put a ballot a final agreement also before the end of the year including **Ballarat Grammar School**.

Given the slowdown in bargaining 2020, we have only seen five Agreements approved by the Fair Work Commission in 2021, but with many current negotiations ending we would expect that number to rise sharply in 2022.

Enterprise bargaining accounts for a significant amount of the work undertaken by the IEU in independent schools. Bargaining is very labour intensive with Organisers generally required to attend a significant number of negotiation meetings on top of the additional member consultation, recruitment and Sub-Branch work. Of course, IEU Organisers continue to be backed by our very able industrial staff who provide considerable bargaining, legal and professional development support for Organisers.

Tasmania

Following a quieter period last year bargaining has continued in Tasmania in 2022. We have managed to finalise four Workplace Agreements in 2021 and are currently at the table negotiating with six schools. Our Tasmanian-based Organisers have also been involved in wage setting at number of schools for 2021 and 2022 in line with current Agreements with those employers.

Our union has been involved with the re-negotiation of the **Christian Schools** Multi-Employer Agreement which is moving to ballot soon and the **Indie School** Agreement to bring the members in the new sites in Tasmania under the employer's industrial instrument. Short-term agreement extensions may also be finalised for both Teaching and General staff at **Launceston Church Grammar** school before the end of the year.

As is the case in Victoria, wages for Education Support staff in Tasmanian independent schools remain low. The IEU is working hard to address this but in schools where membership numbers are low this is proving to be difficult as intransigent employers continue to argue against wage increases for their lowest-paid employees.

Your union is growing in size and strength

Following a bumper recruitment year in 2020, we've seen more than 2000 new members join our ranks in 2021.

We're ending the year nearly 2% bigger than we started it, continuing our long run of solid recruitment by members, Reps and Organisers which has seen us grow by 25% in a decade.

This strong result came despite the challenges of making contact with potential members during periods of lockdown, and is a testament to the work members and Reps put in to 'talking union' with their colleagues to demonstrate the value of membership.

A bigger union is a stronger union, with greater capacity to support members and to negotiate better working conditions. This is particularly important in years where we are bargaining new Agreements for improved pay and conditions, as is the case for our Catholic sectors in both states as well as many independent schools next year.

In 2021, 75% of new members were either teachers or principals and 22% of the new members were Education Support staff.

Education and training remains the sector of the Australian workforce with the highest proportion of union members. Overall, women make up a greater proportion of trade union membership (55%) than men (45%).

As always, it's vital that we keep our focus on growth. Members and Reps are key to this: we look forward to working with you all at the start of the 2022 school year to encourage colleagues to join us, so we can ensure that the IEU wins keep on coming!

Another survey, but an important one

We encourage all Victorian teachers to participate in a survey that will form part of the federal government's Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD).



Australian
Teacher
Workforce
Data

A huge teacher shortage is looming if workload intensification is not addressed.

The ATWD project run by the Australian Institute for Teaching and Leadership (AITSL) aims to build a comprehensive picture of the national teaching workforce, from initial teacher education through to the end of a teaching career.

The ATWD Survey will offer a crucial insight into modern teaching, including trends in teaching loads and non-teaching activities and shortages in specialisations.

Despite more people starting teacher training, the overall

numbers of graduates have plateaued, only increasing by an average of 0.4% since 2006, lower than the growth rate of Australian school-aged children. It's particularly bad in primary education programs.

The ATWD survey aims to address gaps up-to-date and relevant teacher data. Targeted policy can only follow from accurate and timely information.

The potential workforce shortage has three main causes: a significant cohort of teachers approaching retirement; new teachers leaving the profession; and problems attracting teachers, including graduates from other professions.

In June, the New South Wales Teachers Federation told *The Guardian* that state will need 11,000 more teachers by 2030.

In Victoria, more than 40% of principals say maths and science classes are not taught by teachers qualified in those subjects, and 86% of teachers say their workload is 'never, seldom, or sometimes manageable'.

Professor John Hattie from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education told *The Conversation* in 2017 that the average age of starting a teacher education course was 23-29, so many come as a second career when giving up earnings is more difficult.

'Almost half the students who

enrol into teaching programs don't complete their course (about 30,000 enter each year and 18,000 complete). Of the students who started an undergraduate teacher education program in 2012, only 47% had completed their study after six years... There is little evidence on who drops out and why.'

Prof Hattie also asked for ways to attract a 'more diverse cohort' into studying teaching, saying the workforce in many schools is 'mostly female and white', which does not reflect school populations.

The ATWD has been a four-year process and will begin reporting annually later this year with an 'emphasis on analysis

and reporting that will inform policy / employer needs.

All Victorian teachers should have received an invitation to participate on 3 November. Don't delay – the survey closes for Victorian teachers on 10 December.

The survey recently closed for Tasmanian teachers – thanks to the many who participated.

More details can be found at www.aitsl.edu.au



Lyn Davies: A great teacher and unionist retires

At a time when most people accept accolades, Lyn Davies was busy handing them out.

When she retired from teaching after a marvellous six-decade career, Lyn Davies emailed the IEU, thanking us 'for a teaching lifetime of protecting and helping'.

'I want to thank you for your unceasing care and work towards better conditions. May you always do this.'

Such a generous message is typical of the ex-Kiwi, a lifelong unionist, who finished her career teaching the children of her original students.

Organiser Mark Mitchell says Lyn was a great Rep who 'advocated strongly for all the members and was a great recruiter'.

'She was fearless but measured. Her great strength was 'breaking in' new principals. It didn't take principals long to realise it was better to consult with Lyn before they planned, so Lyn didn't have to carefully and respectfully show them the error of their ways.

'Lyn's great leadership meant the Mercy College Sub-Branch always had good member density and a great sense of unity. Lyn regularly attended IEU Council and Conference and our Rep dinners.

'Lyn always welcomed a visit from the Organiser and made sure we met up with the principal and the staff. We always felt welcome and enjoyed our interaction with the members and staff at Mercy Regional College Camperdown.'

Lyn says she wanted to be a teacher because she was taught by some 'wonderful' teachers herself.

'They made me believe in myself and that I had a brain if I cared to use it!'

'I trained in New Zealand and came to Australia in 1976 to see what it was like, and yes there was a boy involved! Anyway, I needed a job and applied at the Melbourne Catholic Education office and ended up at Noorat, at the very new Catholic Regional College. I had to modify my fabulous New Zealand accent and teach in areas I wasn't trained in. Nothing like learning on the job.'

'I joined the union early because I felt it was an important idea and something that needed to be expanded.'

Noorat, 211 km west of Melbourne, population 219, is near Camperdown, where Lyn finished her career, at the same Mercy Regional College. It is home to Australia's largest dry crater and was the birthplace of famous children's author Alan Marshall, whose *I Can Jump Puddles* Lyn taught her students.

Lyn enjoyed working in a smaller school because it yielded a 'deep knowledge' of students, and she enjoyed the 'multiple roles' she had to embrace.

Lyn has been a classroom teacher, English coordinator, VCE coordinator, careers advisor, VET and VCE teacher. She

taught Home Economics, Textiles, VET Hospitality, English, Literature, History, and Health and Human Development.

Lyn spent her whole career working for the one employer, but she says there have been 'huge' changes in teaching itself, what is taught and 'the politics of teaching' in her time.

'When I first started teaching there was no maternity leave. Things have got better, sometimes we forget how far we have come.'

Lyn's great grandfather was a union man in Wellington, New Zealand and she grew up familiar with the idea that 'there are rights that are important for a working man'.

'I joined the union early because I felt it was an important idea and something that needed to be expanded. In those days we had classes of 30-plus, limited sick leave, no maternity leave and less money than state teachers, and limited protection as far as employee rights were concerned.

'One of the joys of being part of the union has been fighting and gaining those rights. I felt honoured when people asked me to support them when we had problems at school. The sense that you don't fight battles on your own is a very important one...'

Lyn says the first thing she asked a new staff member was 'Are you a member of the union?'

'I think that always showed we were a growing force to be reckoned with.

'I've always been proud to be a teacher, when someone can read and write it makes them powerful. As a union member, it makes us as teachers powerful in a very important job.'

Lyn finished her career during the COVID era, and she says the pandemic has reminded society that we need to pay teachers properly for the 'multifaceted job' they do.

'I think COVID may have been a wake-up for some parents. COVID has also reminded us of the importance of face-to-face teaching, Zoom doesn't quite cut it!'

For Lyn, retirement means 'no more dreaded Sunday nights' and taking time, instead of rushing. She's going to explore duties as a marriage celebrant and pursue a Certificate 2 in Horticulture.

She will be greatly missed by her colleagues and the wider IEU community.

HSR Super Sleuths

October was National Workplace Health and Safety Month, and the Victorian Trades Hall Council's annual conference for Health and Safety Reps had the theme *HSR Super Sleuths: Exercising Your Powers to Uncover Hidden Hazards and Risks*.



HSRs from all industries and around the state participated online, including IEU members like Emma Gray from St Francis Xavier Primary School in Corio who said the conference was 'fantastic and very worthwhile' She was especially impressed by the HSRs from Crown Casino who banded together to change legislation for smoking indoors.

'I commend them for their tenacity and thank them for the inspiration.'

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Lin Fritsch, an epidemiologist from Curtin University interested in occupational causes of cancer. Professor Fritsch spoke about the

importance of keeping the H in OHS, maintaining an emphasis on health as well as safety.

Occupational diseases such as mesothelioma from exposure to asbestos and silicosis from exposure to silica dust are well known but fewer people are aware of the connection between work and cancer, with occupational exposure to carcinogens estimated to cause over 5000 new cases of cancer in Australia per year (Cancer Council Australia).

Professor Fritsch spoke of the difficulty in understanding, identifying, and preventing occupational disease because of the time between exposure and disease, other contributing non-work-related factors, and the fact that sometimes

there is no clear sign about what caused the disease.

HSRs then heard about how this awareness of occupational disease could be used by HSRs to keep workers safe.

HSRs who missed the conference can catch up on the recorded sessions and resources at www.ohsrep.org.au/conference2021

Picture this

A recent amendment to the OHS Act means that from 22 September 2021 Victorian HSRs have the power to take photographs or measurements or make sketches or recordings (either audio or video) at any part of a workplace at which a member of their designated work group (DWG) works.

The OHS Act also sets out how HSRs can use the information they have gathered. They can raise health and safety concerns directly with their employer and negotiate higher order controls, send it to their union for assistance and advice, or provide it to WorkSafe who may consider whether further investigation is required.

WorkSafe Victoria has a summary of the amendments at: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-safety-and-other-legislation-amendment-act-2021



Principal journey: Ellie McGinness, St Joseph's Sorrento

Ellie hasn't just been a teacher in Catholic schools in three states since 1975, and a principal since 2003, she's been in the Catholic system since she was five!

She studied at Australian Catholic University and commenced her teaching career in Canberra. Her journey as a principal began in 2003 at Larmenier Catholic School in Launceston, Tasmania.

In 2009, she joined Catholic Education Melbourne as principal at St Mary's School Malvern East and she's been at St Joseph's Sorrento since 2016.

Ellie says the children she's taught have been the highlight of her career and she's been blessed with the 'calibre, passion and dedication' of her staff over many years.

'The profession of teaching is truly remarkable. Staff just keep on giving.'

Parents have also played an important role in her years as a principal.

'The sheer trust parents place in us with the care and nurturing of their child in an ever-changing world and a society of increasing complexity. Preparing students for an unknown future is exciting and daunting and an enormous responsibility, and one full of challenges, sadness, joys, love and laughter.'

Like most educators we speak to these days, Ellie says balancing workload and life is the major issue facing teachers and principals.

'The huge increase of administration and managerial work takes us away from our core work and vocation.'

She says schools are a 'world full of policies that cannot be ignored' and the increasing parental expectations and crowded curriculum are also increasing

challenges for educators.

She believes workload issues are the number one priority for the IEU and says the union has been 'very active' in this area.

Ellie has been a truly committed unionist.

'I have been a union member throughout my career as teacher and principal. As a principal in Tasmania I began as the Tassie Rep on APPA and ACPPA. When I moved to Victoria, I joined the IEU as a principal Rep and then became the Victorian Rep on APPA and ACPPA until 2018. I am still an active member of our union.'

In her six years at St Joseph's, Ellie has overseen changes including the development of flexible open learning spaces; the ongoing development of collaborative learning teams and deepening of the philosophy of contemporary learning.

