



**FACE IT!**  
It's time for a deal in  
Victorian Catholic education

# Standing together for a better deal

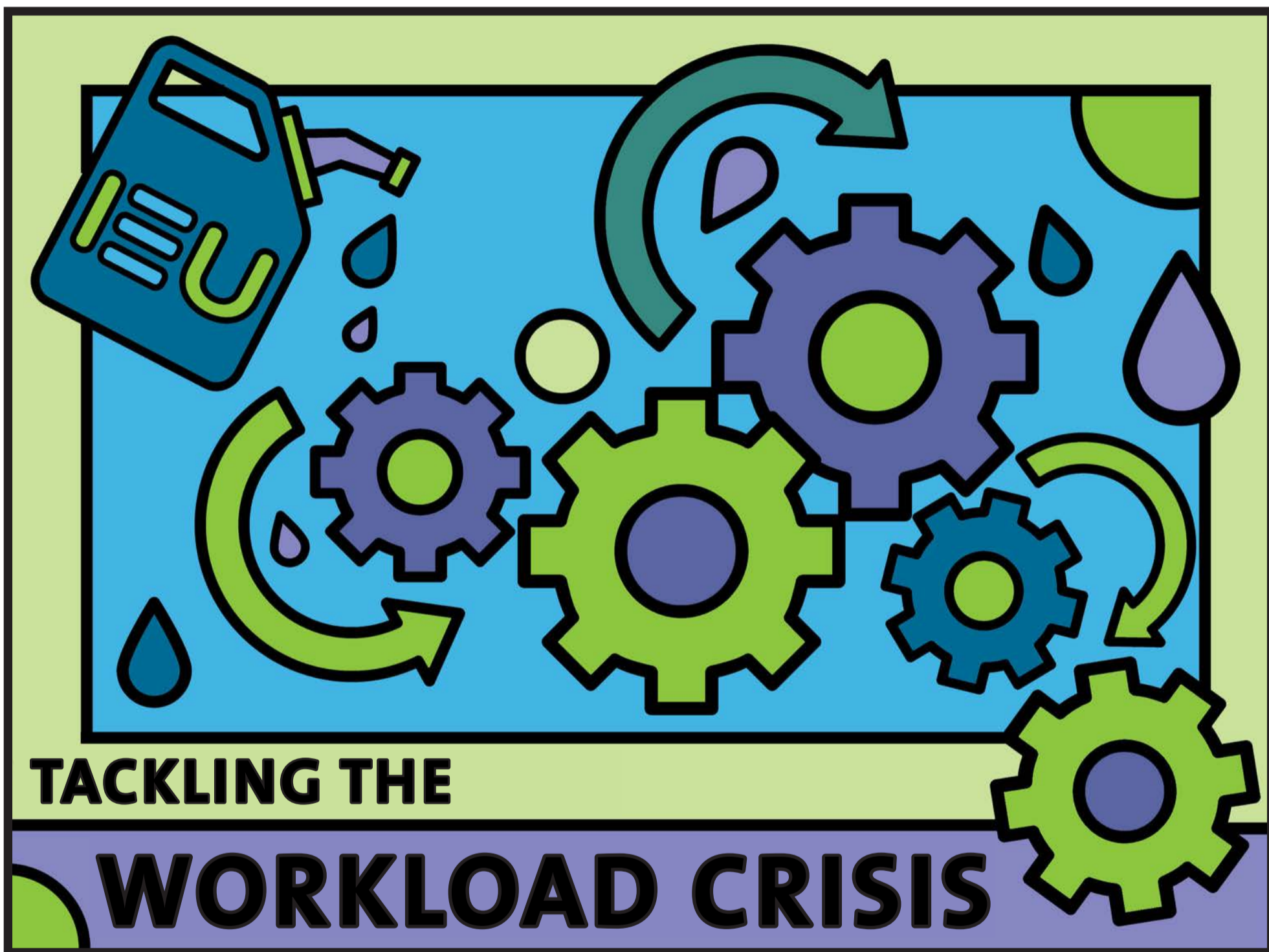
This year, the IEU is campaigning and negotiating for better pay and working conditions in Catholic Education and dozens of independent schools across Victoria and Tasmania.



## Are you with us?

INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION  
**IEU**  
VICTORIA TASMANIA

# ThePoint



**GENERAL SECRETARY**  
DEBRA JAMES

## All hail the resilience of educators

However, our patience and goodwill must not be taken for granted.

Our journey over the last couple of years has really tested our members, our schools, and our community. Teachers, principals, and education support staff have been called on to deliver the quality teaching they are so committed to despite incredible difficulties, stretching them to the limit.

Towards the end of last year, staff were exhausted and hanging out for the holidays. Then the new variant hit, cases soared and the more normal start to the school year that people hoped for was taken away. So school communities and staff did what they have been doing over the last

couple of years – they dealt with it! They worked with the changes, they accommodated different ways of working, they stepped up to the challenges.

*Continued page 3*

## Know Your Country

Sign the petition to employ First Nations cultural educators in every primary school.

- Give kids a better education about local First Nations people and culture
- Ally with local First Nations communities and their right to share the wisdom of their own culture in schools
- Encourage all parliaments to commit proper funding before their next elections.

The KYC website includes free resources – email signature banners, logos, and acknowledgements of country – as well as information about promoting the cause.

Go to [knowyourcountry.com.au](http://knowyourcountry.com.au) to sign up

## Fix your fixed-term contract

Should you be ongoing?  
Talk to the IEU and find out!

With the help of the IEU hundreds of staff have stood up and been made ongoing. What are you waiting for?

If you are an Education Support Staff employee on a fixed-term contract, contact Education Support Staff Officer Tracey Spiel on [tspiel@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:tspiel@ieuvictas.org.au)

If you are a teacher on a fixed-term contract, contact us at [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au) or (03) 9254 1860

JOIN THE IEU TODAY: [www.ieuvictas.org.au/join](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au/join)

## Work-related stress: an OHS training course



Friday 8 April 2022 9:00 - 5:00  
FEU Conference Centre  
120 Clarendon St, South Melbourne



This WorkSafe approved Refresher helps HSRs, and Deputy HSRs understand how to identify and control the risks associated with work-related stress.

Elected HSRs and Deputy HSRs are entitled to time off work with pay to attend an annual HSR Refresher OHS Training Course.

Go to the training and events page at [ieuvictas.org.au](http://ieuvictas.org.au) to book.

## Fee freeze 2

Eagle-eyed readers will notice the same headline in this space as a year ago. That's because for the second year in a row, IEU membership dues will not increase in 2022.

You had as tough a year in 2021 as you did in 2020, and the union once again experienced strong membership growth, so we repeated the measure.

Our tiered fee structure ensures that membership is affordable for all – but make sure you check in Member Access that you are paying at the correct income-based level.

Please also check that we have your correct employment and contact details listed. You can confirm or update your details at <https://member.ieuvictas.org.au>. Let's work together to keep fees low by growing again in 2022!

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## All hail the resilience of educators

(continued from front page)

Disappointingly, a few leaders looked for loopholes to ask things of staff that are patently outside what is fair and reasonable, but by now, members are well attuned to pushing back when necessary.

The wellbeing of staff should be the top priority in every school. It's only with a happy, healthy, trusted, respected, and supported cohort of educators that the education of our students is at its best. Look out for the staff and they'll look out for the kids!

The last couple of years have given us the opportunity to look at things differently, to do things differently, to break with long established practices and try new things. We've got to make sure that these experiences stay with us into the future. Do parent-teacher interviews need to be face-to-face? Do we really need staff and team meetings in person? Would an email or a post on Teams reduce the need for morning briefings?

Nor should we go too far. Nothing will ever completely replace in person conversations and the need for face-to-face interaction, the camaraderie of a group or the benefits of casual chats with co-workers. I hope all schools are having a good look at their practices, meaningfully evaluating them, and making changes to create an effective work environment.

Dealing with the issue of teacher workload is critical. It's been intensifying for a long time and, COVID challenges notwithstanding, staff are pushed to the limits. Exhausted and stretched staff can't give their best to their students. Increased administration

requirements, complex student management systems, continuous online reporting to parents, data entry, NCCD expectations and never-ending emails from parents are just some examples of the changes in workload heaping enormous pressure on staff.

The reduction in scheduled class time achieved in the Victorian government sector deal is an historic and significant improvement that will certainly provide more time to teachers through the school week. But it can't end there. Schools must examine what is asked and expected of teachers and actively look for ways to lighten the load. How can compliance issues be streamlined? How can we better manage data collection? Are we actually collecting too much? What is the impact and relevance to students of everything we ask teachers to do? Are there better and more efficient ways of doing these things?

You'll see these issues addressed in detail in this edition of *The Point*.

Right now we're at the bargaining table for members in Victorian Catholic Schools and Tasmanian Catholic schools, as well as many independent schools across both states. The outcome in the Victorian Government sector has a big impact on outcomes we can achieve. We are fighting to improve wages and conditions and to retain those won in previous Agreements. Employers also have their claims. The bargaining process is also a major focus of this issue, as you can see from this cover, which highlights our photo petition, which members have embraced

with so much enthusiasm. We'll continue to keep you posted as bargaining progresses.

We must stand strong together to tackle the workload crisis and achieve the best possible outcomes for members.

## IEU wins for staff stood down during COVID lockdown

The IEU has recorded another major legal victory, with Peninsula Grammar agreeing to pay IEU non-teaching staff for the period they were stood down during the first COVID lockdown in 2020.

The four staff members will receive payment for the period they were stood down. Peninsula Grammar has incurred huge legal costs fighting this case for nearly two years – when it could have just paid the employees and avoided the fight.

The matter was due for a five-day hearing in the Federal Court after two years of litigation, but settlement was reached outside court.