Ellie has developed a 'lateral' leadership style across the school. She says, 'all staff are leaders'.

As principal, she's aimed to be 'an ongoing presence in all the learning spaces' to remain 'very much a part of the planning, assessment and data'.

'The focus always on the student. Bringing the use of data to the forefront and use data to drive the learning and teaching.'

She's also championed literacy and mathematics initiatives and focussed on ICT, ensuring there's relevant devices for every student.

The other changes Ellie has initiated in her six years show how much a motivated principal can achieve. Refurbished library and art room. Outdoor Sensory Educational Garden. Indigenous Edible Garden. Establishment of a Bible Garden and Vegetable Gardens. Replanting of grounds with native coastal plants. Extensive improvements to the grounds.

Despite all these successes, Ellie says when she retires, it's people she'll miss the most.

'The children first and foremost. The wonderful people that I have had the privilege of working with. The school as community.'

A true educator to the end, Ellie says she'll enjoy 'family, fun, and travel' when she calls it quits.

But she'll also be 'staying connected with education and children' and undertaking 'further learning'.

In her six years at St Joseph's, Ellie has overseen changes including the development of flexible open learning spaces; the ongoing development of collaborative learning teams and deepening of the philosophy of contemporary learning.

Then there's enriched connections with community groups including parishioners, the Sorrento Men's Shed and the introduction of Little Joey's Playgroup.



The power of a pair

Jenny Roberts and Michael Chalkley, long standing IEU members, discuss how they have made a success of being co-principals at St Peters Catholic Primary School in North Bendigo.

Jenny and Michael say the success of their partnership is due to many hours of 'establishment work' undertaken with mentor Anne Sexton, which set out the basis for sharing their duties.

Jenny and Michael firstly shared their fundamental beliefs about the role. Luckily, both identified teamwork as a crucial ingredient for success! Communication was also an agreed fundamental – they had to ensure all stakeholders understood the dual roles from the outset and decided they would both take part in important conversations. They aimed to focus

on the school community with 'no ego-driven agendas' and resolved to be a united team which had each other's back.

They even agreed to share an office. This ensured Jenny and Michael always had someone to bounce ideas off, but also meant they heard the same messages, and presented consistent messages themselves. Sharing the same space also made it easier to check in with each other when making decisions.

They say their shared vision and proximity boosted their confidence and sped up decision-making.

Jenny appreciates the great

'back-up' co-principalship creates.

'In every meeting, we always have a support person. It enables one of us to listen reflectively and add additional information that the other may have missed.'

Feedback to the partnership from staff is favourable – they appreciate that one of the two principals is always accessible.

And training the wider school community has been simple. When a parent calls and asks to talk to the principal, the answer is, 'we have two co-principals, I'll put you through to the one who is available'. Depending on availability, parents can see one

or both principals.

'Every part of the role is shared, no 'split down the middle', so people are clear that they could go to either for support,' says Michael.

That said, the skillsets of the two principals vary, so they can cover a wider range of situations than if one of them was in charge.

Michael says the partnership enables the principals 'to be reflective, respectfully challenge each other's perspective, and share ideas and use collective wisdom to problem solve'.

Jenny says they were surprised by some advantages of the arrangement.

'People said you would waste time making decision. We found the opposite. There's less wasted time checking in, as we hear the same information and can then make a joint decision.'

If one person supporting a child, staff member or parent, the other is available to complete timeline designated tasks.

Jenny and Michael recommend the model for a new leader, who could learn alongside a more experienced principal.

VTHC calls for a royal commission into the organised far-right in Australia

Secretary of Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC), Luke Hilakari, publicly spoke out against the rise of fascism and far-right organising in Australia, calling for a Royal Commission to investigate links to foreign influence, social media, commercial interests, and media platforms of known far-right agitators.

The demand came after a small gathering of concerned anti-vax CFMEU members escalated into a riot and right-wing attack on the Victorian union's offices in late September.

Protests and violence continued for a week in the streets of inner Melbourne led by known far-right agitators and anti-vax organisers. Hilakari, who witnessed the events unfold from inside the CFMEU office, recalls: 'It was deeply disturbing to watch this crowd rampage through Melbourne for a week terrorising people – openly using neo-Nazi symbols and gestures, desecrating symbols of our democracy – and I know that there were people among them I would have once called comrades.'

Since these events, VTHC have spoken to thousands of union members about COVID vaccine requirements in workplaces. They've found the overwhelming majority of union members support vaccination and understand the need for public health measures, but there are also those who don't want to get vaccinated and who feel under threat. These members state they are scared of the vaccine, worried about losing their job and income, and feel alienated from their workmates. Most unions staunchly back vaccination as an essential requirement of safe workplaces and as an act of solidarity with our health workers, but to vaccine refusers this feels like betrayal. They are easy pickings for the far right, and as a result

Australian families are losing loved ones to conspiracies and extreme ideologies.

They've found the overwhelming majority of union members support vaccination and understand the need for public health measures, but there are also those who don't want to get vaccinated and who feel under threat.

The siege on the CFMEU offices is not the only attack the organised far-right is advancing against the union movement. Within education, health and other industries, we are seeing the emergence of a new group of pseudo-unions. Portraying themselves as 'non-political alternatives' to established unions, these organisations in fact have strong ties to Liberal and National Party figures as well as groups further to the right, and their cynical growth strategy is to exploit vaccine hesitancy and lockdown fatigue to break solidarity and to lure vulnerable workers away from legitimate unions

which have the capacity to support and bargain for members.

In the words of Australian Council of Trade Unions secretary Sally McManus: 'These are fake unions run by LNP members and their associates set up to try and divide working people... this amounts to an LNP-sponsored anti-vaccination campaign which will directly and needlessly cause working people to contract a deadly virus.'

Hilakari identifies the true agenda of the far-right: 'Despite their use of anti-authoritarian rhetoric and appeals to 'freedom', what unites these disparate groups is an interest in undermining trust in democratic institutions.'

Alongside public policy and federal investigation, the VTHC calls for public information campaigns to address misinformation and political illiteracy, and the development of a rehabilitation strategy for our friends, family members, and workmates who have been entangled in conspiracies and dogma by the far-right.

Hilakari says we must address the factors that made those people susceptible to fascism – suspecting job insecurity, casualisation and a loss of control over workplace autonomy are the roots of the phenomena.

Recently in Melbourne some AEU and IEU members got involved in a community organising effort coordinated by the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism in response to the attacks on the CFMEU offices. The 'pro-vax, pro-union, anti-fascist' solidarity campaign drew in over 600 union members to its online organising meeting, with a goal to counter the messaging portrayed by the far-right and anti-vax movement.

We spoke to two IEU members about their involvement:

- 'Protests against vaccinations and public health measures go against the principles of unionism which are pro-health, pro-safety and solidarity. I'm deeply concerned at reports of the infiltration of the far right into the union movement, and as an educator believe we have a responsibility to the next generation of workers and unionists to stand together against these attacks.'
- 'I'm opposing the far right because being a unionist is about solidarity, inclusivity and opposing bigotry! Getting vaxxed is about doing our bit for public health and showing solidarity with healthcare workers.'

Rep training

This has been a big year for Rep Training, as a big cohort of new Reps were elected and eager to be trained.

We kicked off in March with two groups of new Reps and Assistant Reps attending Initial Rep Training. This program is designed to build the confidence of new Reps at Sub-Branch level and within the IEU. We aim to develop skills which help Reps have powerful conversations in their workplaces to strengthen the union.

Throughout the year we trained a total of 107 new Reps/Assistant Reps and saw that training reflected in steady recruitment numbers and member engagement.

When COVID restrictions eased in Victoria earlier in the year we held half of our Experienced Rep training in person. Experienced Rep training is designed to hone the skills of established Reps as the leaders of their Sub-Branch and builds on the concepts of power and activism explored in Initial Rep training to build union and activity in the workplace.

Running alongside our formal training program, Reps and Assistant Reps worked with Organisers and other workplace leaders to develop skills and

share experiences through our Rep Huddles. The huddles focused on transitioning to and from remote learning, but we see enormous long-term potential for them to share ideas across our sector.

When COVID restrictions eased in Victoria earlier in the year we held half of our Experienced Rep training in person.

Unfortunately, COVID restrictions meant we couldn't hold as much face-to-face training as planned. However, we're proud to have replicated the 'in the room' experience online, with many of our Reps reporting it was the best online PD they have done!

Online training also enabled us to incorporate our Tasmanian Reps into our regular Rep training program this year, which was invaluable for building interstate understanding and solidarity. Reps and Assistant Reps in the Tasmanian Catholic sector also

came together in September for face-to-face training and planning around our Tasmanian Catholic Bargaining Campaign.

Lockdowns prevented us from running Advanced and Extension Rep training this year, however we got feedback from experienced Reps to help us develop big plans for next year!

We look forward to further developing the leadership skills and industrial knowledge of Reps in 2022.



2021 The year in review

Industrial report

Reportable conduct investigations, misconduct and professional registration matters have again dominated the workload for the Industrial Team in 2021.

Issues and Disputes

Our successes in opposing unpaid stand-downs of support staff during periods of remote learning in 2020 meant that employers backed away from doing this in 2021. We won all those battles, and we're still pursuing Peninsula Grammar for one period where some support staff were unpaid. In November, we won a case against Peninsula Grammar in the Federal Circuit Court over a failure to honour fee reductions for the children of staff.

In 2021, the union represented individual members on more than 600 separate issues, while providing advice to many more. We continued to scrutinise fixed-term contracts, in particular for Education Support staff, and we've had hundreds of teachers and support staff members achieve ongoing employment. Other common issues were consistent with previous years: part-time work hours; 'due process' disputes; bullying and harassment; changes of hours and return to work part-time after maternity leave.

VIT issues have again been on the rise – in particular, there's been an increase in VIT re-reviewing previous indictable offences which are now required to be considered under recent amendments to the Act. Members facing these issues require considerable support from their union.

On top of our ongoing work supporting bargaining in independent schools, the industrial team has been closely engaged in bargaining (and pre-bargaining) work with Catholic schools in Victoria and Tasmania.

Termination of Employment

In 2021, the IEU represented several members facing unfair dismissal or adverse action concerns. In many cases, it was evident that the member would not ultimately escape termination of employment and a settlement agreement was negotiated.

Last year we reported that we were about to go to trial for a member who was terminated by a community arts group where she had been teaching for many years. The employer had tried to pass off her employment as 'sub-

contracting' and refused to pay wages, provide notice or superannuation. Their case collapsed at trial, and they agreed to pay all that was owing to her and contribute to the union's costs.

We also pursued an independent school for employing many teachers on fixed-term contracts. On threat of prosecution, the school relented and confirmed ongoing employment for about 90 teachers.

Tribunal and Court Matters

The TCEO tried to force employees being made redundant to sign a very unfair 'deed of release' to get their severance payment. TCEO had to withdraw much of their evidence and submissions because they were irrelevant. The Commission decided in our favour.

The Union also took the TCEO to the FWC over its use of an extremely misleading 'support person guide' which it issued to employees being subjected to performance management processes. The 'guide' attempted to stop representatives from even speaking in meetings. The Commission strongly criticised the document and the TCEO agreed to withdraw it.

One matter proceeded to the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Tribunal for a member who was stood down and subsequently terminated because of their disability. We anticipate this will proceed to trial.

While dealing with termination of employment and redundancy matters in the decimated ELICOS sector, our Project Officer uncovered all manner of underpayments and breaches of the Award and the Act. We've had many significant underpayment wins, retrieving wages, holiday pay, long service leave, and redundancy pay for underpaid teachers who had been treated as casuals.

We had a further significant success at VCAT, overturning a VIT Panel Hearing decision made in December 2019 which disqualified a member from teaching for three years.

Workers' Injury Compensation (WorkCover)

We've been busy providing advice and support for members injured at work, lodging claims, advising on wage and medical benefits and other costs covered, giving assistance in disputes over rejected claims and Return to Work Plans, and settling lump sum claims for permanent injury and negligence cases. We referred members' Workcover disputes to conciliation, and to the union's solicitors for further advice.

The industrial team prepared the union's submission to the independent review into the Victorian workers' compensation system, supporting the submission by the Victorian Trades Hall Council that the scheme's main goal must be caring for and effectively treating injured workers.