Non-teaching staff are often the lowest-paid workers at schools. The result sends a loud message to any school tempted to use the pandemic as an opportunity to cut costs by dipping into staff wages: the IEU will pursue them doggedly to uphold the legal rights of our members.

Every other school which attempted to avoid payment of wages for stood-down workers reconsidered their position in the face of legal action from the IEU.

Not for the first time, Peninsula Grammar was an outlier.

In November, the school was found guilty in the Federal Circuit Court of 'unconscionable conduct' over its failure to honour fee discounts of \$300,000 promised to a senior teacher with her children at the school. When remote schooling started, the school tried to cut the discount. The Federal Circuit Court said the blanket imposition of the lower discount 'was grossly unfair' to teachers who had secured higher discounts.

Again, the IEU fought on behalf of the staff member all the way to the Court and Peninsula Grammar lost the case, with the school ordered to pay the IEU's legal costs, likely to be well in excess of \$100,000.

'It's a real shame to see a wealthy institution like Peninsula Grammar display such little loyalty, regard or care for hard-working staff,' Deb James told the *Herald Sun*.

She said the only financial impact of the pandemic on the school had been 'the huge legal bills they've amassed trying unsuccessfully to squeeze their own employees out of their legitimate entitlements.'

## Solidarity selfies: facing up to a fair deal

On the cover of this edition of *The Point*, you can see the faces of just some of the workers in Victorian Catholic education who have sent in a 'solidarity selfie' for our photo petition.



This campaign began after the publication of the draft Victorian Government Schools Agreement (VGSA) in early February, as we turned up the pressure in our negotiations with Catholic employer representatives.

This 'photo petition' of staff in Victorian Catholic Education brings employer representatives face-to-face with all of us who know we deserve improvements to our salaries, conditions, and workloads.

If you haven't yet joined in: take a selfie and email it (along with your name and your school and suburb) to [photos@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:photos@ieuvictas.org.au). The union office will then add your image into our posters and banners to show that we stand united.

Your picture helps show employer representatives that we are watching negotiations for fair pay and conditions, and we care about the outcome.

The more of us there are, the more powerful this message is – so please encourage your colleagues (including non-members) to add their face to our photo petition.

Let's make this BIG and bring employer representatives face-to-face with the thousands of employees whose working lives will be directly affected by these negotiations.

Aside from your selfie, we're asking you to help us grow in size and strength by inviting a colleague to join you in your union. Every new member in Victorian Catholic

education strengthens our hand at the bargaining table as we negotiate improvements that will benefit everyone working in our schools.

**Questions about bargaining? Don't hesitate to contact your IEU Rep, your Organiser or the IEU office on 92541860 or [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au)**

*\*Go to pages 12 and 13 for more on the 2022 bargaining campaigns.*

# NCCD workload win!

The IEU has helped streamline evidence collection requirements for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) as part of its campaign to reduce the impact of non-teaching tasks upon members.

Time consuming non-teaching tasks are exhausting Australian teachers. Administrative duties continue to pile up, reducing the time teachers can teach, and increasing stress and job dissatisfaction.

The IEU is hard at work addressing this issue by bargaining on better workload outcomes for members in upcoming Agreements. But it has also collaborated with the federal Department of Education, Skills, and Employment (DESE) to provide important new guidelines regarding the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).

For many teachers, undertaking the annual NCCD has become a demanding and time-intensive addition to an already crowded timetable. Our union surveyed members last year, revealing the NCCD demands were resulting in excessive and unnecessary data collection and data recording. Our research in hundreds of schools showed there is widespread respect for the NCCD and its aims – but it was also clear that teachers were

struggling with unsustainable evidence collection expectations at school and system level.

At a federal level our union made ongoing representation to the DESE about the need to clarify the reasonable expectations of evidence collection in the face of often unreasonable and inconsistent employer demands.

Following these consultations, DESE published an updated NCCD Evidence Fact Sheet for the non-government sector. This fact sheet will be invaluable in ensuring that NCCD requirements are met without placing unnecessary additional workload burdens on staff.

Key elements of the guidelines include:

- What is necessary and unnecessary evidence.
- Examples of evidence in excess of what is required.

This is a significant outcome arising from IEU work and advocacy and should make a real difference to workloads for many staff in our schools.

## What this means for IEU sub-branches

The Fact Sheet is an important resource for IEU sub-branches, Consultative Committees and Health and Safety Reps. It provides helpful clarification about what should and (importantly) should not be expected of staff who are collecting evidence for the NCCD – so it's vital that teachers, classroom support staff and members of school leadership familiarise themselves with this document.

All IEU sub-branches have received (via their Rep) a copy of our new staffroom poster with key information about the NCCD Fact Sheet.

Following our well-attended NCCD Project Discussion Forum on 16 March, at which we ran through the key implications of the Fact Sheet, we'll run a second online Forum on Thursday 31 March, from 7-8pm.

**You can access our article unpacking the NCCD Evidence Fact Sheet, our workplace poster, and registration links for the upcoming NCCD Project Discussion Forum at [www.rebrand.ly/NCCD](http://www.rebrand.ly/NCCD)**

www.rebrand.ly/NCCD'. The IEU logo and website [www.ieuvictas.org.au](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au) are also present. An illustration shows people working together to build a large structure."/>

## ‘Insane, burdensome, complicated, and relentless’: the workload scourge

To fix a seemingly intractable problem, talk to the experts: teachers.

Why is Australia facing ‘total teacher exhaustion’? ‘Meaningless administration (there’s a form for everything!’ said one IEU member recently. ‘The overkill of online ‘professional development’ modules. The increasing demand to upskill IT skills - most of which you’re left to learn in your own time (which usually ends up being at night at your kitchen table while juggling making dinner).

‘Complicated student management systems - in some schools, multiple student management systems (all of which don’t ‘talk’ to each other). Hours spent writing online feedback that is often not even accessed or read by parents.

‘Dealing with student behavioural issues with little or no support or intervention. Hours spent mentoring and assisting new staff with no pay or time allowance to do so. The relentless narrative of ‘goal setting’ and ‘targets’, all so someone above somewhere can tick a box.’

That’s more than enough, but it didn’t end there:

- Underfunding of necessary classroom resources and equipment.
- Onerous documentation for annual reviews.

- The constant steam of emails from students, parents, and leadership (particularly out of hours) that ‘demand’ an immediate response.
- Copious amounts of ‘data’ entry
- Lengthy, detailed paperwork for simple excursions.
- Sick leave requirements so burdensome it is easier just to go to work sick than take time off.
- Endless VCE data analysis.
- Extra classes when colleagues are absent, because schools won’t or can’t find CRTs.
- Continual additions to an overcrowded curriculum.
- Endless policies and procedures that have crept into the day to day running of a school.

Our correspondent said unless all of this ‘unnecessary rubbish’ is subtracted, teachers will continue to leave the profession in droves.

Through Agreement negotiations and fostering of effective Consultative Committees, the IEU has long sought to ensure workloads in our schools are manageable.

IEU General Secretary Deb James says increased work had a negative impact on the morale of teachers, their ability to perform

their core work, and their wellbeing.

A Grattan Institute survey backed this up, stating that ‘teachers feel overwhelmed by the enormous expectations of their jobs, with nine in every 10 saying they don’t have enough time to prepare for their daily classes’.

Dr Jordana Hunter, the Grattan Institute’s education program director, told *The Age* the findings were a ‘cry for help’ from an exhausted workforce, which ‘lacked the time to prepare for their core teaching duties, including lesson planning, reviewing students’ work and supporting struggling learners’.

‘Teachers should be able to get the core parts of their job done in a standard working week,’ Dr Hunter said.

In her own *Age* piece on the topic, Dr Hunter said teachers are expected to ‘assess student learning frequently, monitor progress closely and adapt their practice appropriately, stay abreast of the research evidence, develop children’s social and academic competencies, and ensure their teaching is inclusive of the range of student abilities’.

Phew.

But wait, there’s more.

‘Add in hours of yard duty and

extracurricular activities each week, a good dose of paperwork, student welfare checks, administrative meetings, and the frequent introduction of new programs to tackle emerging social issues from financial literacy and cyber-bullying to informed consent, and the average teacher’s schedule is bulging.’

Teachers are also expected to supervise extracurricular activities and deal with issues including ‘childhood obesity, swimming safety, mental health challenges, cyberbullying, and consent in personal relationships...’

Teachers want to teach – but to do so effectively they need time, resources, and autonomy to prepare, to engage with educational research and undertake quality professional development.

The IEU will continue to prioritise workload issues in our negotiations for new Agreements in Catholic and independent schools to ensure that our members have the time and resources they need to do their work safely and well and to give our students the education they deserve.

# Hello and a goodbye

There were major changes at the IEU Victoria Tasmania in 2021. David Brear became Deputy Secretary, Kylie Busk and Nick Sahlqvist were appointed Assistant Secretaries and stalwarts Cathy Hickey and Loretta Cotter retired.

Unfortunately for our branch, and fortunately for the Queensland IEU, the changes have continued, with Assistant Secretary **Nick Sahlqvist** leaving his role to take his young family home to the sunshine state.

Nick's union journey began in Queensland and included a stint in the UK, where he was national officer with the FDA, the union for the Senior Civil Service. He started with the IEU Victoria Tasmania in 2012 as an Organiser covering the western districts and later became responsible for co-ordinating bargaining across Independent schools. He was also IEU delegate to Geelong Trades Hall Council.

Nick is an experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated organiser, negotiator, and administrator, but colleagues and members will also miss his calm demeanour, good humour, and collegiality.

'I have loved my time with the branch, and we are sad to be going but also looking forward to the adventure back north,' Nick said.