WorkCover cases to date in 2021:

- 42 new cases
- 47 cases of dispute conciliations (Union Assist / Worker Assist referrals)
- 18 cases of solicitor referrals in respect to permanent injury claims and genuine dispute outcomes
- 1 case currently before the Tribunal in Tasmania
- 12 cases of assisting injured members in their Return-to-Work negotiations with their employer.

Education & professional issues

The IEU strives to ensure that members views and interests are represented on a wide range of education and professional issues at both state and federal levels.

This involves active participation in a range of government and employer forums and advisory bodies.

In **Victoria**, extended lockdowns again affected every aspect of the work of our members this year. We continued to actively lobby for sensible protocols to ensure that workloads were manageable and safety was prioritised throughout the pandemic. We made extensive submissions to the important review of the Victorian Teaching Professions Code of Conduct, which was implemented in July. We have also been continuing to raise concerns around some aspects of the Register of Disciplinary Action, particularly relating to protocols for the naming of individuals who have been subject to VIT proceedings.

In **Tasmania**, we were largely pleased with new measures introduced by the TRB in response to concerns we raised over registration requirements, particularly in relation to workload requirements for provisionally registered teachers and school-based supporting members. We were less happy with the exclusion of stakeholders (including education unions) from important education regulatory bodies, and have written to the Tasmanian Minister for Education to outline our concerns and seek improved representation.

Nationally, we have launched a member project seeking to address the significant workload issues relating to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD). Initial survey results are being assessed, and we intend shortly to establish a working group develop strategies for tackling this workload issue. We are also involved in consultation in a number of other areas, including the NAPLAN review jointly undertaken by the Victorian, Queensland, NSW and ACT governments.

The year that was



JANUARY

- 1 Governance overhaul in Victorian Catholic schools reduces the number of employers in that sector from more than 500 to fewer than 30.

FEBRUARY

- 5 **Victoria's 25,000 Catholic school staff** demand the right to take protected industrial action in a push for more leave, smaller class sizes and less teaching time. General Secretary Deb James tells *The Age* that governance changes should give teachers and staff the ability to bargain collectively and take protected industrial action in the event of a dispute - a right previously denied them.

- 13 **Victorian lockdown 3**

MARCH

IEU Submission: Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process Interim Report to the Australian Government

- 8 **International Women's Day**

- 15 **March 4 Justice**
IEU joins other Australian unions and allies to call for equality, justice, respect and an end to gendered violence. Over 200 protests Australia-wide attract 110,000 people.

- 28 **The IEU has a huge win** when staff at Australian National College of English win almost \$200,000 in unpaid wages after taking on their college's decision to slash pay during lockdown.

APRIL

- 23 **Federal government's failed 'milkshake' consent campaign**
The IEU's Deb James said the schools sexual consent materials were 'well-intentioned, but they just don't hit the mark'.

MAY

- 16 **Education Support Personnel Day**

IEU General Secretary and Trades Hall President Deb James makes a keynote speech at the

21 **School Strike for Climate** in the Treasury Gardens.

- 24 **The push for an increase to the minimum wage**

Workers from across industries join ACTU Secretary Sally McManus at the Fair Work Commission to encourage the Morrison Government to institute a 3.5% increase to the minimum wage.

- 27 **National Reconciliation Week commences.**

- 28 **Victorian lockdown 4**

JUNE

- 1 **The push for teacher vaccinations ramps up**
The IEU and the AEU back calls for priority access to coronavirus vaccinations for school staff.

- 15 **IEU calls out casual work law changes** as a 'looming disaster for millions'. The *Industrial Relations Omnibus Bill* sounds tame enough, but it has shockingly anti-worker provisions that threaten the employment security of millions of Australians.

- 22 **IEU pushes for paid vaccination leave**
The IEU wants schools to provide paid leave during the school day so education staff can get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

- 2.5% Minimum wage increase a win for workers**

The Fair Work Commission decision vindicates decades of campaigning and bargaining by unions for decent minimum wages.

- 30 **AEU members**

in Victorian government schools take the first step towards industrial action in their crucial campaign for fair remuneration and more manageable workloads.

JULY

- 7 **Joint union statement & letter to Minister Hunt: Failed vaccine rollout leaves schools & communities unsafe.**

Teachers, Educators and Education Support staff struggling to get access to vaccination has left schools and early learning centres unsafe, and society without a clear path out of the COVID-19 mess, three major education unions said this day.

- 15 **Victorian lockdown 5**

- 17 **IEU Statement - Victorian outbreak**

The over-representation of school staff in the latest outbreak underscores the urgent need for vaccination of our education workforce.

- 23 **Joint IEU / AEU petition to prioritise vaccine access for education workers**

AUGUST

- 5 **Victorian lockdown 6**

- 11 **Andrews government fails to curb legal right to fire gay staff - from *The Age*.**

IEU General Secretary Deb James says there is still too much discrimination allowed under Victorian law and 'too many schools where both staff and students are forced to hide aspects of their identity or are made to feel unwelcome'.

- 12 **The IEU's Discrimination Survey** is cited in a series of articles in *The Age* about religious schools sacking gay staff.

- 19 **IEU commences consultation with members in Tasmanian Catholic education in preparation for Agreement negotiations.**

- 27 **Organise for Equality**
The IEU supports the campaign to help close the gap on pay inequity for women.

SEPTEMBER

- 2 **Vaccination Blitz** is announced for Year 12 students, their teachers, VCE exam supervisors and assessors.

- 15 **IEU members at Woodleigh College vote for protected action**

IEU members at Woodleigh College overwhelmingly support protected action to push for their long overdue pay deal. Within a month, the employer agrees to IEU claims.

- 16 **IEU supports proposed anti-discrimination law changes**

The IEU applauds the Victorian government's proposed reforms of legislation to better protect workers in faith-based schools and institutions.

- 21 **IEU position on COVID-19 vaccinations**

The IEU backs the vaccination drive because COVID-19 vaccine helps to protect education workers, their families, and our communities from the spread of COVID-19.

- 22 **Earthquake!**

- 23 **IEU condemns protest violence**

The IEU publicly condemns violence on the streets of Melbourne following the attack on CFMEU offices.

- 29 **Vaccination requirements in Victorian education**

On 22 September, the Victorian Chief Health Officer announces that vaccination will be a requirement for staff who work in schools and early childhood settings.

OCTOBER

- 1 **Student Teacher Conference**
A free full-day conference to equip pre-service teachers with the correct information and skills required to enter the teaching profession.

- 4 **Failing on climate fails Australian students**

Australia's three education unions reiterate their support for the School Strike for Climate (SS4C) movement.

- 13 **AEU Victoria industrial action begins.**

- 15 **Tasmanian lockdown**

- 22 **Victorian lockdowns completed**

- 29 **Victorian restrictions further eased**

- 29 **World Teachers' Day.**

The IEU calls for urgent action to address the workload crisis in our schools.

NOVEMBER

- 1 **IEU serves a Log of Claims on the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, while preparing a Majority Support Determination campaign.**

- 10 **TCEO finally agrees to schedule good-faith negotiations with the IEU.**

- 17 **Peninsula Grammar win**

Federal Circuit Court finds the school engaged in unconscionable conduct by trying to reduce the fee remission entitlement of an IEU member.



Sectors – year in review

At the end of yet another busy year for schools, here's a quick look at some of the big issues in our individual sectors.

Victorian Catholic Education

In 2021 the new governance structure in Victorian Catholic education was finalised, reducing the number of employers from over 400 to around 30 – one in each Diocese plus a number of religious orders. The IEU consulted with both former and new employers over the course of the transition to the new governance arrangements to ensure that IEU members' rights and conditions were protected.

Unfortunately, the stand-off over Long Service Leave entitlements continues. The interpretation given to the 2018 Agreement by employers is that everyone must take leave at a 'weighted average' of their time fraction across all their service. This has led to absurd results, principally that many employees are unable to take leave at their current rate of pay. In February 2019 the IEU proposed a simple and workable solution, which was inexplicably opposed by employers. After years of arguing and internal wrangling at the CECV, the Sale Diocese has now prepared an application to vary the Agreement – exactly as we suggested nearly three years ago! We hope we are at last close to a resolution.

Several years ago, the IEU and the CECV commissioned a major independent review of teacher and principal workload. The review provided irrefutable evidence that staff in Catholic schools are working excessive hours and that many workload drivers can be effectively addressed at a school and system level. The current Log of Claims for our next Agreement includes several demands for workload improvements. The IEU will be drawing on the findings of the review to support these claims and we are determined to gain improvements to conditions in this area.

The IEU has focused on the misuse of fixed-term contracts in Catholic schools over many years. As a result of our litigation, Catholic employers now must provide the IEU with accurate data on

the use of fixed term contracts. Current data shows that while the Sale diocese has made significant inroads, in the other dioceses there is still an unacceptably high number of staff on fixed term arrangements. We will maintain our focus on this issue in 2022 and beyond.

Tasmanian Catholic Education

While the Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement 2018 was a giant step forward for members, both in terms of improved conditions and clarity, we still had several disputes with the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, including a few requiring Commission proceedings.

Most issues that have escalated to disputes have involved the use and abuse of performance and conduct management processes. The IEU needed to intervene on several occasions when this process wasn't followed correctly. Of particular concern is the increasing practice of standing down employees while a performance process is instigated. This is rarely justifiable, and is very isolating for individuals and far from ideal when many of these processes could continue without recourse to stand-downs. Union membership is vital insurance at times like this – it ensures members get the right level of support when they need it.

There have also been disputes over the incorrect use of limited tenure contracts, fitness to work and modified duties, rights to long service leave at half pay for double time, correct calculation of leave entitlements and reclassification of support staff to higher levels. Several discrimination matters were resolved in conciliation in the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, but one matter continues and is likely to go to trial. The IEU also uncovered what appears to be a major mistake in the calculation and payment of Long Service Leave – we are hopeful of resolving it soon.



Rep training in Tasmania

Independent Schools

While Tasmania managed to avoid the worst of the pandemic, the continued swings in and out of lockdown in Victoria forced schools and staff to again show their agility in a constantly changing environment. Most schools consulted well with staff and made these transitions as safe, fair and manageable as possible. Some did not, which led to increased stress on members, heightened risk factors and significant work for our union.

Most independent schools continued to closely adhere to protocols and procedures required in government schools to manage safety and attendance during the pandemic. A minority took unnecessary risks around issues such as staff attendance requirements or meeting arrangements – while generally we managed to resolve these, there were several instances where poor decisions appear to have contributed to local COVID outbreaks.

We have continued to follow through in both the industrial commission and the courts regarding the poor actions we saw from employers in relation to the COVID pandemic. Our union has been successful in actions against Peninsula Grammar and will continue to pursue recalcitrant employers to make sure our members rights are protected.

While independent school bargaining would usually slow in a period where we await wages outcomes in government and Catholic schools, the delays experienced in 2020 have led to a significant load of 'catch-up' bargaining through the year in both states.

Reports to the Commission for Children & Young People (CCYP) continue to rise and even though more experienced in the scheme, some schools continue to handle the process poorly. Members are sometimes reported for incidents which clearly do not trigger the CCYP reporting provisions, creating a great deal of stress for everyone.

Regional Victoria

The pandemic created a different set of challenges for members based outside Melbourne or travelling to regional areas.

For much of the year, lockdown boundaries meant that metropolitan and regional areas were largely cut off from each other. Continuing state border closures affected the substantial number of members who lived in one state and worked in another. Employees needed permits to get across the border each day for work, with ten-minute journeys blowing out to over an hour.

Members who lived in metropolitan local government areas but whose workplaces were in regional LGAs, and vice versa, also faced a new set of obligations. Due to travel restrictions and authorised worker status requirements differing between metropolitan and regional areas, many members had to get COVID-19 tests several times a week just to go to work. Despite this extra strain, reports came back that those members met the obligations of the health directions and got their work done.

Often teachers and support staff had little notice before adjusting their work arrangements due to changing regulations, once again proving their skill and adaptability, delivering excellent great support for students and colleagues.

The Tutor Learning Initiative implemented across many low-fee Catholic and Independent schools enabled many members who were recently retired or worked as casual relief teachers (CRT) to take up fixed-term positions in schools. While these newly created positions providing some much-needed assistance to students, many regional schools as a result had difficulty engaging CRTs for daily teacher absences.

The year that was... in the media

The IEU was the subject of extensive print, television, radio, and online media attention in 2021. The union was featured in major news organisations 10 times in 20 days in September alone.

Mandatory vaccinations for teachers spiked attention, but we were also quoted extensively after issue three of *The Point* reported on the revealing Discrimination Survey completed by over 1200 members in July. This important work uncovered shocking intolerance and was quoted by *The Age* in a series of feature articles. This was a crucial addition to public debate in the lead-up to the introduction to Victorian parliament of long-awaited legislation to tackle

workplace discrimination in faith-based workplaces.

Other big issues which caught the attention of the media in 2021 included the ever-increasing scourge of teacher workloads; the campaign for priority vaccination of teachers; bargaining in Tasmania and Victorian Catholic sectors, the fight for a pay rise at Woodleigh College; school closures due to COVID-19 outbreaks and the growing mental health challenges facing educators.



Student teachers

Our free student memberships allow the IEU to unionise future members of our industry, providing them with the knowledge and skills to start their career securely.



Since 2020, we've worked to reactivate our presence in universities, creating new opportunities to develop activist student members and engaging with a broader cohort of teaching students more frequently. Digital organising has expanded our connection, providing convenient workshops in lockdowns, and improving engagement with regional students. We booked over 30 presentations on topics including 'Unions, Industry & Employment', 'Legal Liability and Duty of Care', and 'Applying for Jobs'.

This year we held two highly successful online events. In July the conference 'Be The Best Teacher You Can Be' aimed to provide attendees with the expertise needed to become an inclusive and well-informed educator. It covered topics from employment rights to decolonisation

in the classroom, attracting over 300 student teachers, many recruited to the IEU through the registration process.

Highlights of October's free online conference included the Principals Panel featuring a keynote presentation from an IEU member giving students a 'teachers toolkit' resource list. While it was a shame not to be able to hold an in-person conference, running it online improved accessibility, increased our numbers and gave a greater spread of attendees from right across both states.

Our Facebook group 'Preservice Teachers Victoria' now engages with more than 700 student teachers and draws in new student recruits to the IEU every week. It's a great space for students to discuss relevant issues, helps identify active union members, and is an easy way to share resources and information.

Alongside the AEU, we continue to run the Student Activist Network which attracts student members and encourages them to help organise and build student membership on their campus. We hosted two intakes of activist training this year, where student members were taught about union history, values, recruitment and organising skills, and were guided through goal-planning to unionise their cohorts.

Early Career Teachers

Despite pandemic restrictions making it difficult to connect with graduate teachers, we've converted or recruited almost 200 graduate members this year.

At the beginning of 2021, we upgraded 62 graduating student members to full IEU members. We also presented at the inductions for graduate teachers at the Diocese of Ballarat and Sale, recruiting 21 new graduate members. We hope to do the same in all Catholic dioceses in 2022.

The union also facilitated professional development, focusing on legal liability for teachers starting in schools, covering basic information about employment rights, the role of the IEU, duty-of-care responsibilities and the management of complaints. These sessions helped many younger workers understand key workplace rights and the role of unions.

When access to schools was restricted, we stayed connected with early career teachers providing support and professional learning, running webinars through the TLN, and launching IEU Early Career Teacher support huddles. The huddles, for teachers in their first five years of employment, enable early career teachers to share experiences, ask questions, raise concerns, and provide support and encouragement to each other. Facilitated by union organisers, but directed by the needs of attendees, the huddles covered tips for report-writing, having difficult conversations at work, pay and conditions, and the benefits of union membership.

The union continued to check in with graduate members, holding phone-banking days, sending out text communications, and holding online drop-in sessions over the holidays. At the end of Term Four, we will survey the cohort to ensure we continue to support this group as they enter their second year in the profession.

Casual Relief Teachers

2021 has been another challenging year for our CRT members. With each move from on-site to remote learning and back, CRTs have faced the uncertainty of whether bookings will be honored on top of concerns about the availability of daily work.

We heard of many schools that continued to engage CRTs for on-site supervision during periods of remote learning, to enable teachers to focus on remote delivery of classes.

This year also saw the Tutor Initiative Program rolled out in eligible Catholic and Independent schools.

Many of these roles were taken up by CRTs and this has provided stability in terms of days of work and income during this interrupted year. With the program continuing in 2022, there are further opportunities for CRTs to engage in this vital work.

Your union continued to support CRT members throughout these

challenging times. This year we again offered fee waivers during extended periods of lockdown to acknowledge that many of our members in this category had limited work capacity.



Women and equity

Well, 2021 was not the year we had hoped it would be way back in January and once again IEU women had to embrace flexibility and change, often at the last minute.

There was plenty of pivoting, postponing, and re-jigging of events and activities but we managed to achieve a lot as well as preparing some events and ideas which are 'ready to roll' in 2022.

International Women's Day and WRAW Festival

Amidst the uncertainty of the start of the school year we decided to hold our IWD event online. This meant sisters were able to join from all over our states to talk about the issues facing women working in schools. We finished with a feminist quiz – something that will reappear in future events as it was a great success. The We are Union Women team at the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) organised the Women's Rights at Work festival in the week of IWD and the highlight was the screening of *Women of Steel*, a documentary about a diverse group of women who ignited a campaign that changed Australia forever.

Women's March for Justice

On 15 March more than 100,000 women and allies rallied to fight for an end to violence against women and equality and justice for all. The Melbourne crowd in Treasury Gardens crowd included many members and students from our schools.

Launch of SAFE RESPECTED EQUAL Campaign

In 2021, the Victorian Trades Hall Council Women's Team launched the Safe Respected Equal campaign to

win better conditions and cultures for working women of all colours, cultures, and experiences. It was to be launched at the Women's Rights at Work Conference on 23 July, which turned out to be the first day of Melbourne's sixth (and hopefully last!) lockdown. The launch was moved online, and the conference postponed.

Many IEU women participated in these meetings and began the work of organising for change through:

- Activism at a workplace level. To fight for gender equality and clauses for gendered violence prevention and paid family violence leave and provisions for women's equality and rights.
- Activism to change systems. To campaign publicly for recognition and value of women's unpaid labour including funding free universal access to childcare, paying fair wages for early childhood educators and carers, and addressing the gender pay gap more broadly.
- Activism to change the conversation and drive cultural change in Australia through media, social media and large-scale mobilisations around particular events such as Equal Pay Day.

Focus on electing women HSRs

Alongside the above campaign, Victorian Trades Hall Council has been working towards getting more women elected as HSRs in their workplaces. Women are often disproportionately impacted by safety issues such as gendered

violence, bullying and harassment, and key to highlighting these issues is ensuring that we have more trained and empowered women HSRs across all sectors.

Anna Stewart Memorial Project

We were unable to run ASMP in 2021 due to COVID restrictions and the impact of lockdowns. We had hoped to host our online participants from 2020 in a work 'placement' culminating in attendance at the WRAW conference in July. We look forward to returning to an in-person program in 2022.

Campaign for inclusion of clauses in enterprise agreements

We've worked hard to run a gender lens over claim development and have been successful in a number of schools in getting improved paid parental leave entitlements, paid family violence leave, limits on spreads of part-time of hours and days, inclusion of gendered violence in workplace policies on harassment and discrimination, and payment of superannuation on unpaid parental leave considered in negotiations.

Audit of BOLD participants

IEU Victoria Tasmania members continue to participate in the BOLD program (run by our federal union) through online webinars. We are looking ways to engage and encourage a new group of women into this program in 2022.

LGBTIQ+

This year saw the biggest leap towards achieving equality and fairness for our members in faith-based schools with the introduction of The Victorian Government's *Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021*.

The IEU is proud to be part of these reforms after lobbying for over a decade and holding the current State Government to its commitment to deliver. See our longer article on page three for more details.

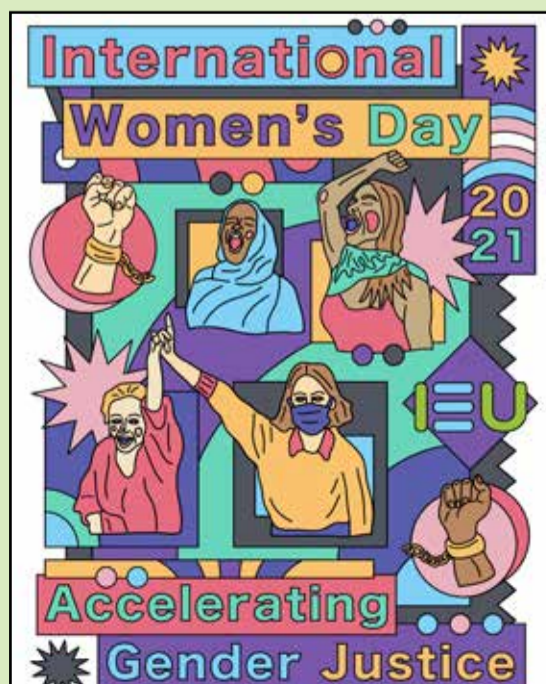
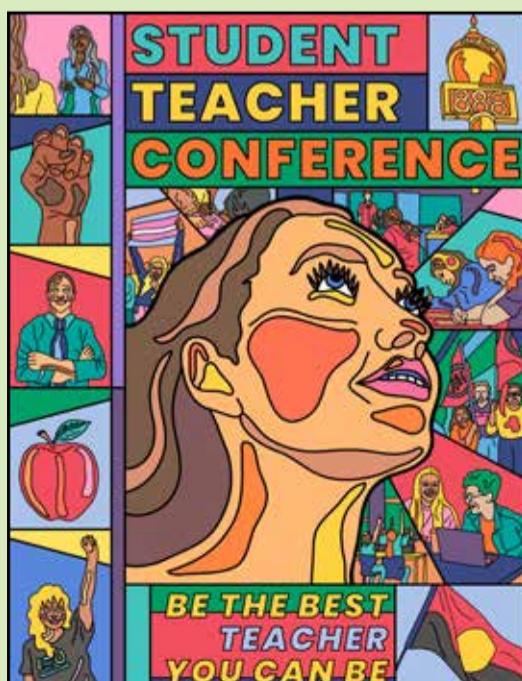
It's important to acknowledge the contributions made by the IEU Pride Network members who have shared their stories about hiding their real identity in the workplace for fear of losing their job, in particular Samantha Cairns. Sam bravely shared her story with journalists which resulted in a major article in *The Age*, which highlighted the fact that you could still be sacked for being LGBTQ+ in faith-based organisations.

As we dealt with another year of lockdowns, events such as Midsumma and our planned IEU Pride Network social event with MP for Northern Metropolitan Region Sheena Watt unfortunately had to be cancelled.

2022 promises to be a big year for the network, commencing with the Midsumma Carnival and Pride March. The IEU will be attending both events. Upon the passing of the Equal Opportunity reforms, the network will hold a special celebration to mark this major milestone.

The IEU Pride Network will continue to support union members in accessing information, support, and advice. To join the network, please contact pride@ieuvictas.org.au or apply to join our closed Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/ieupride

The year that was... in IEU posters!



Education Support staff

In 2021, Education Support staff again went above and beyond to assist students and colleagues with online learning and to keep our schools running.

The responses to the pandemic from schools ranged from the good, to the bad and the plain ugly. Superheroes were needed - and ES staff rose to the challenge, doing what was needed to ensure good outcomes for their students.

Recruitment of ES staff is continuing to grow. So far this year we have welcomed 487 new ES members into the IEU – that's a 10.5% increase on our 2020 recruitment (which itself was a record year with a 21% increase on 2019!). These are great numbers, and we are delighted to welcome our new members. Growth leads to Sub-Branch strength – and stronger Sub-Branches bargain better and get issues fixed!

Growing numbers of ES members in Catholic schools means better outcomes in the current Victorian bargaining and upcoming Tasmanian negotiations, and growth in the independent sector is key to ensuring that ES staff don't get left out when we negotiate for better salaries and conditions.

We've still got much to do. We know that in the Tasmanian independent school sector in particular, wages for ES have in some cases fallen below significantly behind. Right across all school systems, there are still far too many ES staff on fixed term contracts when

they should not be – though we should also take time to celebrate our recent successes in significantly reducing these numbers. The IEU will continue to allocate considerable resources to address these issues.

So far this year we have welcomed 487 new ES members into the IEU – that's a 10.5% increase on our 2020 recruitment (which itself was a record year with a 21% increase on 2019!).

Despite heavy schedules, many more ES staff made use of the IEU Learning Hub this year, showing that the thirst for great PD remains, no matter the other challenges faced.