The considerable hole in leadership Nick leaves will be filled by two new Assistant Secretaries, Cara Maxworthy and Simon Schmidt.

**Cara Maxworthy** joined the IEU as a student teacher at ACU, and has been very active in the union through a distinguished 15-year career as a Junior School Teacher and Coordinator at St Margaret's and Berwick Grammar School, where she became IEU Rep in her second year of teaching and worked on the negotiation of three Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBAs).

Cara was on the IEU Committee of Management for 11 years and became the President of the Independent Council, then IEU Deputy President before being employed as an IEU Organiser in 2018, playing a senior role in the negotiation of EBAs in Victorian Independent Schools.

Committed to making things better for IEU members, Cara says she is especially keen to contribute on gender issues and improving outcomes for First Nations People.

**Simon Schmidt** joined the IEU as a graduate teacher at East Preston Islamic College in 2008, where he became the school's first elected Rep. He interned with the union through the Union Summer program run by Trades Hall in 2009. Simon says this 'formative experience' inspired him to seek work as an organiser.

Simon's organising highlights included building activism in Islamic schools and working with members in the Shepparton area, but soon he was also working on campaigns and lobbying, writing for *The Point*, and setting up IEU social media channels, moving into a media and communications role in 2018.

A founding member of the Committee of Management of the Young Workers Centre, Simon has represented the federal IEU on the ACTU Youth Committee and at Education International forums.

The other newcomers at the IEU, both joining the Organiser team, already seem like old hands. Their credentials explain why they've taken it all in their stride.

**Shanae Rowick** joined the IEU as a student when the union addressed her cohort at Australian Catholic University.

'When I got my first job, I got immediate benefit from my membership as my organiser supported me in negotiating to not have to pay for a device,' Shanae recalls.

'At that stage Catholic schools were still charging staff for work devices. The school ended up changing their practice as a result of this challenge.'

The recent Discrimination Bill mess resonated for Shanae.

'As a Queer teacher in Catholic schools, I wanted to be a part of making non-government schools a better place for

people with diverse life experiences. I also really loved being a Rep and helping to ensure that people who work in education have the best circumstances possible to facilitate good teaching and learning in their workplaces.'

'I hope the contribution I can make is to help the members I work with to empower themselves with knowledge of their rights and build the capacity of their sub-branches by spreading unionism through their workplaces!'

**Andy Hyde** says he originally had a 'Lone Wolf attitude to survival' in teaching, but over the 20 years he worked at Eltham College, he was part of building a 'team approach' to union work that 'changed his life' and led him to the new role with the IEU.

Once the Lone Wolf 'found his pack', he found its members possessed 'superpowers' like 'prudence, human connection, humour, persistence, and gratitude'.

'Our Eltham team became unstoppable and never again would I forget or underestimate the power of the collective voice! Suffice to say our membership skyrocketed to over 75% which at times of negotiations is a force to be reckoned with. Working on Enterprise Bargaining Agreements supported my understanding of the power in working with a team, listening to the members, and giving them voice.'

'My wish for my work in the IEU is that I will become deft at seeking out the key issues with you, and I will find those hidden 'natural leaders' in your schools so that together we can better serve the whole. I hope to build teams who will work in support of you, our members, and all the wonderful and magnificent professional teachers that care so much about the education of young people!'

## This is the year of elections



**DEPUTY SECRETARY**  
DAVID BREAR

A federal poll is expected in May and Victorians are scheduled to vote in November.

While the IEU is not affiliated to any political party, we have in the past supported individual candidates as well as campaigns run by the broader union movement — something we will do again.

We do this because when it comes to industrial relations and worker's rights, there have been stark differences between the positions taken by different parties — some of which have been good for workers and some catastrophically bad.

*Your Rights at Work* was a great campaign run by the union movement which helped end the reign of the Howard government. It was followed a decade later by *Change the Rules*, a campaign which offered much but didn't manage to grab the hearts and minds of the electorate.

Electoral campaigns have been run at a state level out of the Victorian Trades Hall with great success.

In my time as a union official it has really hit hard how much it matters who is in power both in Canberra and in Spring Street.

I remember back in 2006 feeling the fear of members who were concerned about their job security because the Howard government had removed their protection against unfair dismissal.

I remember too when the Rudd government was elected, we could finally get Agreements at schools which had always refused to negotiate with us, as long as we could demonstrate that a majority of staff wanted to bargain.

These weren't ideological or esoteric wins for people. They meant that staff who had never been paid at the same rates as government school staff now were. They meant that people had better job security and access to basic rights like paid parental leave.

The ALP's position in the debate around the recent federal Religious Discrimination Bill has made a lot of people very angry, me included. It's one thing to adopt a small target strategy and entirely another not to stand for anything.

But when I saw Scott Morrison last night on TV channelling George W Bush in declaring that we are facing an 'Arc of Autocracy' I thought, these blokes (and they mostly are blokes) have really got to go.

We'll be in touch again once the federal election campaign formally kicks off, and encourage you to get involved in what is going to be an absolutely crucial contest.

## Union and people power ends Launceston Grammar unrest

Resignation ends difficult period for school stretching back to 2019.

Following three motions of No Confidence, the threat of industrial action, a campaign by parents, damning survey results and the mass resignation of staff over the past few years, Launceston Church Grammar Headmaster Richard Ford resigned from his position at the school effective the end of Term 1 this year.

IEU Victoria Tasmania Deputy General Secretary David Brear said that the signs were bad soon after Mr Ford arrived at the school back in 2019, when staff voted down a proposed Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, then authorised the IEU to seek a ballot for protected industrial action.

As the COVID pandemic broke out in

early 2020, IEU members dropped plans to take industrial action but unrest at the school continued. Parents joined in, with many voicing concerns around deteriorating school culture and low staff morale.

In 2021, over 70 parents signed a letter expressing these concerns to the school board. Other parents and Old Grammarians also issued complaints and staff passed a motion condemning the board over their inaction.

Mr Brear said that it was rare for there to be such unrest across a school community.

'This was never about a reluctance amongst staff to accept change, but about the way that it was done,' he said.

'The lesson in it for the Board is that you need to listen.'

'This has all come at a cost. The school's reputation took a battering over the past few years and many talented staff left, in some cases with no job to go to.'

## QITER the eye-opener

The debate continues over whether pay is the key issue for attracting and retaining teachers, or whether other factors are more important.

Lifting the highest rates of pay by \$30,000 would make young high achievers 13% more likely to choose teaching as a career. This was the conclusion of the recently released Quality Initial Teacher Education Review (QITER).

Initial teachers' pay in Australia compares favourably with any nation, but flattens out after about 10 years, well below the average in other advanced economies.

The review also found high-achieving students perceive teaching is not a 'prestigious' profession, leading them to pursue other career options.

Most submissions to the review raised concerns about workload, saying potential candidates were put off by excessive paperwork and red tape as much as by low salary growth.

The head of the NSW Teachers Federation, Angelo Gavrielatos, said the upshot of the review was: 'workloads are too high, and salaries are too low'.

The review recommended the postgraduate teaching qualification be reduced to one year and called for short courses which could familiarise students with teaching without them committing to a full degree.

Academics Hugh Gundlach and Gavin R. Slemph, responding to the report, said pay isn't one of the top 10 reasons teachers leave their profession.

'A loss of passion for teaching, stress and burnout, struggling to cope with their roles and a lack of connection with students were the most common reasons,' they wrote for *The Conversation*.

Their surveys show major attractions to teaching include:

- passion for learning
- working with young people
- contributing to society
- job security

One teacher with 12 years' experience told them:

'The most significant factor I have perceived in keeping teachers in our profession is their personal passion. Teachers are not materially motivated, there are no big dollars here. Good schools then necessarily rely on passion to outweigh these priorities in retaining and developing excellent teachers.'

Another teacher with 18 years' experience said:

'The thing that has kept me in teaching is the students I teach, the relationships I have with them, and the sense that I am contributing to making their lives better in some way.'

Dr David Hastie, from Alpacrucis University College, says 'the most telling revelation' from QITER is that fewer people are choosing teaching as a profession.

He identified paid work throughout study as the key incentive for potential undergraduates and postgraduates to choose teaching over rival professions.

## No winners in Religious Discrimination Bill fiasco

The chaotic collapse of the Federal Government's Religious Discrimination Bill (RDB) was welcome, but leaves great uncertainty in its wake.

After two previous failed attempts to pass religious discrimination legislation, and months of chaotic and contradictory messaging from the Morrison Government about how the laws would operate and who would be affected, the proposed legislation passed the House of Representatives with Labor's support in a marathon late-night sitting on 10 February. However, amendments forced by Labor, opposition on the floor from several government MPs, and threats from government senators to cross the floor led to a sudden decision to ditch the legislation.

**'These workers deserve to be protected from discrimination and to be treated based on merit, not on irrelevant factors such as marital or parental status, sexual orientation or identity or religious activity.'**

The RDB, intended to protect people of faith from discrimination, was drafted with gaping holes that overrode existing state laws, including Victoria's ground-breaking anti-discrimination laws which were enacted late last year after a decade-long campaign spearheaded by the IEU and Equality Australia.

The Victorian legislation reformed religious exemptions to prevent schools discriminating against students and teachers based on personal characteristics.

In November 2021, IEU General Secretary Deb James said that the Victorian legislation ensured that 'a science teacher, a cleaner, a lab tech or an integration aide who is divorced, gay or an unmarried parent cannot legally be discriminated against in their workplace'.

However, the contentious federal legislation as originally drafted would have enabled schools to expel students for being gay, transgender, or non-binary.

In the week before the bill was debated, Citipointe Christian College in Queensland withdrew an offensive and exclusionary 'enrolment contract' sent to parents, after 154,000 enraged citizens signed a petition condemning it.