We also had a great turn-out to seminars we ran in the lead-up to International Education Support Personnel Day on

key employment conditions including classification, employment security, overtime and break entitlements and conditions for School Services Officers. As a result of the excellent participation rates and great feedback on these sessions, we aim to present them on a regular basis. There is still so much to do in the fight for better conditions and wages, as well as recognition of the vital role support staff play in schools. Clear, informed and open discussion of rights and entitlements is the first step in getting members to work collaboratively to fix chronic issues in their schools.

The IEU has moved the awarding of the Jan Bavinon Award to International Education Support Day to better recognise Education Support staff. The criteria and an invitation to apply will arrive in your inbox early next year. Until then, we wish our ES members a great summer break and look forward to working with you again next year!

Principals report

The care of principals for students, staff, families, and the wider community during a difficult year was once again exemplary.

To ascertain the impact of the major changes to governance in the Catholic sector, a survey was sent to member principals at the end of Term three. Key issues highlighted by most included:

- Lack of consultation over the new governance model.
- An increase in handling required for previously streamlined tasks.
- Frustrations with ICON – excessive costs, lack of support for training, a heavy load on staff causing burnout and the platform being clunky, outdated, and ineffective.

The union met with Diocesan leaders to advocate for Principals in the following areas:

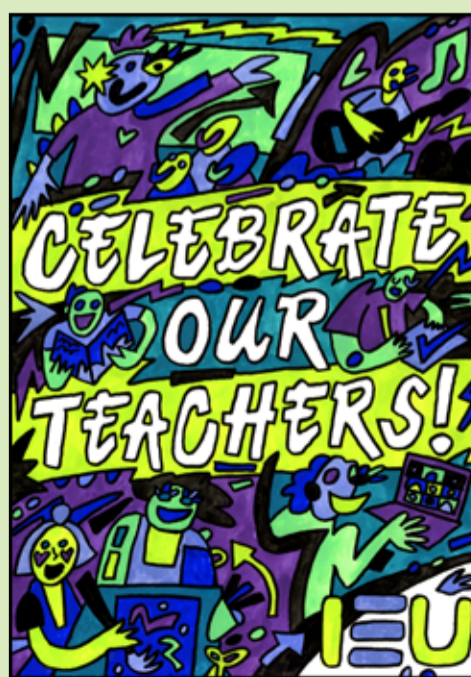
- Renewal of principal contracts considering the change from Parish Priest to Diocesan processes and protocols
- Principal appraisal
- Principal wellbeing
- Governance requirements and increased workload
- ICON workload and the difficulty of accessing support
- Religious Education Professional learning requirements
- Regularly updating COVID advice, to ensure it was timely and directly related to metropolitan and regional schools.

We have also supported our member Principals in Tasmania in the following areas:

- Contract renewal processes
- Principal wellbeing
- Clarity around Principals classifications as Beginning, Proficient, Accomplished and Lead.

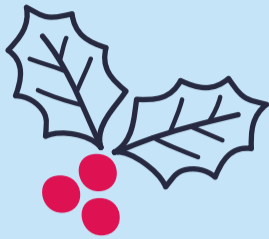
Again we were forced by lockdowns to cancel our annual conference – but we hope to be able to hold it in mid-2022, with a theme of Principal Wellbeing.

We thank and salute retiring principals and hope to celebrate their leadership journey early in 2022!



Rising to the challenge in Shepparton

After a long period of being relatively COVID-free, our members in Shepparton were faced with a particularly bad outbreak in August that brought the town to a halt and saw thousands of residents in quarantine.



Goulburn Valley Health said the large number of schools that became exposure sites was one of the greatest challenges the community faced.

Our members had to deal with the effect that the lockdown had on them as educators, but also as members of the Shepparton community. Con Chrys of Notre Dame College, which was classified as a Tier One exposure site, noted: 'It was particularly challenging having to prepare remote learning for students, whilst also trying to organise food drops for your family, correspond with multiple contact tracer calls and organise appropriate COVID testing whilst avoiding the hour-long queues.'

And yet, despite this dual burden, our Reps stepped up in a big way. IEU Reps and HSRs worked tirelessly to ensure that members were aware of and consulted on changes which were often sudden and significant. Laura Emanuelli of Saint Mels, also a Tier One site, said that this was a time of increased activity for her Sub-Branch, as she worked to keep fellow teachers and Education Support staff informed to ensure the health and safety of members. This has resulted in better and safer outcomes for staff and brought the Sub-Branch closer together, putting them in good

stead going forward.

In schools with elected Health and Safety Reps and OH&S Committees, members were able to use these structures to ensure consultation, with some members from Notre Dame citing more open communication as a result.

Con said: 'The rapid changes in circumstances I believe has made it less likely for school leadership executives to seek consultation with staff representatives, primarily due to time constraints. I don't think there's been a more important time to keep communication lines as open as possible with Leadership as the current time, and where justified to offer alternative courses of action based on the candid discussion Reps have with the staff they represent.'

'Use of the OH&S Committee and staff Reps to input into school responses is also vitally important as all staff grapple with the possibility of being exposed onsite daily from either students or potentially another staff member.'

The work that our Reps and members in Shepparton have done on this is impressive. With things changing at lightning pace, one option is to throw one's hands up and be buffeted about by the pace at which they're changing. Our

Reps and members in Shepparton have opted for a more active role. While the outcomes may not have always been ideal, insisting that IEU members be consulted with and included at the workplace level is a sign of a healthy workplace and Sub-Branch.

As the saying goes, 'Inaction breeds inaction. Action breeds confidence and courage'.

Not only that, but the very action of coming together as a Sub-Branch is important as it helps to build and strengthen a culture of unionism and solidarity in our schools. This well put by Laura, who says: 'I think the main lesson that both I, as IEU Rep and our Sub-Branch have learned is that there's strength and power in the collective as a Sub-Branch, but also as members of the wider IEU.'

'I would reiterate this to other Sub-Branches, but also share with them the importance of developing a strong relationship with their Organiser – they are an excellent source of information and support, particularly in uncertain times such as the last two years!'



The IEU Learning Hub is the IEU's comprehensive suite of professional development activities for members, focusing on broad areas of interest as well as specialised training from different cohorts of our membership.

In 2021 the IEU developed the Learning Hub to provide an even more extensive program with the aim of better integrating members' experience in the Learning Hub from registration to participation. This was an ambitious project, but it was designed to provide members with more ease of access and value.

Working with our training organisation, the Teacher Learning Network, the IEU ran nearly 50 professional development webinars which were free to IEU members through the Learning Hub. In addition, members could access the TLN Early Childhood webinar program, and our growing suite of on-demand webinars, including live events they may have missed.

We were pleased to see many IEU members presenting sessions for the Learning Hub this year, along with a broad range of other hosts from around the nation. Sharing the fantastic work of educators is a real strength of our program. We are looking at ways to support more IEU members to share their knowledge and practice as part of the 2022 program.

Planning for the 2022 program is well underway, and we will incorporate member feedback on the program to even better support members in their professional learning.

GRADUATE DIARY



Looking forward

What a year it has been to be embarking on a brand-new career in education. Not only did we conquer our final year of university through the uncertainty of a pandemic, but we have also now survived... yes, *survived* our first year of teaching. I'd love to say that I thrived this year, but I don't necessarily feel that's been the case.

I would not say I have not been successful though. I have watched my students achieve so many great things, they have been so resilient throughout every challenge thrown their way, they have been successful despite the lockdowns - so that means I must have been successful, right?

I wish measuring success

was as black and white as standardised testing would make it seem.

To watch a student go from not wanting to try to being able to articulate pride in his or her achievements.

But that's not been my experience this year. Success for some of my students has been measured in social and emotional growth. Students who began the year not wanting to be a part of

Cassandra Smyth reflects on her first year as a teacher. She chose an interesting year to begin her new career!

the class, not wanting to do any learning because they didn't feel they were important enough for it to matter. Those same students as we head into the end of the year will now enthusiastically engage in lessons and have the confidence to share their thoughts in front of their peers. They have had the confidence to say, 'I am proud of myself Miss' because they've shown growth or achieved a goal. To me that is success.

That's why I decided to become a teacher, to change a student's mindset so they believe they can be successful, and they can be something, and to see them have a go. To watch a student go from not wanting to try to being able to articulate pride in his or her achievements.

So, as the end of the school year fast approaches and I take a moment to reflect on the year that has been, was it everything I thought it would be? I'd say yes, I knew it was going to be challenging, I knew I would be exhausted, and I hoped with all my heart that I had made the right decision to embark on a new career in teaching.

I do think I have made the right decision. I've loved the challenges that this year has presented. I've been absolutely blessed with a cohort of wonderfully diverse students who have helped to shape the teacher I will continue to grow to be. They will forever be my first students, and for that I will be forever grateful.

Now we think about the year to

come. Some of us will stay in our current positions, some of us will be moving into new schools. I look forward to learning the lessons my new class will teach me, to seeing how I can grow next year, and I hope that next year is more stable for all of us!

Educating about climate change



It's easy to be unsettled by the position the Australian government has taken on its approach to the climate.

In the face of overwhelming evidence about the need to take significant and immediate action, our country has been timid. I, for one, wanted to feel proud of our leadership across the world, or even just the Indo-Pacific. Instead, we have vacillated.

However, as educators, we have a unique opportunity to be leaders and promote leadership on the issue of climate change.

If you're not engaging your students on the issue of the climate then you're not fulfilling your role as an educator. Let me set out the professional obligations on teachers that allow me to write that sentence, a statement that applies to all – from those teaching Prep right through to a Year 12 Specialist Mathematics teacher.

In December 2019, all Australian education ministers agreed on the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, which set education goals for all Australians. Given two years of COVID we can be forgiven if this important document passed by us unnoticed. It is freely available at the Commonwealth government website (google Mparntwe Declaration).

Goal Two of the declaration is very clear:

All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community ... who:

- *are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become*

the way they are

- *have empathy for the circumstances of others and work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments*
- *are informed and responsible global and local members of the community who value and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences, and engage in the global community, particularly with our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific regions.*
- *have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future.*

Sustainability is a cross-curriculum priority of the Australian curriculum (Tasmania) and the Victorian curriculum. The description of the curriculum area opens with:

Sustainability addresses the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life ... (It) is fundamental for students to understand the ways environmental, social, and economic systems interact to support and maintain human life. It allows them to critically examine the diversity of views and values that influence sustainable development. The curriculum also provides students with the opportunity to participate creatively and to see themselves as having the capacity to act in ways that will help to establish more sustainable ways of living.

The obligation is clearly set out for us: we have a professional obligation to engage our students on the issue of climate. The curriculum websites articulate an approach that can be

taken for every subject area and includes curriculum descriptors and sustainability organising ideas from Foundation to Level 10. The Victorian site also has links to resources on FUSE.

Your union has a commitment to Climate Justice and will support members who are 'fighting for a safe, just and clean future for all of us and for our planet'.

As educators we can become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of expectations on our time. Often there are gaps in our own professional knowledge and skills that inhibit us from engaging in an innovation. When it comes to climate issues, we should have the professional confidence to take one step. Here are ten options that will take you half an hour or less:

- Commit 30 minutes to reviewing the VCAA or Australian curriculum website
- Ask your students who has attended the School Strike 4 Climate, engage them in a conversation and work out how to give them a voice in your workplace. If no-one has attended ask the SRC why?
- Have a coffee & chat with one teacher at your school who you know is active on climate issues
- Message your friendship network and find out who is in a climate action group
- Message your teaching network and find out who has resources they are willing to share
- Prepare a motion for your next IEU

Sub-Branch meeting that commits members and the workplace to act on a climate issue that affects your staff and students

- Google 'the best books on climate change', pick one and put it on your Christmas gift list
- If you are in a Catholic school download and read the papal statement on 'Care for our common home – Laudato Si' (this one might be just above the 30-minute threshold). Other religious traditions will have similar statements – share the documents among your work team.
- Mark 22/2/22 on your calendar and on that day check the IEU Learning Hub calendar and register for a professional development session on climate issues
- Email me at mvictory@tln.org.au for a pdf copy of The Sustainability Issue of the TLN Journal (2016).

Just one action by each IEU member and we can show this nation vital leadership!

Michael Victory
TLN Executive Officer
mvictory@tln.org.au



What members can do to support students striking for climate

Student activist Beth is thankful for IEU members getting behind the School Strikes for Climate but says there's more we can do.