The Independent Education Union of Australia opposed the bill strenuously and called on all federal politicians to block the 'dangerous and divisive' legislation.

'The vast majority of our 75,000 members work in faith-based schools right across Australia. These workers deserve to be protected from discrimination and to be treated based on merit, not on irrelevant factors such as marital or parental status, sexual orientation or identity or religious activity.'

Last-minute amendments to the RDB introduced protections for gay students but left transgender children unprotected, prompting five Liberal members of the Morrison Government to vote against it after emotional debate ran long into the night.

The first iteration of the bill was tabled in 2018, with the Prime Minister promising that religious schools would not be able to expel



students based on their sexuality.

That required removing the exemptions that exist in the federal Sex Discrimination Act that permit faith-based schools the right to expel LGBTQ+ students and sack LGBTQ+ teachers and support staff.

The IEUA and many other organisations and individuals made submissions at senate committees and parliamentary inquiries regarding the exemptions—but they were never removed.

During the final sitting week before the upcoming election, with the government under pressure to deliver on an election promise it had dithered over for three years, the federal opposition released a statement stating if elected, it would 'protect LGBTQ+ teachers from discrimination "at work" (those employed), but also "maintain the right of religious schools to preference people of their faith in the selection of staff."

This appeared to leave the door open for faith-based schools to refuse to employ LGBTQ+ staff, overriding state legislation (including in Victoria and Tasmania) where such discrimination is banned.

The Religious Discrimination Bill may have fallen in a heap for now, but there is no guarantee it will not return after the election. The IEU will continue to work with members to advocate for laws which protect all students and staff in our schools from discrimination.



**IEU LEARNING HUB**

Delivering quality professional development for IEU members



Through the Learning Hub, the IEU provides a free, comprehensive suite of professional development opportunities for members, focussing on broad areas of interest and specialised training for different cohorts of our membership.

Two years ago we developed the IEU Learning Hub as an

expanded source of high quality free online professional development for members on a range of topics. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive.

An upcoming highlight of Hub offerings is the timely PD seminar PD Webinar *Student Wellbeing - Supporting students who are experiencing anxiety*, on Wednesday 18

May. Presenter David Vinegrad will offer techniques for re-engaging anxious students.

The program for 2022 continues the extensive provision of high quality, practical PD opportunities, which members can visit and re-visit on-demand.

**See the calendar on page 28 for the full Semester One program, and find details of all 2022 offerings at [www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars)**



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

# Taking leave during the pandemic

COVID is affecting most forms of leave for school staff. Know your entitlements and options in case the virus affects you or your loved ones.

### COVID leave

If you contract COVID or are required to care for someone who has, you are entitled to be on leave, but it may come out of your personal (sick/carers') leave. The exception is where you contracted COVID at school, in which case you can claim 'infectious diseases leave' which is paid and doesn't come out of your personal leave. However, while all Catholic schools and most schools with an Agreement negotiated with the IEU have infectious diseases leave, there are still some independent schools that don't have it. In those schools you will have to use your personal leave even if you caught COVID at work. If you run out of personal leave, your employment cannot be terminated but your subsequent leave will then be unpaid.

### Close contacts

Many schools (including all the Catholic schools in the Sale Diocese) are granting five days' paid leave to staff who are required to isolate as a close contact. This leave does not come out of your personal (sick/carers') leave. Other schools are taking it from personal leave. In those schools, if you run out of personal leave your isolation period will be unpaid.

### Vaccine Refusal

In Victoria there is a government vaccine mandate in place. All staff must be fully vaccinated (which now means a third dose). Some staff have refused to get vaccinated. A very small number have a genuine

medical exemption under the directions, but many, including some with health concerns such as being immune compromised, are not eligible for an exemption. Contact the IEU if this applies to you. While most employers have allowed these staff to take leave (usually unpaid leave or long service leave if they have any accrued) most are now refusing to grant any more leave – so these staff must now get vaccinated or their employment will be terminated.

While an organisation purporting to be an 'alternative union' for education workers opportunistically emerged last year with a promise to run a legal defence for unvaccinated staff, even that entity now admits that there is nothing they can do currently. As the IEU warned at the outset, the mandate was not vulnerable to legal challenge and those that signed up to that option are now facing the consequences.

In Tasmania there is no government mandate, but many employers have implemented one. All staff in government and many independent schools have been directed to get vaccinated, but Catholic Education has decided against a mandate. Where the school does have a mandate, the situation is the same as for Victoria.

### Unpaid Leave

Catholic and independent schools are not obliged to grant unpaid leave. Under pressure from the IEU, many have previously granted it, but most are now refusing to do so for staff who are

not fully vaccinated. Members who want unpaid leave for other legitimate purposes can still apply, but many schools are worried about covering staff absences due to the pandemic, so may be reticent to agree. If you want unpaid leave for the traditional reasons, apply and speak to the IEU if you are refused.

### Long Service Leave

Some staff have applied for and been granted Long Service Leave as a short-term measure, especially for staff with serious concerns, such as being immune-compromised. Employers can only refuse an application for LSL on 'reasonable business grounds'. The difficulty now is that staff are falling ill, others are being required to self-isolate and others have resigned or been terminated because they refused to be vaccinated. This gives schools a better basis to refuse applications for LSL because they can legitimately say that they will have trouble back-filling staff absences.

If you have a genuine reason to take LSL, give as much notice as possible, which will make it harder for the employer to reject your request. Note that while some schools have 'policies' about how much notice you have to give when seeking LSL, these policies are unlawful: failure to meet a suggested timeline is in and of itself not a valid reason for rejecting a Long Service Leave application.

If you are refused, contact the IEU.

## Common sense prevails on Long Service Leave anomalies

The Diocese of Sale and the IEU seek to amend the Victorian Catholic Agreement.

**I**EU members will have recently received a 'special message' about an application in the Fair Work Commission to vary Long Service Leave provisions in the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Employer Agreement 2018*.

This is the result of the Diocese of Sale and the IEU seeking to vary the Agreement to fix problems created in drafting the Long Service Leave provisions. Specifically, staff who have had any part-time service have been getting paid LSL at their 'weighted average' time fraction instead of their current time fraction. This means, for example, that a full-time employee who had previously worked part-time for a period would be unable to take Long Service Leave at their full-time rate, instead being paid at the 'average' time fraction of their service.

*Example: Denise worked full time for two years then went part time (0.5 FTE) for five years after taking maternity leave. She then returned to her full-time position for three years. Denise is now going on LSL, but under the existing arrangement she would only be paid LSL at 0.75 of her salary (the average of her time fraction over her 10 years of service). The problem for Denise is that she budgets for a full-time income. The proposed variation will mean she will be paid her current time fraction.*

For various reasons, the 'fix' to this has been a long time coming. If approved, the variation we have now negotiated will apply to all Victorian Catholic education staff. It will allow LSL entitlements to be converted to hours, and will permit employees going on LSL to draw down on their balance at their current time fraction. There will be no disadvantage to any employee and no loss of hours or entitlements.

It's important to note that while members who have had their entitlement paid out at a lower rate over recent years have been in some cases very seriously inconvenienced, they have not been disadvantaged in terms of their overall entitlement – receiving a lower rate of LSL means that the total balance is drawn down more slowly.

Staff have received the special message because the Commission has directed the employers to notify staff of the proposed variation. You do not have to respond or do anything – we are confident that the approval of this variation will fix this issue, which we know has been a major concern for a significant number of members.

If you have any questions, please speak to your IEU Organiser.



## Rossbourne members make great leap!

Three years ago, Rossbourne School in Hawthorn had one IEU member and very little transparency about employment conditions.

**M**omentum started to build after a teacher joined the IEU (doubling the membership!) and contacted the school Organiser seeking clarity on pay and workload. This teacher agreed to be the Rep, despite the risk of standing out in a workplace with virtually no members and no history of collective action. She then recruited colleagues to the IEU and

put together a list of issues that the sub-branch of (then) a dozen members wanted addressed.

This led to a bargaining committee of sorts being established, after which a claim was put to the Principal in Term 2, 2021. Despite COVID and its disruptions, several (remote) meetings were held, resulting in a great outcome for members, as follows:

- Increase from six to twelve weeks' paid parental leave
- Confirmation of one week of paid partner leave
- Provision of five days' Family and Domestic Violence Leave
- Confirmation of the salary and allowances scales, with a generous premium over government school rates
- Confirmation of face-to-face hours and their composition –

- also significantly better than government benchmarks
  - Further workload concessions from leadership
  - An agreement to revisit all employment conditions in two years' time.
- These wins were celebrated at the end of the year with a morning tea for members who had contributed to the consultation and negotiation

process, at which they asked their colleagues to join, and to support each other in speaking up where appropriate.

Congratulations to all involved, but especially to the teacher who volunteered to be Rep and got the whole ball moving!

From little things, big things grow...



## Insecure work and Education Support Staff



It's that gut-wrenching feeling as your contract nears its end date and you don't know if you'll be offered another one.

Whether it's casual labour, a fixed-term contract, a short-term contract, a dodgy sole-trader arrangement, or a sham contract, what we're talking about is insecure work – which means financial insecurity, difficulty planning for the future, and stress.

Try rolling into a bank to negotiate a mortgage or a personal loan if you have insecure work – good luck! Then there are the unscrupulous bosses who use your fear of unemployment to bully you out of asking a legitimate question about your terms and conditions or to prevent you from making a complaint about harassment or bullying.

Insecure work leaves a large section of the workforce with inferior rights, entitlements, job security and wages growth. It leaves working families living week to week, unable to rely on a regular income while facing rising household costs and increased household debt.

Insecure work is also a gendered issue. Most workers suffering from financial insecurity due to low pay and insecure work contracts are women. In its submission to the Senate Select Committee on Job Security in April 2021, *Insecure Work in Australia*, the ACTU said, 'the surge in women's casual work has widened the gender pay gap'.

'Women disproportionately suffered job losses when COVID-19 hit, and as the economy recovers, are returning to insecure work. From May through to November (2020), casual jobs made up over 60% of new jobs and women filled 62% of those jobs.'

In the education sector 14% of all

staff are employed as casuals and the education and training sector has the highest percentage of fixed-term contracts at 33%.

**Any casual employee working a regular pattern of hours should be offered conversion to a permanent role at their regular time fraction after 12 months' service.**

In the Catholic sector, the use of fixed-term contracts is unacceptably high and varies widely depending on where you work.

In the Sale Diocese at the end of 2020, 10% of employees were on fixed-term contracts, about half of the rate in the other three Diocese – Melbourne, Ballarat, and Sandhurst. Ballarat had a slight increase in fixed term contracts over the 2019 year. The figure decreased in all the other Dioceses.

Catholic primary and special schools account for 26.3% of fixed-term employment in education, compared to 11% in secondary schools. Up to a whopping 32.5% of Education Support Staff in Primary schools are on fixed-

term contracts compared to 13% in secondary schools.

The Victorian Catholic Agreement lists five legitimate reasons for the use of fixed-term contracts. In our experience a very significant proportion, possibly even a majority of fixed-term contracts in Victorian Catholic education are not compliant with the Agreement. Again, the honourable exception to this is the Sale Diocese, where dodgy contracts are relatively rare.

In Independent schools where staff are employed either under IEU-negotiated Enterprise Agreements or the bare-bones Award, the situation can be more complicated. Contact the IEU office or your Organiser for advice!

### NEW ENTITLEMENT: Casual Conversion

In a big win for casual staff, resulting from years of campaigning by the union movement, 'casual conversion' is now a National Employment Standards (NES) entitlement for many casual workers, including those in schools. As the ACTU's submission put it: 'Workers should have jobs they and their families can rely on with fair and predictable pay and hours of work, access to important conditions like annual leave, paid sick leave, protection from unfair dismissal, and quality skills and training and career opportunities.'

Any casual employee working a regular pattern of hours should be offered conversion to a permanent role at their regular time fraction after 12 months' service. While this is a very welcome new provision, it can be complicated – so it's important to seek advice from your union if you want to pursue casual conversion.

In 2022 we are starting the year with a campaign to eradicate non-compliant fixed-term contracts. If your contract is unlawful – let's fix that. If you have been on more than one fixed-term contract – let us check it out for you.

**Get in touch with your Organiser via [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au) or our Education Support Staff Officer Tracey at [tspiel@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:tspiel@ieuvictas.org.au).**



## 'Seek justice justly': stalwart Rep Jennie Schofield steps down

Highly respected art teacher and long-time IEU Rep Jennie Schofield has retired from Melbourne Montessori School (MMS), ending a career that began in 1977.

Jennie was the art teacher at MMS for 22 years, creating a program recognised by the NGV and the arts community and was the IEU Rep there for a decade until last year, helping negotiate the school's past four Enterprise Bargaining Agreements.

Jennie says when she first joined MMS, staff, parents, and the board shared a community feel, 'just like a family'. Staff were paid 3% above the government sector and felt well respected. However, that culture changed under a new principal. The board decided to discount staff wages and gave the parents a fee-freeze. The school climate eventually became fearful, and staff

felt powerless.

Jennie realised the staff were being poorly treated and underpaid and were being subjected to a 'divide and conquer' mentality. She called the IEU and became a member and the IEU Rep all at once! Jennie knew it was time to work as a collective to get an EBA in place.

Jennie is most proud of ensuring union meetings were conducted at least once a term during her time as IEU Rep. This provided a safe space for members to share issues affecting their work and encouraged them to find solutions as a group. At each meeting Jennie would note the issues raised, which

would then form the basis of the Log of Claims for the next EBA. Through her persistence Jennie pushed for wages and conditions to rise over successive agreements, standing steadfast when cutbacks were on the table.

Jennie says a persistent IEU Rep can wield a lot of power in the workplace and positively impact the school culture, creating a safe place for staff to openly say what they think and express ideas for ways to move forward. A Rep can be particularly effective interacting with a Consultative Committee. Having a strong IEU membership that knows they have the support of the IEU Rep has helped return

MMS to a culture of collaboration.

Jennie's advice for other new IEU Reps? Seek justice justly. The role of IEU Rep should be carried out with integrity. It's also important to listen to the IEU members. As the IEU Rep is representing other people, it's important to know what they think.

She also quotes legendary US jurist Ruth Bader Ginsberg: 'Fight for the things you care about but do it in a way that will lead others to join you'.

Jennie's passion is fostering the creativity of children through visual art, and she will continue to volunteer, writing lesson plans and booklets and assisting education

officers at the Jewish Museum of Australia and developing children's labels for the Glen Eira City Gallery.

Jennie also volunteers as a phone counsellor for families of newly diagnosed brain cancer patients for Cancer Connect (part of the Cancer Council Victoria) and assists to raise funds for brain cancer research. As a further sign of her dedicated unionism, Jennie has pledged to continue volunteering for the IEU when required.

Such Reps are the backbone of the union. We thank Jennie for her commitment to the IEU members at her school over her many years of service.



# COVID WorkCover claims

It seems a pretty basic question: 'Should I make a WorkCover claim if I contracted COVID at work?'



Often, the answer is 'yes', but read on – there are no guarantees, and every case is decided on its facts.

If you test positive, the first thing to do, after you take care of your immediate health concerns, is to apply for the appropriate leave to cover your time off work. In many cases, this will be infectious disease leave (IDL). But be warned: Being granted IDL does not necessarily mean that a WorkCover claim will be accepted. It helps, but it's not automatic.

Then, if you believe you contracted the virus at work, have a detailed discussion of the nature of your work and your infection with your IEU Organiser. This will help you work out whether a WorkCover claim is advisable.

For a claim to succeed, it is essential that you reasonably believe you caught the virus at work.

In Victoria, the legislation applies a different test for diseases than for a 'traditional injury', and compensation is paid where a disease is 'due to the nature of the employment'.

The Act provides that 'a disease suffered by a worker is to be regarded as due to the nature of employment if, and only if, the nature of the employment gave rise to a significantly greater risk of the worker contracting the disease than had the worker not been employed in employment of that nature'.

In some cases the DHS may assist in determining whether the virus was contracted through exposure at work, through contact tracing for example. However, the insurer will also make such inquiries and the nature of your work will affect whether the insurer

will accept liability.

It is possible the insurer will consider an employee mostly working in a classroom environment as more likely to have contracted the disease because of the workplace compared to, say, a maintenance worker who mostly works outside.

Our comrades at the ANMF and other health unions are encouraging members to make claims because the settings for their work – Intensive Care Units, emergency departments, COVID wards and pathology laboratories – are likely to experience higher than usual exposure to COVID-19 and the likelihood is higher that the disease will be contracted 'due to the nature of their work'.

The ACTU advises that work must be a 'substantial' or 'significant' contributing factor to the injury or illness when making a claim.

'Workers who are exposed to COVID-19 at work and subsequently contract the virus will have an entitlement to claim lost wages and medical expenses arising from the illness. Each claim will be considered on its individual merits and given the potential difficulty in tracing exposure of COVID-19; it is important that you report any potential exposure as soon as it occurs.

'You may be required to obtain a medical opinion that the illness or injury occurred in the course of employment.'

## ACTU advice on making a claim for workers compensation:

1. Notify your employer in writing via accident book or email or other means as soon as you become ill or have been diagnosed.
2. Visit your doctor, not the company doctor. You have a right to visit the doctor of your choice. Tell your work history to the doctor. Obtain a medical certificate. Your employer is not entitled to come to this appointment, and it is advised that if you would like a support person with you that you should bring a friend or family member (subject to appropriate protections relating to COVID-19).
3. If your employer or their representatives insist that you must attend their doctor, it is essential you get that request in writing. Inform your employer that you are getting advice. Contact your union.
4. Do not let an employer representative attend your medical appointment. Medical appointments are private. If a case conference is organised, then speak to your union and make sure you have a support person or representative with you, always.
5. Get your doctor to fill out the workers compensation forms if applicable in your state or territory. (See links below)
6. Fill out your section and provide the completed claim form to your employer along with any medical certificate. This can be provided by email.
7. If your employer refuses or delays in notifying the insurer, then do it yourself. Your union may assist in this. Some states and territories have online notification/reporting systems.
8. Keep copies of everything, including details of:
  - a) when and how you believe you were exposed,
  - b) your symptoms and when you started experiencing them,
  - c) when you told your employer,
  - d) when you visited the doctor,
  - e) when your employer or their insurer spoke with you – either in person or over the phone.
9. Speak to your union delegate. Never meet with anybody without your delegate and request all questions be in writing. If there is a case of COVID-19 at work the Health Department may ask you
10. to provide details of who you have been in contact with. Follow their instructions. If you contract COVID 19 your privacy will not be guaranteed as contacts will need to be followed up by the Health Department.

Source: [www.actu.org.au/media/1448964/chs-workers-compensation-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.actu.org.au/media/1448964/chs-workers-compensation-fact-sheet.pdf)



## Rep Profile: James Brown, Scotch College

James is another teacher who knew his destiny very early. It's doubtful he predicted it would involve teaching from a car!

### How and when did you get into teaching?

Since high school I knew that I wanted to be a teacher, even though my dad (a teacher) wasn't so keen. I had a lot of fun entertaining young kids when situations arose and combining that with my lifelong interest in history and literature led me to high school teaching.