On 15 October, thousands of students across the country took the streets or showed up on Zoom to rally for climate justice in Australia. The climate crisis is something that everyone will need to deal with at some point, with people even experiencing the effects right now, and there's no doubt we need our government to take this problem seriously.

My name is Beth, I'm 15 and use she/they pronouns. I'm part of the Naarm or Melbourne team of School Strike 4 Climate, a national network of students fighting for climate justice, and I joined this organization in June of this year. I've been striking for the climate since 2019, though, because every time I look out the window

of my house at our beautiful natural world, I don't want it to be destroyed. I see how many of the politicians in our government don't care about an issue that is so clearly endangering us all, and even with events like the recent COP26, little seems to be getting done. SS4C allows young people across the country to come together and support each other, pushing to have our voices heard by the adults in charge even though most of us are not yet allowed to vote. Along with my peers and the support from teachers like IEU members I feel empowered to make a difference.

Since most of the people at SS4C are school students, our teachers are some of the most important and influential people

in our lives. We are inspired by them and follow their lead. IEU has supported us so much already by signing our pledge and endorsing our cause, but there are still things we'd love to see from our hardworking teachers.

I go to a private school in South-East Melbourne (on Boon Wurrung land), and we are taught all about the environment and the dangers of climate change, however there is an undeniable negative attitude towards school strikes. Teachers aren't allowed to promote the actions to students and some of my classmates have even been reprimanded for attending our national strikes. Although protesting for the climate often involves students missing important education,

as teachers you are teaching us many skills, which include leadership, standing up for what we believe in and being advocates for our passions. We are the next generation of politicians, scientists, and inventors, and you have the important job of raising and teaching us. Learning how to advocate for ourselves and others less fortunate than us is allowing us to be better leaders and training us to be adults who initiate change.

One of the best ways you, as teachers, can support our movement is by making your classrooms and schools a place open to discussing the School Strike 4 Climate movement and allowing students to pursue their passions and stand up for what

they believe in. I understand that you might not always be in the position to change rules in your school about promoting our strikes but bringing it up at staff meetings and having productive conversations with your colleagues helps us more than you can imagine.

What is happening to our world is terrifying and inexcusable, but it's not too late to fix it. With your support you can help make a difference for yourselves, your students, and your loved ones. We thank IEU again for their wonderful help and assistance to support our movement!

For more information on the School Strike 4 Climate movement, head to www.schoolstrike4climate.com

LABOUR HISTORY

War and peace: a look at trade union involvement in anti-war movements

For over a century, trade unionists have rallied against Australian involvement in wars including World War One, the Vietnam War and the Iraq War, with maritime workers consistently at the forefront of this activism.

With the recent implementation of the AUKUS alliance signalling the potential for war with China at a time when tackling the climate crisis requires global cooperation, there could not be a more pertinent time to look back at organised opposition by unionists to war.

One of the earliest examples of this is during the First World War, which most of the organised working class in Australia supported from the outset in 1914. However, by 1916 as the devastation and privation of war became apparent this patriotism waned and enlistment figures dropped, leading Labor Prime Minister William Hughes to introduce conscription. The union movement was at the forefront of organising against this and the government was defeated in two referenda.

The Australian Trade Union Congress explained their position at the time thus: 'Fellow unionists, conscription is the law in Great Britain and in the Republic of the French. In both countries conscription has been used to render null and void all the achievements of trade unionism ... conscription has been used not merely as an instrument of national defence, but as a bludgeon to break down the standard of the industrial classes.'

Maritime workers have long been at the forefront of anti-war activism due to the international nature of their work and the power they wield as an industry, loading and unloading ships that sail across the world as part of a global interconnected supply chain. Add to this the multicultural makeup of maritime workers and the distinct

shared identity of seamen and you have an industry that was able to develop, build and sustain a sense of international solidarity useful for workplace agitation and activism.

Throughout the 20th century, Australian maritime workers wielded their labour power to act in solidarity against global conflicts. In 1938 workers at Port Kembla refused to load pig iron onto the Japan-bound *SS Dalfram* following Japan's 1937 invasion of China and the commission of atrocities including the Nanking Massacre. The workers passed a resolution stating they were 'compelled in the interest of humanity to refuse to load further shipments of scrap-iron for Japan, believing that by doing so they (were) protesting against a ruthless slaying of innocents by Japanese naval and military authorities'.

In 1945 Indonesian soldiers, sailors, and airmen refused to fight for the Dutch after an Indonesian Republic had been declared. The maritime unions supported them, refusing to take any military supplies to the colonisers in Holland and holding up 559 ships in ports, creating one of the biggest boycotts in history.

Actions such as these paved the way for the decade of radical activism that occurred in the 1960s, much of which was centred around opposition to the Vietnam War. Unionists in the building industries and the maritime unions demanded the complete withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, with over 2500 maritime workers staging a walk-off in Melbourne, and 500 picketing the American embassy in Brisbane. Rank and file unionists also protested the use of napalm and the transportation of

weapons to be used in war.

Fast forward to the 21st century and memories of the Iraq War and global opposition to this remain etched in our collective consciousness, largely due to the fact that despite the efforts of a huge global protest movement, the war still occurred and many lives were needlessly lost. Education unions in Australia at the time publicly opposed the war with the AEU stating that the priority must be on 'the avoidance of conflict by peaceful means and recognition of cultural and religious diversity'. Unions urged teachers to take action in the workplace and support students taking an anti-war stance and to attend rallies in support of peace.

Today, it is important to consider the role trade unionists can play in opposing any potential war with China. Large scale war in the twenty-first century could lead to extraordinary devastation and loss of human life, and would vastly exacerbate the climate crisis, possibly past the point of no return. We cannot afford to sleepwalk into war – but as history shows us, when workers are organised, they can utilise their labour power to fight for peace. With the vanguard of the climate movement organising students in our classrooms, a revived antiwar movement must surely be a cornerstone of future activism and a priority for trade unionists everywhere.



Wharfies protest Robert Menzies in Port Kembla



Wharfies protest Robert Menzies in Port Kembla



Anti-Vietnam War Protests



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The IEU's commitment to reconciliation: a 2021 overview

Our First Nations and Allies Action Group expresses its solidarity with indigenous Australians through ongoing education and advocacy.

Following the endorsement and publication of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) last year, our work with Reconciliation Australia (RA) continued across 2021 and we've now completed our RAP tasks. In September, we reported back to RA by taking part in RAP's Impact Measurement Questionnaire. This allowed us to take stock of our achievements, identify remaining gaps and remind us that reconciliation is an ongoing project.

In May during National Reconciliation Week (NRW), an Acknowledgment of Country video appeared on our social media platforms, with a broad range of IEU staff taking part in the process. Attendance was high at our TLN webinar 'Including Aboriginal Content in the Classroom', which was hosted by Al Fricker – a proud Djab Wurrung man, former primary and secondary teacher, and academic. We were so impressed with Al Fricker's content that he kindly returned during NAIDOC week to present to our student members on the topic of 'Decolonising your Classroom' at the IEU/AEU Student Teacher Conference. The students were absolutely enamoured with Al's presentation and rated it as the highlight of the Student Conference.

The inaugural meeting of the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) First Nations Union Caucus on 7 July this year was attended by one of our members as our proud IEU representative. The member spoke highly of the experience, saying it was enlightening and put into perspective the issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the workplace.

The IEU is determined to create a space for our First Nations members to speak out about the unique challenges they

face. We know that Voice is crucial in self-determination, and that our ability to show solidarity lies in our ability to listen. If there is anything we could be doing to better address the needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, reach out to us at fnaag@ieuvictas.org.au.

To all our members – watch this space as we continue to strive towards First Nations Reconciliation and representation in our union and take a stand in your school for action to be taken. The responsibility to address the continuing disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, and engage in self-education, truth-telling, and advocacy, lies with all of us.

Our staff have been engaging with workshops and presentations run by elders and active members of our local first nations communities. One of the workshops recently attended was run by Andrew Gardiner, a proud Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung man. The workshop looked at a documentary depicting a series of interviews of Wurundjeri people seeking their views of what a Treaty must include.

A significant proportion of Wurundjeri lands are now inhabited in an urban environment, yet the perspective of one of the interviewees was: 'When you look at Melbourne you still identify Country, it's beauty and history, even though parts are a concrete jungle'.

Others who were interviewed called for reparation for loss of land and for as much land to be returned to nature as possible. Sovereignty was spoken about in terms of custodianship and the need for Elders to have naming rights. There were many inspiring ideas of how to integrate the history and stories of the Wurundjeri people into the urban landscape and city streets. Key to all these ideas is that

a Treaty needs to be a living, evolving document and a process that recognises history and truth-telling, regional local languages, and the freedom to move around Country.

The IEU is determined to create a space for our First Nations members to speak out about the unique challenges they face. We know that Voice is crucial in self-determination, and that our ability to show solidarity lies in our ability to listen.

The Wurundjeri people are seeking improved processes with the State Government to ensure that a Treaty provides the Elders opportunity to fully engage in and debate the legalities of the document and to consider its impact on their local communities. They seek a five- to six-year process that includes the provision of legal support and funding to support their membership to be in a strong negotiating position.

We support the Uluru Statement from

the Heart to achieve justice, recognition and respect for First Nations people and a referendum to enshrine a First Nations Voice in the Constitution. We accept the invitation contained in the Statement to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.



Al Fricker



New Rep: Rian Prestwich, St Catherine's Berwick

Rian reflects on taking on his new role during an unprecedented period of remote learning.

What was the biggest challenge in taking on your role in the middle of the pandemic?

The biggest challenge was being unable to meet face-to-face to discuss grievances or chat with members. There is nothing better than sitting down with someone and chatting and this was removed from us. Also, being new to the school and having a large

member base meant it was harder to establish good connections with members.

What gave you the most satisfaction as a Rep this year?

Taking staff feedback onboard and seeing a change which results in positive feedback. We, like many schools, were still trying to find the best 'onsite supervision' roster which took into account

FTE and fairness. After some feedback to leadership, there was a change that made members happy and promoted the ongoing relationship between the Union and leadership.

What have you learnt about being a Rep?

That some conversations are venting, and some require an answer. I was introduced to the statement, 'Do you want me to

listen, or do you want advice', and I have used this on a few occasions. I am very much a solution-orientated discussor which doesn't always work for people who just want to vent.

What is your favourite film or book about teaching or education? And why?

A short video, which I highly recommend to have a laugh at is *Substitute Teacher Mr Garvy* by

College Humour. A film I like is *Bad Teacher* - not due to the title or the premise but purely because it makes me laugh.

CAREER CORNER

Job applications in the time of COVID



If, as expected, there are more vacancies than usual this summer, how do you ensure you get the position you want?

The Victorian government mandate for compulsory vaccination of employees has resulted in some teachers and school staff using leave or negotiating alternate work arrangements until the end of the 2021 school year. The restrictions on overseas visas and visitors will also kick in at this time.

The IEU believes this mandate will continue for the foreseeable future, and employers are unlikely to agree to flexible leave or work arrangements in 2022. This could potentially lead to higher than usual staff turnover in schools, and may also mean that vacancies peak later than usual, with more jobs being advertised right through to the start of the new school year.

What can you do to maximise your chance of securing one of these vacancies?

Firstly, vaccine hesitancy has affected a wide variety of roles in schools. Therefore, it doesn't matter what your desired role is, or your level of experience,

you're likely to find opportunities.

Secondly, the mandate will affect all school sectors equally. Anecdotally at least, heavily religious schools have higher rates of vaccine hesitancy. Therefore, you should expand your job search to all sectors and across all platforms: The Catholic Schools online job board, Seek, individual school websites, and any other relevant agencies.

The next consideration is whether your CV needs changes.

We suggest that you include proof that you are fully vaccinated in your cover letter and CV or include a pdf of your vaccination status as part of your application. You can download this from the MyGov website. It is highly likely this will continue to be the evidence required as we move towards the necessity of booster shots.

Given the timeframe outlined above, you will need to have your application documents ready to go at short notice. You will also need to be resilient and

patient, and possibly willing to devote a significant time of your summer break to job research and applications.

Ensure your CV is not only up to date, but also meets contemporary expectations. This means not only adding to your employment record and professional development, but also removing outdated duties and roles dating more than ten years ago. There is nothing more frustrating for an employer or recruiter than having to sift through a muddle of high and low-value attributes and experiences to discern your suitability for their role.

Do this job for them and resist the temptation to include every aspect of your role. A good guide is to include no more than three to five bullet points per item. If you have three to four different or emerging roles, this means you've got between nine and twenty distinct bullet points to champion your suitability.

Finally, don't be afraid to reach out in person to a potential employer between

now and the end of term. Call the Daily Organiser, Deputy Principal or Principal and ask if they anticipate any vacancies arising.

Between now and February ask if it's ok to send in a cover letter and CV and for them to keep you in mind should a vacancy arise at late notice. They may well give you an interview before advertising a role, especially if the incumbent has left little time before advising of their intention not to return.

As always, the IEU is on hand to provide advice on contract offers and give you the lie of the land on any school you are applying to. We occasionally unearth unlawful 'gems' in contracts, and such scrutiny is part of your membership.

It should be a rollercoaster of a time, recruitment-wise, so good luck and make sure you update your membership record with your new employer when you're offered your next job!

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Behind the Whiteboard

Congratulations to you all! We here at BTW remain in awe of the amazing resilience and dedication that you all showed throughout another tough year.

The tales of amazing agility when switching between onsite and remote delivery; the flexibility seen in working from home; the care and compassion shown by you all to each other... Simply amazing. Well done, Dear Reader. We here in The Bunker love it when you keep us well fed with your stories of wonder so keep them coming via btw@ieuvictas.org.au.

Sharp eyes

Did you hear the one about the support staff member who was incorrectly classified by the same Catholic secondary school for over 30 years? The BTW Scribes were thrilled to hear of the positive outcome the member was able to achieve, with the help of their Organiser, when they noticed a discrepancy between their payslip and their long service leave statement. It turns out that they were being paid at a much, much lower level than they should have been. A couple of well written letters later, a quick classification review by the employer and Hey Presto! one correctly classified

support staff employee and one chunk of back pay just in time for Christmas. Always check your payslip and always contact your Organiser.

Food for thought

Two food technician members in a Catholic secondary school were recently reclassified to Level Two after a long journey with countless meetings, a lot of research and great support from the union's legal team. Persistence and a touch of bravery can deliver a good outcome. Fronting up to a meeting with the Business Manager and the Principal can be daunting, but with representation from one of your legal eagles you can present a solid case.

Confusion in the HR department

A member contacted their Organiser saying she felt her role was not captured by the level she was being paid. The Organiser assisted with a letter to the principal to request a classification review. This request then went to the

central education office rather than being dealt with at a school level. Our member received a response, explaining that she had completed step one but now needed to complete steps two and three, outlining how her job 'had significantly changed'. The answer was that it hadn't, but that the level had never been appropriate for the job our member was doing. This answer did not seem to fit the narrow response that was being expected, causing a minor meltdown at the HR office! After a couple of false starts, it now seems like the 'incorrect classification' process is now underway, once again proving the value of a phone call to your Organiser.

Speaking of Legal Eagles...

A member was asked to sign a new contract for an agreed-to job restructure. Said contract was written for the school by their own lawyer. So why did the school object to the member requesting their lawyer (an IEU Industrial Officer) review the contract? Something to

hide? Turns out the contract contained wording that gave the employer the right to terminate without notice. Remember: Union membership provides access to a crack legal squad who are ready to take up the fight on members' behalf.

A bit rich

We've boasted of the recent **Peninsula Grammar** decision elsewhere in this edition – but one aspect of the dispute which caught BTW's eye was the school's assertion that the applicant's daughters would not be disadvantaged if they instead enrolled in a state school. While we offer no comment on the merits of this argument, it is somewhat inconsistent with the school's marketing materials and may come as interesting news to parents forking out five-figure fees... perhaps Mt **Eliza Secondary College** should expect a significant enrolment boost for 2022?



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It's the workload, dummy



The largest national mental health survey of Australians under lockdown identified that 'depression and anxiety symptoms were at least two to three times higher than would normally be observed in the community'.

The research, from Monash University's School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, found 'more than one in four respondents experiencing mild symptoms of depression and anxiety'.

'Rates of moderate to severe symptoms were more than double pre-COVID-19 rates.'

These numbers shocked researchers – and that survey was undertaken in the first month of the pandemic, way back in April 2020.

We all know how much more stressful things became, especially those living in Sydney or Melbourne, where lockdowns lingered more than a year later.

Teachers experienced all the above, and then some, in this pandemic.

But they copped more, dealing with transitions into and out of remote learning. Then, in late 2021, the return to classrooms coincided with the biggest numbers of cases during the pandemic and COVID outbreaks in schools.

There were constantly changing school operations rules; colleagues contesting mandatory vaccinations; concerns about classroom ventilation; and challenges with student mask-wearing compliance.

Little wonder already overworked teachers experienced stress, burnout and needed extra mental health support. IEU General Secretary Deb James reminded us in her International Teachers Day address that teacher workload is the primary issue behind teacher burnout:

'I cannot think of a time when teachers have ever been more deserving of celebration, respect and thanks. Along with other hard-working staff in our schools, teachers have gone above and beyond and done the most extraordinary work in the most difficult circumstances over these last two years.'

'We've had pivots between on-campus and remote schooling, forcing teachers often at very short notice to run their classes from kitchen tables, bedroom desks, sheds or the living room couch. The work they have done is truly incredible.'

'To engage, educate, support and care for a real live classroom full of students is challenging enough – to do so remotely, especially for those juggling the needs of their own families, is an amazing feat.'

These amazing feats have come at a cost.

In late October, the *Educator* online described teaching as 'a profession in distress', with 84% of teachers think of quitting. Citing the NEiTA-ACE Teachers Report Card 2021 conducted in July 2021 found that 'in addition to a vast majority of educators considering a career change, 75% feel stressed by their work, 82% struggle with work-life

balance and one in three (36%) are not satisfied in their job'.

University of Melbourne researchers told *The Conversation* that 85% of educators they contacted reported that the pandemic had negative impacts on their wellbeing. The study of early childhood educators showed the pandemic had 'exposed existing strains on the system and further eroded their wellbeing'.

'The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the challenging working conditions the profession faces. Educators have to navigate emotionally complex work. They work long hours, with poor pay and a lack of status or public recognition. Their opportunities for professional development or career progression are limited.'

'As a result, levels of work-related stress and burnout are high. Many are choosing to leave the sector.'

Up to 50% burn out or simply leave in the first five years of their career.

'They deserve and need to be able do their job properly, safely and well. Workloads in our schools have reached crisis levels. Teachers want to teach, and to support and educate every one of their students – but with ever-increasing workloads and bureaucratic pressure, unpaid and unacknowledged overtime is becoming dangerous.'

Wellbeing is essential for educators to do their job well and their mental health affects the experiences of children across the nation. As the researchers put it: 'A stable, qualified and healthy workforce is essential for families, communities and societies.'

Lecturer Saul Karnovsky, from Curtin University, says teachers' professional lives can be 'highly demanding, pressured, stressful and at times,

emotionally exhausting'.

'Because teaching is emotionally demanding, teachers experience what is known as 'emotional labour'. This is when teachers have to manage, suppress or feign their emotions as part of the work.'

This behaviour includes observing 'unwritten rules' of teaching like:

- don't ever cry in front of students, because if you do, they will see you as weak and eat you alive
- don't lose your temper, shout, or get angry, because if you do, students will lose respect for you
- don't show your emotional vulnerability, especially not to other teachers, because if you do, they might think you are not right for the job.

Suppressing emotional labour in teaching can lead to 'emotional exhaustion, depression and anxiety'.

Emotional and psychological solutions

Clearly, accepting the emotional challenges of teaching is a first step.

'Navigating the emotional rules of learning to teach is a significant aspect of becoming a teacher, yet it goes largely unrecognised in an initial teacher education course,' says Karnovsky.

'If we are to ensure thousands of newly enrolled teachers are to thrive in their courses and careers, we must make the invisible emotional rules of the profession seen and heard.'

Karnovsky believes pre-service teachers should explore these emotional rules with teacher educators to build resilience to 'confront the emotional challenges of modern teaching'.

The University of Melbourne researchers keep it simple.

'Here's a good place to start: Encourage self-care and provide access to resources; support and sustain relationships; acknowledge educators' essential role in society and recognise that their well-being matters.'

Self-care included meditation and exercise, but also yoga, mindfulness and even just walking the dog. Consulting counselling and professional development services such as Beyond Blue and the Employee Assistance Programs is also vital.

Supportive professional and personal relationships provide 'solidarity and shared understanding'.

'The value of being able to unload, debrief or talk with others at work increased throughout lockdowns.'

Most importantly, to support teacher well-being, we must understand the experiences of educators. We need to listen to them and 'act on what they're telling us'.

The workload crisis

Deb James says teachers and all school staff need more than our thanks.

'They deserve and need to be able to do their job properly, safely and well. Workloads in our schools have reached crisis levels. Teachers want to teach, and to support and educate every one of their students – but with ever-increasing workloads and bureaucratic pressure, unpaid and unacknowledged overtime is becoming dangerous.'

'We're seeing increasing numbers of teachers burning out, and far too many making the hard decision to leave the profession, simply to protect their own health or so they don't have to lock themselves away from their own families every evening and weekend.'

'We call on all employers – government, Catholic and independent – to work with their staff and their unions to tackle this workload crisis. Teachers have done so much over these last two years, and over the many years before. For their sake and for the sake of our students, we must improve basic employment conditions and tackle this crisis head on.'

New Reps: lessons from a baptism of fire

Nikki and Steve reflect on their tumultuous first years as Reps.



Nikki Melilli, St Dominic's School, Melton

The biggest challenge in taking on your role during the pandemic

Not being able to converse with staff face-to-face and introduce myself as their IEU Rep. To be honest I still haven't had the chance to because of the amount of work everyone has on in Term 4. Hopefully 2022 will be a far better year than the last two.

What gave you the most satisfaction as a Rep this year?

I am the first LSO at my school to be voted as IEU Rep by my fellow co-workers. When I joined the union back in 2016, I always assumed it was a teaching staff position.

What have you learnt about being a Rep?

I've learnt to be a lot more proactive. I'm looking forward to doing the training in 2022 so I can be better in the role of IEU Rep.

Steve Lewis, Brighton Grammar

The biggest challenge in taking on your role during the pandemic

Staying informed and connected and chatting with colleagues about workplace issues during the pandemic lockdown.

What gave you the most satisfaction as a Rep this year?

Discussing the merits and benefits of IEU membership with colleagues who then became new members.

What have you learnt about being a Rep?

I gained invaluable information and advice from Branch Organisers and other Reps through New Rep Orientation Zoom and Rep Council Zoom sessions during the year.

I wasn't expecting to be contacted by so many non-member colleagues asking for advice and IEU assistance with workplace issues. There was a common misconception IEU membership was linked to VIT membership.

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Rep profile: Sharon Healy, Holy Cross New Gisborne.

Frozen screens and sanity checks: 2021 is not easily forgotten.



What a year it has been. Just when we thought remote learning was done and dusted, we found ourselves once again sitting in front of a screen reminding people yelling at screens to unmute and hearing: 'It's frozen!'.

As educators we persevered through all that technology threw up. Our students needed us, and we were there to take up the challenge. This year seemed harder than last and as a staff we required more support – not to do the teaching but to be there for each other.

The hardest part was not having the day-to-day contact in school with colleagues; the conversations that spontaneously happen in the staff room during break times, being able to share a student's achievement with others as it happened... Working from home just didn't feel the same. I even missed the photocopier running out of paper or the coffee machine not being filled (and I don't drink coffee).

When I nominated to be the Sub-Branch Rep for Holy Cross Gisborne at the start of the year, I didn't envisage all of this! However, I found that working as a Sub-Branch, as a collective, members had support through the collective. I had attended Rep training early in the year, which helped to prepare me for this.

There were so many Zoom meetings when text messages were sent saying 'It won't let me in the meeting'. Being

technically challenged, I often found myself putting my little hand up in meetings (when I finally worked out there was a hand) asking questions and then forgetting to place myself back on mute as the dishwasher clanked away in the background.

It was a great insight into people's home lives as we often had animals and little people join our meetings.

This year also saw the resignation of our long-serving principal. It was a sad but also an exciting time. It was an amazing experience to work with the Consultative Committee team in workforce planning for the next school year and reviewing policies and procedures in readiness for the new principal.

Throughout it all we never forgot to look out for each other and a weekly check-in from a colleague was great for my mental health and sanity. We cried, we laughed, but we did it together and that is what I treasure the most – knowing I was not alone. As a Sub-Branch we also experienced solidarity with each other. I had my co-workers and the support of the Union to get me through.