### How did you become involved in the union?

In my second casual job I looked up the Award and was able to prove that we needed to receive additional payments

for working on Public Holidays. Since my first sessional teaching gig I've been a member, and I've always been conscious of the advocacy of unions, and how intrinsically linked they are to workplace conditions.

### How and when did you become a Rep?

I became Rep at my previous school in 2016 due to the previous Rep going on Maternity Leave. In 2020 at Scotch, Long Service Leave saw me stepping in for the previous Rep, and I've had the role ever since.

### What do you most enjoy about being a Rep?

I like solving tricky problems — doing this tactfully and behind the scenes where possible is what I most enjoy.

### What are the biggest issues facing education staff in your school?

Like most schools, workload and burnout are an ongoing issue. The balance between extracurricular and academic duties is a tricky one.

### What has been the impact of COVID on your school, family, self?

Our school ran every class remotely, in full, so balancing that with a two-year-old and working in the living room made that difficult. I would also go and teach from my car when she was napping.

My second daughter was born last year, and so it was amazing to be able to spend those few months of lockdown with her. Her afternoon nap in the front pack meant I could go for a lovely walk.

Now at school the issues are ventilation in the heritage rooms (where doors and windows

have to be open) and enforcing mask-wearing. We're getting a few notifications each day of new cases and of course the students need to isolate when there's a case in the household, so we need to keep up with the emails for those missing classes.

## Teachers in Tasmanian Christian Schools reject EBA

Teaching staff at four schools have issues with salary parity and pay level calculations.

Teachers at Calvin Christian School, Channel Christian School, Northern Christian School, and Emmanuel Christian School recently voted to reject a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, while general staff overwhelmingly voted to accept a new agreement for their salary and conditions.

The main issues that concerned teachers were some parity claims with the Department of Education in Tasmania in relation to salary, with Christian Schools Tasmania (CST) only guaranteeing that staff would fall no further than 3% behind their colleagues in state schools. This comparison was problematic as it was done each January, with DoE teachers then getting a pay increase in March of the same year, thus increasing the gap to over 5% for the remainder of the school year. A removal of a CPI guarantee also concerned some teachers who voted no to the proposed EA.

Other issues included disparity in how progressions through the pay levels were calculated. At CST a part-time teacher needs to work the equivalent hours of a full-time teacher before going up a pay level, meaning a 0.2 teacher could take 5 years to move up a level. This compares to most other Tasmanian schools which guarantee progression at least every two years.

Staff were also concerned that home room lessons are not being counted as face-to-face teaching, despite having to write reports and have parent teacher interviews for students in these groups. The current compensation of a reduction in duties was not seen as fair compensation for the work being done.

EA reps will return to negotiations despite the employer's initial response that they would be unable to improve the final offer that went to staff. The IEU hopes that the employer is willing to listen to their employees' concerns and to help find a way to resolve the current impasse.

# Independent bargaining round-up

The IEU will be pushing hard in upcoming EBA negotiations with Victorian independent schools for employers to better or at least match key improvements achieved in the recent round of bargaining in Victorian government schools.

The new government deal sees a reduction of face-to-face teaching to 18.5 hours (secondary) and 21 (primary) by 2024 and the introduction of measures to ensure that teachers' time during the school day is not gobbled up by meetings arranged by the employer. In addition, teachers in government schools will get time off in lieu when required to perform work outside of normal hours. This work includes attending camps, speech nights and parent teacher evenings.

It's hard to see how some independent schools can expect their staff to continue to work the hours they currently do, especially in schools with enormous co-curricular demands where teaching staff are paid barely more than they would get in a government school.

The union will be pushing independent schools to do far more to regulate teacher workloads which means putting enforceable limits around face-to-face, co-curricular and meeting times in Agreements.

The government deal also sets a new standard in Education Support Staff pay, especially in terms of the rates paid to ES at lower levels of the classification structure. The new government structure adds a number of new incremental steps for ES which means that staff including

Learning Support or Teacher Aides will be eligible for significantly higher salaries than in the past. ES salaries in many independent schools are woefully inadequate.

The IEU expects independent schools to at least match the new parental leave provisions in government schools, including the payment of superannuation for the first 12 months of parental leave.

We expect that 2022 will be a big year of bargaining as negotiations commence in schools that have waited for the government outcome to be announced.

### At the table

At **Eltham College** an initial meeting has been held with the IEU Rep and management to establish some 'guiding principles' for bargaining at the school. The meeting was a really worthwhile meeting opportunity for all of the parties to acknowledge that together we can work positively towards reaching agreement.

At **Firbank** the bargaining committee has met to respond to the first draft of the Agreement. This round of bargaining began way back in August 2019, but the IEU Reps and members on the committee have stayed the course and their interest and enthusiasm for getting the best

Agreement they can for members has not waned. There have been some late nights and these staff really deserve a big thanks! Over at **MLC**, negotiations have concluded, and the Agreement has been lodged at the Fair Work Commission for approval.

At **St Catherine's**, the bargaining team has been established and it's a cast of IEU members which is great. The sub-branch is currently getting organised to meet and to produce a Log of Claims. It's the first time in the history of the school that the one Agreement will cover most employees. Following a huge campaign, the **Woodleigh** Agreement has been approved by the FWC. This was a huge win for members who stood strong and were prepared to take industrial action to secure a fair deal.

At **PLC** negotiations on new Agreements for teachers and general staff are about to kick off, with claim development currently in progress, while at **Strathcona** the employer has offered 2.5% per annum for 2022 to 2024. IEU members are currently considering the offer. At **Billanook** the employer has offered staff 2% for 2022 but is seeking to delay bargaining until later in the year.

**Ballarat Grammar** staff have just voted to approve their Agreement after the school agreed to a last-minute increase

in salary to 3% pa (1.25% + 1.75% pa). This was a great achievement by the bargaining team of IEU members Melissa Cornell-Smith, Ian Riethoff and Naomi Ivey. The EBA at **Cornish** is going to vote.

At **Braemar** partner leave increases from five paid days to 10 paid days, family violence leave from three unpaid days to 10 paid days and there is agreement to include a clause designed to limit the spread of hours for part-time staff. The wage increase for 2022 is 4.25% with a minimum of 1% to follow in 2023.

At **Beaconhills** negotiations continue on the General Staff Agreement with the school agreeing to 2% pay rise in 2022, 20 days paid family violence, 16 weeks paid parental leave, improved redundancy provisions and improved access to Long Service Leave.

Negotiations at **Gippsland Grammar** are at the point where the school is responding to the union's claims and outlining their own. The school has provided staff a 2% wage increase for 2022 but the bargaining Reps will be seeking more in negotiations.

Bargaining has commenced at **Xavier College**, **The Kilmore International School** and **Ballarat and Clarendon College**. It continues at **Girton Grammar**.

## IEU in the news

It's been a busy start to the year, with General Secretary Deb James quoted in many stories, and the proposed Religious Discrimination Bill and misbehaving schools filling up our media archive.

Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania general secretary Deb James said vaccinating students and staff on site at school would help drive up the number of kids vaccinated before they return to the classroom.

"Schools are amongst the most high-contact workplaces, and it is essential that everything possible is done to ensure that the start of Term 1 is a safe and positive experience for everyone," Ms James said.

"Vaccinations for students should be accessible and easy, and all school staff should be given access to a booster shot before the start of the school year," she said.

"We support any initiative to improve vaccine access to students and staff."

THE AGE

The Independent Education Union's Victoria and Tasmania branch president, Deb James, said while children deserved to be safe at school and teachers were rightly held to a high standard of professional conduct, schools and students were not served well by the "undermining of the careers and confidence of good teachers".

"We have seen too many good teachers have their career, reputation, confidence and mental health ruined by protracted investigations of trivial matters under Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme," she said.

### Herald Sun Peninsula Grammar staff win payout after Covid lay-offs

Staff who were stood down by Peninsula Grammar during the Covid pandemic have won a hefty payout from the elite school after their union settled their long-running dispute on Thursday.

The Independent Education Union has been fighting for payment for the classroom assistants and library staff after they were laid off in April and May 2020 for four weeks.

The leading private school, which charges nearly \$30,000 a year in fees for senior students, was due to defend its actions in the Federal Court, but settlement was reached out of court.

Victorian IEU general secretary Deb James said she was delighted the workers were "finally getting their long-overdue entitlements".

"The total amount in dispute here was around \$20,000 in wages for some of the lowest paid staff in the school. Rather than simply resolving the matter quickly, Peninsula

THE AGE

OPINION >



PM, your religious freedom bill puts teen lives at risk

The Guardian  
For 200 years

Morrison signals attempt to pass religious discrimination bill 'in the near future'

Earlier on Monday the Australian Council of Trade Unions president, Michele O'Neil, the ACTU assistant secretary, Liam O'Brien, and the Independent Education Union addressed a group of Labor MPs, reiterating their concerns with the bill.

# Mind Your Head – and identify mental health risks in your workplace



The Mind Your Head campaign is a joint initiative between unions and employers, supported by Employers Mutual Limited and WorkSafe, to give workplaces the resources they need to identify and address workplace mental health hazards.

The project is 'beneficial in acknowledging, accepting and helping people work on the hazards that may cause psychosocial stresses and 'injuries' in the workplace' says Oona Shepherd, IEU member and OHS Rep at St Joseph's Primary School Korumburra, one of the first schools involved with Mind Your Head.

'The non-physical injuries may go unnoticed although they are just as serious and problematic to not only the employee suffering but also the business/school as a whole.'

Mind Your Head is a comprehensive checklist which can help locate the source of the problem when the following issues arise in your school: low morale, burn-out, poor workplace culture, or toxic behaviour.