But no, I do not want to go through it again.

New Rep: Julie Previtera, Holy Child Dallas

Empathy in unpredictable times and the importance of pens.



What was the biggest challenge in taking on your role during the pandemic?

Not being onsite limited opportunities to meet with members or to be available to them if they had a concern. So needing a new approach, correspondence was through email or phone. Face-to-face is so much more informative and welcoming.

What gave you the most satisfaction as a Rep this year?

The gratitude from members. That I was trusted and respected with personal concerns, and the appreciation of outcomes. Hoping I have made work/life balance easier for some, especially during unpredictable times.

What have you learnt about being a Rep?

To be proactive and check in with members with concerns. That it is important to understand and empathise with the perspectives and reasoning of all parties to a situation. To be prepared; and I am forever grateful for the dedication, diligence and reliability of our school's Organiser, who has been a great support and readily available.

What was the funniest or most unexpected thing that happened to you as a Rep this year?

PENS, pens and more pens. Just about every member I gave an IEU pen to commented on how they're one of the greatest/easiest pens to write with. And they were happy to take more than one. That has got to be irrefutable data on how good the pens are, we all know how much writing goes on in schools.

What is your favourite film or book about teaching or education? Why?

I am a music person, so perhaps am more inclined to list songs that have resonated with teaching, and it's more that the titles, rather than the song content, that are indicative of why: *I Say A Little Prayer* by Aretha Franklin; *School Days*, Chuck Berry; *One More Cup Of Coffee*, Bob Dylan; *The Nips are Getting Bigger*, Mental as Anything; *Ain't no Mountain High Enough*, Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell.

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NATIONAL UNION ROUNDUP

AWU hails piece rates ruling as one of the greatest victories in its 135-year history

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) has ruled that casual workers picking fruit on a piece rate must be guaranteed a minimum wage.

The Australian Workers Union (AWU) hailed the decision as one of its greatest victories and 'one of the most significant industrial decisions of modern times'.

On 4 November, the full bench of the FWC inserted a minimum wage guarantee in the horticulture Award to ensure pickers earn at least \$25.41 an hour.

Piecework is when workers are paid according to the amount of fruit or vegetables they harvest. The more harvested, the more a worker is paid. Piece rates are supposed to help pickers earn at least 15% more an hour than the minimum hourly rate, but the FWC found they were often used to underpay workers.

AWU national secretary Daniel Walton said under current arrangements there were 'widespread incidences of workers getting paid as little as \$3 an hour'.

'Fruit pickers in Australia have been routinely and systemically exploited and underpaid. Too many farmers have been able to manipulate the piece rate system to establish pay and conditions far beneath Australian standards.'

He said that it will now be 'easy for workers – even if they don't have good English language skills or Australian connections – to understand if they're being ripped off'.

'From now on if you're making less than \$25 an hour fruit picking in Australia your boss is breaking the law and stealing from you.'

The FWC found that existing pieceworker provisions were 'not fit for purpose', and that current arrangements did not provide 'fair and relevant minimum safety net' as required by the Fair Work Act and agreed that the 'characteristics of the seasonal harvesting workforce in the horticulture industry render it vulnerable to exploitation'.

Employers claimed a minimum wage floor would 'demotivate and disincentivise' workers exclude those 'happy to earn less and work at their own pace' and reduce productivity, while increasing labour costs, management and recruitment requirements, *Workplace Express* reported.

However, the bench held the variation will 'on balance' increase productivity, acting as an 'economic

incentive to manage unproductive workers' and 'leading employers to take more active steps in the recruitment, supervision and management of pieceworkers'.



INTERNATIONAL ROUNDUP

More than 100,000 workers downed tools during October in the **United States**, in a wave of industrial action across several industries dubbed 'Striketober'.

Farm equipment workers, TV and film crew members, nurses and McDonald's employees were among the organised workers pursuing better pay and conditions in what ABC News labelled 'one of the country's most visible industrial uprisings in decades'.

'Increasingly precarious jobs and stagnant wages, compounded by the stress of a pandemic that has claimed nearly 750,000 American lives, are fostering an urgent push for change.'

Jacobin reported than an 'uptick in private-sector strikes and record numbers of workers quitting their jobs are just two signs that the pandemic has changed workers' willingness to accept a bad deal'.

The US Department of Labor (DOL) reported that 4.3 million people quit their jobs in August, about 2.9 percent of the country's workforce. Sectors where the risk of catching COVID-19 is highest – healthcare, retail, and hospitality – had the highest quit rates.

This 'Great Resignation' occurred as workers gained increased bargaining power as labour demand outstripped supply, and individuals re-evaluated their priorities after life changes wrought by the pandemic.

A Gallup poll in July revealed 48 percent of the workforce was 'actively job searching or watching for opportunities'.

Jacobin concluded: 'If you have a union, you fight for more. If you don't, you quit.'

In **Scotland**, union representatives who attended the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow believe the final agreement 'lacks the ambition needed' to limit global warming sufficiently.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) said a jobs plan guided by its Just Transition principles was essential to the agreement. Just Transition 'aims to ensure that no one is left behind as the world transitions to a climate-friendly economy'. It calls for wealthy nations to pledge funding for climate change mitigation and decarbonisation efforts in poorer countries.

At COP26, developed countries failed to meet their commitments to support developing countries 'adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change'.

Trade unions have vowed to fight for Just Transition to inform policies at COP27 next year.

In **Pakistan**, low-paid workers have won a crucial battle, after a court judgement upheld the right of the provincial government in Sindh to increase the minimum wage for unskilled workers above the set national increase.

The Sindh High court upheld the government of Sindh's decision and that the minimum wage rate be maintained and that female workers should be paid a minimum wage equal to male counterparts in the same category. The court fixed minimum hourly wage at PKR120 (\$0.79 AUD).

Union leader Nasir Mansoor told *Industrial*: 'If the state institutions take decisions in the light of the Pakistan's constitution to ensure the provision of basic rights to the workers, then there is no reason why the problems of the workers could not be resolved. The provincial court's decision reflects the needs and rights of millions of labourers in the province.'

Ooh wooh! UWW wins new deal for warehouse workers

The United Workers Union (UWW) has won an in-principle agreement with the Toll transportation group on pay rises and minimum pay rates after two days out on strike.

UWW workers had taken protected industrial action after rejecting the company's pay offer of between 2.25 and 2.5% per annum. Australia's consumer price index is at 3%.

The new three-year agreements cover all seven Toll warehouses and include a three percent pay increase each year for three years, more than 100 new permanent jobs, improved union and training rights, increased redundancy, a minimum starter rate of \$25 an hour and a guarantee that if workers are moved to a new Toll distribution centre their wages and redundancy provisions will be maintained.

UWW national secretary Tim Kennedy congratulated Toll workers for taking the brave step to 'hold the line' and said the dispute showed that big companies are 'disconnected from reality'.

'Workers, economists, politicians and even the governor of the Reserve Bank have been saying for some years that stagnating wages are hurting all of us, meanwhile workers at Toll were forced to take strike action for a 3 percent wage increase...'



Checked out: Library workers fight for overdue change

ASU members at Geelong Regional Libraries staged a 24-hour strike for better wages and conditions on 18 November. The puns in their posters were a hit on social media, the learned humour underscoring the urgent need for these workers to be properly paid.

Geelong Regional Libraries have been ranked as the best public library service in Victoria for six years in a row, yet its staff are some of the lowest paid in the state. Despite this, the ASU says, 'member councils that fund the service have failed to step up, and management are attempting to push through years of below-inflation pay increases'.

Members held pickets at Belmont, Geelong West and the main Geelong library and other libraries at Newcombe and Colac were shut before members met outside the Geelong Library a Heritage Centre for a solidarity BBQ and rally.

2021: Bernese Mountain puppies playing with lemons

It's been two years like no others for our Reps. Here, a select few talk about the highlights, challenges and guilty pleasures of prolonged lockdown.



Name: Lynette Campbell

School: Catholic Ladies' College, Eltham

Role: Rep, Performing Arts Key Learning Area Leader.

Years in IEU: 11

Biggest challenge in your job in 2021: I am a drama teacher, so the biggest challenge has been motivating my students to be loud and creative through the screen. In a classroom energy and excitement is easy to build in a Drama class, but online with parents insisting on silence, fear of filming oneself, fear of others judging your filming... my junior classes, which usually build confidence in self-expression, have been quite a challenge.

Highlight of your work in 2021: My Year 12's managed to focus and on the whole prepare for their performance exams – shout out to Dan the Man for letting performance students attend school to prepare for exams – their use of space was appalling – most having created their work between bed and desk – fixed that – and awesome work was created.

Most interesting, exciting or inspiring thing you heard, read or saw about unionism in 2021: Though mired in tragedy the Indian farmers protests early this year demonstrated how individuals with little or no political power could come together and attract the worlds attention to their plight and demands for change.

Guilty pleasure that got you through lockdown: Sleeping in! Re-setting that work alarm time for a little bit later and spending recess and lunch in the sun with a cryptic crossword.

Name: Nick Baff

School: St Kevin's College

Role: Rep, teacher

Years in IEU: Time stopped having much meaning during COVID. But a fair few.

Biggest challenge in your job in 2021: It's no secret that the St Kevin's community has been through an incredibly challenging period in recent times. There's still pain and turbulence mixed in with optimism and progress, and we've been doing everything we can to support and advocate for staff as we move through the current process of renewal.

Highlight of your work in 2021: Witnessing my colleagues in action, continuing to support each other and our students. There are reserves of spirit and energy that continue to be drawn on, even when the needle on the fuel gauge is way past empty and we're running on vapour.

Most interesting, exciting or inspiring thing you heard, read or saw about unionism in 2021: The pandemic has dragged to the forefront of public consciousness some fundamental questions about our society and how different groups have had vastly different experiences of the COVID era. The precariousness of casual work, the largesse of corporate welfare, our reliance on (exploitation of?) essential workers, housing affordability, educational access, the implications for gender equality... even access to green spaces. So many conversations to continue to be driven by unions that will hopefully produce positive change in these spaces.

Guilty pleasure that got you through lockdown: Videos of Bernese mountain puppies playing with lemons.

Name: Litsa Tzelepis

School: Mount St. Joseph Girls' College

Role: Year 7-12

Years in IEU: 26 Years

Years as a Rep: Two.

Biggest challenge as a Rep in 2021: Staying across changes regarding COVID safe practices in the workplace to help keep our staff and students operating safely within our school community.

Most interesting, exciting or inspiring thing you heard, read or saw about unionism in 2021: Interestingly but not surprisingly, feedback from the Union survey (2020) highlighting that almost 50% of teachers attend work feeling sick/unwell and are stressed and overwhelmed by workloads. Let's hope one of the outcomes of the pandemic is that staff try to take better care of their overall health.

Guilty pleasure that got you through lockdown: Coffee & TV all the way - Full Seasons of *Animal Kingdom*, *The Shield* and *Yellowstone*.

Name: Luke Drummond

School: Catholic College Sale

Role: Teacher/House Leader

Years in IEU: 11

Years as a Rep: 1

Biggest challenge as a Rep in 2021: Discussing vaccinations with colleagues who did not want to get vaccinated.

Most interesting, exciting or inspiring thing you heard, read or saw about unionism in 2021: Getting vaccinated is another example of solidarity with your colleagues.



Name: Andrea Basterfield

School: MacKillop Education Geelong

Role: Education Support

Years in IEU: Approximately four years.

Years as a Rep: One.

Biggest challenge as a Rep in 2021: Several staff members leaving.

Highlight of your work as a Rep in 2021: Increasing membership numbers.

Most interesting, exciting or inspiring thing you heard, read or saw about unionism in 2021: I loved the Rep training, inspired me to get in and increase membership.

Guilty pleasure that got you through lockdown: Pyjamas.

Name: Marcus Corlett

School: Parade College

Role: Science and Food Studies Teacher

Years in IEU: 10

Years as a Rep: Five

Biggest challenge as a Rep in 2021: Many, many Consultation meetings over Microsoft Teams.

Highlight of your work as a Rep in 2021: Successfully consulting for staff OHS.

Most interesting, exciting or inspiring thing you heard, read or saw about unionism in 2021: Unions backing health officials in regards to vaccinations.

Guilty pleasure that got you through lockdown: Home baked Bread!