These problems are the result of are psychosocial hazards, which are defined as 'anything in the design or management of work that increases the risk of work-related stress and psychological injury'.

Such mental health hazards may be one-off occurrences, a result of prolonged exposures or accumulative in nature.

Oona says the project's initial training and explanation about different types of illness and injury allows OHS officers and employers to be more aware of what might be impacting their employees.

'A physical injury or a hazard can be seen and easy to address and hopefully resolve. Understanding and recognising that there are other factors that can impact someone's health, productivity and general wellness enables the OHS Rep to address these things as they occur

and hopefully avoid some of the impact. It becomes an ongoing process of recognition and elimination rather than a reaction after the fact.'

The Mind Your Head checklist covers 74 potential risks in ten categories: management commitment; job demands and resources; job control and recognition; bullying, harassment, and gendered violence; violent and traumatic events; organisational practices; role clarity and responsibilities; workplace relationships; environmental conditions; and WHS awareness.

Oona says the project enables her 'to think outside the box'.

'There is an understanding of what each area of staff finds challenging, where they feel work pressures may be and it is enabling us to look at how we can create a workplace/school where everyone is understood, listened to and helped if needed without the stigma of mental health versus physical health being a barrier.'

The Mind Your Head guidance on psychosocial hazards states:

'Just like physical health and safety hazards, such as slippery surfaces, dangerous and unguarded machinery and badly set-up workstations, there are also workplace mental health hazards, like high and low job demands, isolated work and poor role clarity.

'These workplace mental health hazards injure thousands of workers each year, just like physical hazards but they often fly under the radar.

'Workplaces are experiencing a mental health emergency, with workplace mental injuries now the

fastest growing type of workplace injury in Australia.

'Mental health hazards can have a major impact on individuals, but they also affect everyone in the workplace through high staff turnover, reduced productivity and of course, an increase in workers' compensation claims.'

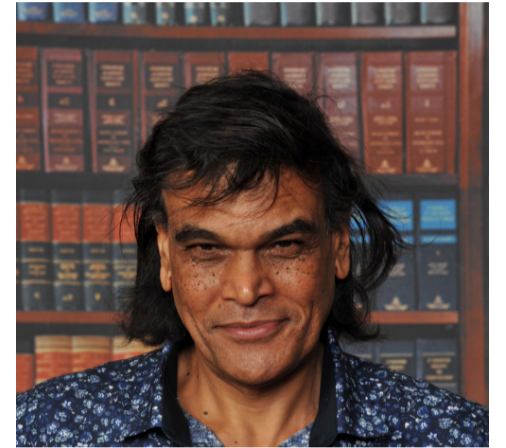
The Mind Your Head campaign aims to:

- Raise the priority of mental health and safety to sit equal to treatment of physical health and safety
- Educate and develop workers, HSRs, Managers and Leaders to understand work-related mental health risk factors and the relationship with WHS
- Design tools and resources for workplaces to create mentally safe systems of work
- Facilitate engagement with workers, HSRs, managers and leaders to work together to create mentally healthy work
- Review and analyse the interventions to determine best practice and create a community that learns from each other.

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe working environment for employees – and this applies equally to both physical and psychological health.

**You can learn more at [www.mindyourhead.org.au](http://www.mindyourhead.org.au)**

## Rep Profile: Brad Crowie, Notre Dame College, Shepparton



Retiring Rep Brad is a longstanding stalwart in the Shepparton area, and a previous winner of the IEU Regional Rep of the Year award.

Brad arrived in Australia from South Africa 23 years ago. He says teachers there were 'respected and held in high esteem'.

'South Africa strived to excel in education. If you're poor, education is a means out of your poverty. If you're wealthy, it gives you the ability to maintain your wealth and if you're middle class, education is a stepping stone to wealth and prestige. Back then everyone tried to get an education. Not sure if that is still the case today!'

Brad says the biggest surprise about being a Rep in regional Victoria was the 'huge discrepancies between normal learning and teaching and the discrete and often slippery slope staff are confronted with when dealing with disputes in the workplace'.

He gained most satisfaction from helping members, especially support staff, who sometimes 'lack the ability to speak up for their rights or who are afraid to buck a system that can destroy them'.

Highlights of his tenure included attending marches in Melbourne after driving a bus down from Shepparton.

His advice for new Reps?

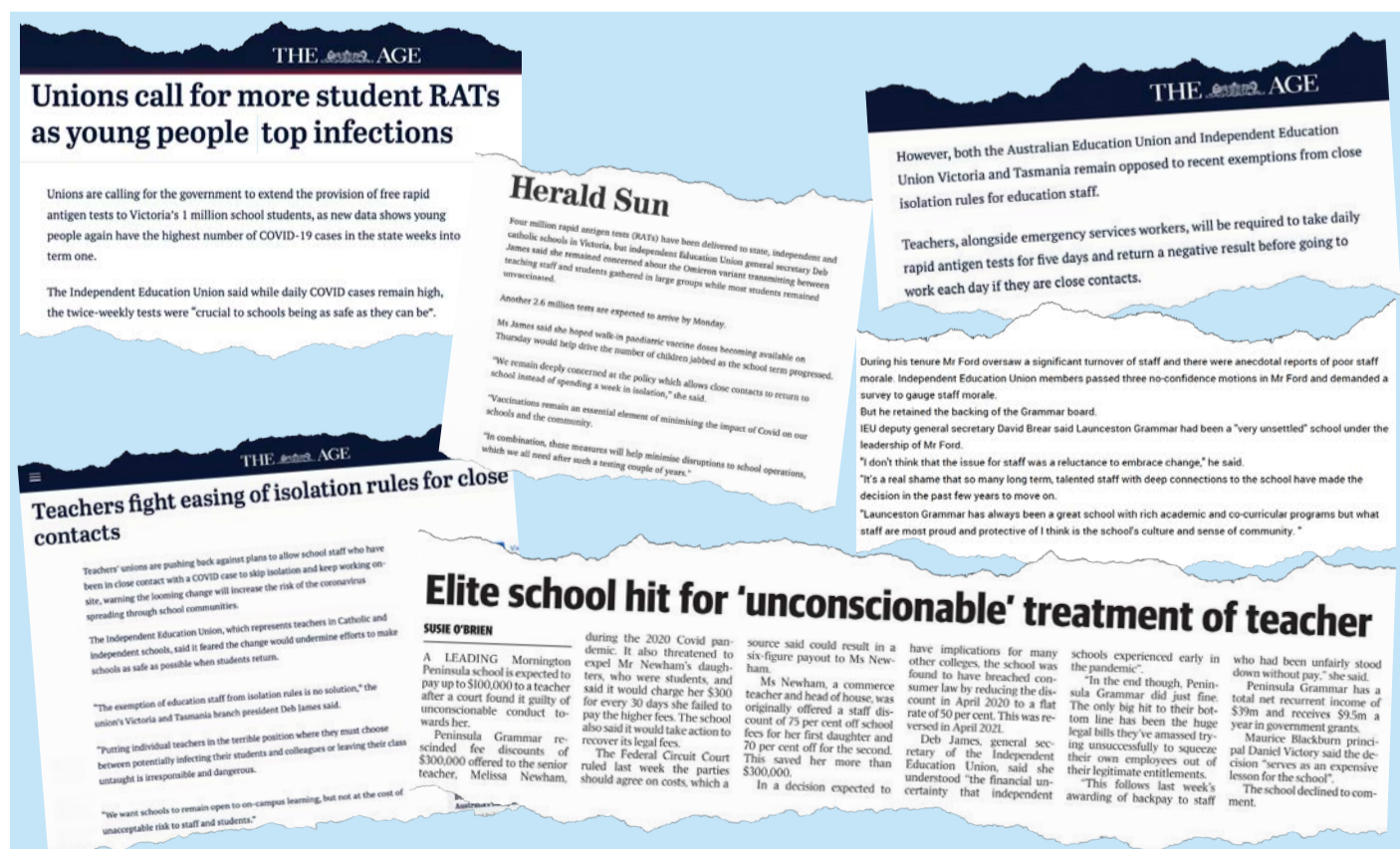
'Any meeting with management and a member of the Union whether friendly or incidental must be documented, as unfortunately they are often the beginning of an ambush! Never attend a formal meeting with a School Principal or Manager without a support person.'

Though proud of his work as a Rep, Brad admits it could be very tough dealing with 'career-defining moments in people's lives'.

'Many people think 'Another day another dollar', but if you lose your job, you lose your dollar!'

He also advises Reps to try their best to work with management, which can be difficult if you are in a management role yourself.

'Don't shoot the messenger' is a good saying to establish at the outset, although your school leadership might be oblivious to that saying!'



# CATHOLIC BARGAINING



## Victoria: time for progress and parity

Bargaining has been occurring each week for new Agreements to replace the Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement (VCMEA) 2018.

These negotiations will determine the salaries and working conditions of staff in Catholic schools for the next few years.

The Sale Diocese is negotiating separately, so we will have three agreements covering Catholic schools in Victoria:

- One for the Sale Diocese and Catholic College Sale
- One for Xavier College
- One for all the other Catholic Schools in Victoria, including the Diocese of Melbourne, Sandhurst, and Ballarat and all the order schools.

While we've had around 45 meetings with Catholic employers and have been pushing to get this done at a reasonable rate, progress has been slower than we would like. The most significant recent development has been the in-principle Agreement between the AEU and Victorian Government announced on 4 February, which is expected to be approved by AEU members in coming weeks (see our analysis, next page). While the Victorian Government Schools Agreement (VGSA) will not cover IEU members, it sets a new benchmark in our bargaining with Victorian Catholic employers and the IEU is at the table to ensure that our members are not left behind.

No wins will be simply handed down to IEU members. There is still a lot of hard bargaining to be done

before our Agreements will be ready for member approval.

### What now?

The IEU will work through our claims as well as those of employer representatives. Some of the employer claims involve crude cuts to hard-won conditions – these we will fight hard to oppose. Others are procedural and probably able to be accommodated if the overall offer is good enough.

We also need to carefully consider the conditions won by the AEU. It's important to note that some of the workload wins for teachers in the VGSA are premised on a different approach to that of previous Victorian Catholic Education Agreements. As just one example, while it contains stricter limits around employer-directed duties and activities during the school day, the VGSA does not grant the right to leave the school campus which is afforded to teachers under the IEU-negotiated Agreement covering Catholic schools. To help guide our approach, we recently surveyed teachers working in Victorian Catholic schools around workload issues – see the details alongside.

We will continue meeting with employer representatives over the coming weeks and try to hammer out the best deal we can as soon as possible, and we will report back to members as

the Agreements take shape.

In the meantime, the stronger we are in schools, the better the outcome is likely to be. Active members need to be talking about these issues and encouraging staff to join us to get the best possible conditions in our schools. Non-members need to understand that there is no such thing as a free ride: not joining the IEU reduces our strength and our ability to deliver the best Agreements.

Over decades of negotiations and members campaigning, we've been able to successfully maintain teacher pay parity and directly comparable conditions and salaries for Education Support Staff, Principals and Assistant Principals in Victorian Catholic schools. We've also achieved salaries and conditions in many independent schools that are competitive with or better than the benchmark set in government schools. But we cannot take these past achievements for granted – our ability to win comes directly from our collective strength. We must continue to grow, stand together and campaign together.

Now is the time for staff in the sector to get behind our campaign to ensure that we aren't left behind.

### Snap Teacher Workload Survey Results

On 10 March, we circulated a snap workload survey to IEU-member teachers in Victorian Catholic schools as we sought to prioritise our claims relating to teacher workloads.

With 2000 results within 24 hours, it was a really useful snapshot of teacher workload pressures – as well as your perspectives on possible solutions.

Of the six categories of non-classroom-related-work we asked about, you told us that before- and after-school meetings were the most time-consuming – full-time teachers in both primary and secondary told us that these on average chew up more than 2.5 hours out of each week. The next most time-consuming task for primary teachers was NCCD-related work (which we hope our recent win will assist with, see article on p. 4), while for secondary teachers it was out-of-hours contact with parents and students.

Of the potential solutions to workload pressures we surveyed you on, the top-ranked was 'measures to reduce administrative burdens'. This is unsurprising, but also a particularly challenging one to tackle in Agreements. Our negotiators will do what they can on this at the bargaining table, but it is also an issue which we address through empowered Consultative Committees and through our work engaging with policy makers and educational authorities. Amongst the next most popular solutions were time-off-in-lieu for out-of-hours activities, caps on meetings, and reduced class sizes. Also highly-ranked were reductions in face-to-face teaching time and greater autonomy within the school day.

Our survey also received around 800 'free text' responses, many quite detailed, which we have been going through carefully.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to participate in this snap survey – it has greatly assisted us in prioritising our claims at this critical point in bargaining.

## Tasmania: time to get serious

Discussions have at last commenced with the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO) for a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for Tasmanian Catholic schools, but the early signs are that the employer is not taking the claims of their own staff very seriously.

Having sat on the IEU Log of Claims for months the TCEO finally responded to the union, rejecting almost every claim outright, indicating a willingness to negotiate around only a handful of issues and agreeing to only a few claims, which were mostly technical in nature.

Obviously, the IEU will not just roll over and accept this.

The TCEO agreed to none of the claims the IEU made to improve teacher workloads. Already Tasmanian Catholic primary school teachers work more face-to-face hours than their colleagues in government schools. Face-to-face work hours and class

size limits must be reduced. The employer thinks they don't need to change because there is no 'educational research' to support the need to do it.

Meanwhile, staff in Catholic schools are expected to continue to do their best in meeting the many and complex needs of the students in their classes. Whatever 'research' employers want to cite, the simple fact is that when there are more students in a class there are more student needs to meet, more differentiation of the curriculum to complete, more NCCD documentation to complete and so on.

On top of this hard-

line approach, employer representatives are stubbornly insisting that meetings should be held only once per month, online, for no more than two hours, while their own staff continue to roll up every day to schools full of kids.

The IEU has written to the TCEO offering to attend their office in person for more frequent meetings, but so far the employer is refusing to budge. They say that online meetings are efficient and that they want to avoid a 'talk-fest.'

It's worth contrasting the approach of the TCEO with that of Catholic employers in other states. The IEU is currently negotiating new Agreements

for staff in Catholic schools in Victoria, where in-person meetings are being held twice a week. While these negotiations are no walk in the park, we are clearly on track to achieve some much-needed improvements around key conditions which are also top priorities for teachers and education support staff in Tasmania.

The IEU is determined to achieve a good Agreement for members in Tasmanian Catholic schools and we will be campaigning hard around all our claims as well as pushing the employer to take a more serious and respectful approach to negotiations.

After all that staff in schools have been through, monthly two-hour online meetings to negotiate a new Agreement just do not cut it. They're an insult.

IEU Organisers will be visiting all Tasmanian Catholic schools to update members on progress and to build our campaign for a decent and fair outcome.



## Staking claims: unpacking the Victorian Government Schools Agreement

Bargaining for new Agreements for Victorian Catholic education gained pace with the announcement of the draft deal between the Australian Education Union and the Victorian government on pay and conditions for teachers in government schools.

The Victorian Government Schools Agreement (VGSA) does not cover IEU members, and we need to negotiate every improvement to our own working conditions ourselves. However, it does set a new benchmark in terms of salaries, workloads, and important conditions such as parental leave and Education Support Staff career structures.

### The AEU Outcome

#### Pay

Under the VGSA, pay outcomes are complicated! Firstly, there is a 'salary adjustment' for the vast majority of staff, backdated to December 2021. This varies significantly – for example it's worth close to 1% for most teachers, almost 2% for graduate teachers, and up to 9.3% for the bottom rung of the education support staff scale. Then there are eight 1% salary increases, occurring every six months, with the first back-paid to January. Finally, most staff will also receive a 'position allowance' each December, equivalent to 1% of their salary at that time. This will attract superannuation.

Teacher wages will increase by 9.31% over the 2022-2025 period, plus four additional 'position allowance' payments worth 1% of income, paid every December and an additional 1% for the graduate rate. Since the IEU won parity over 25 years ago, teachers in Catholic

schools have been paid the same rates as their colleagues in government schools.

For support staff the AEU has negotiated significant improvements to the salary and classification structure which will provide access to higher pay-points for many staff, in addition to the 2% across-the-board increases each year. Support staff salary structures in Catholic schools are not identical to government schools, but are similar at the levels that cover the vast majority of support staff.

There are fundamental differences in the payment of Assistant Principals and Principals in the two sectors. The bands in the government sector are determined by funding whereas in the Catholic sector they are set by enrolment.

#### Workload

One very significant outcome in the government sector is the reduction to scheduled class time limits, which haven't changed in many years. They will reduce (in both primary and secondary schools) by one hour next year and by a further 30 minutes in 2024. This will also lead to the employment of significantly more teachers in government schools, which should result in flow-on workload benefits (such as a reduction in yard duties).

There are also new provisions in the VGSA aimed at 'quarantining' non-teaching time from meetings and other duties to ensure that teachers

have greater professional discretion about the appropriate use of their non-teaching time. Importantly, time-off-in-lieu provisions have been extended to all staff (including teachers) who are required for out-of-hours activities such as parent info nights, concerts, sport, and school camps.

#### Other improvements

Some of the other improvements include longer paid parental leave (increased from 14 to 16 weeks, with partner leave increased from 1 to 4 weeks) and the payment of superannuation on the first 12 months of parental leave (including during unpaid leave).

All Education Support Staff will be provided with laptops.

Consultative provisions have been improved, and union Reps have been given 30 hours release time per year to consult with members.

Other forms of leave are being introduced or improved, including unpaid Grandparent Leave and Cultural and Ceremonial Leave.

#### Summary

Overall, the government sector Agreement includes some significant wins.

Even given the restrictive and short-sighted Victorian government wages policy limiting increases to 2% per

year, AEU negotiators have succeeded in effectively winning substantially more than this in the first year of the Agreement, with teachers this year taking home 3.5% more than they did in 2021, before considering any incremental progression. Many categories of education support staff will receive significantly higher increases.

For teachers, the reduction in class time and the protection of professional autonomy of much of the rest of the week will help address the workload crisis in our schools.

The improvements at the bottom of the Education Support Staff scale are a big boost to the lowest paid workers in schools and are an important recognition of the increasingly professionalised work of this category of staff.

**The most important thing to remember is that none of this will be simply handed down to IEU members. In both Catholic and independent schools, we will need to campaign and to negotiate to ensure we are not left behind. This relies upon our collective strength, so get active in your union and help us grow!**

## Bargaining on a busy year

In 2022, the IEU is negotiating new Agreements covering all Catholic school employees in Tasmania and Victoria as well as staff in many independent schools.

Negotiating Enterprise Bargaining Agreements is labour intensive, time consuming and sometimes difficult – but it brings rewards.

Anyone who has ever played a part in negotiating an Agreement knows how much work goes into it. They know too that the union drives the deal. If it wasn't for the IEU negotiating hundreds of enforceable Agreements in independent schools over the years, most would still be relying on internal policy determined by the employer and changed as they see fit.

If we hadn't been at the table negotiating with Catholic employers over the years, where

would we be? Those who have been around for a while will remember the parity dispute – and may also remember when staff in Catholic schools got a grand total of zero weeks paid maternity leave!

Of course, the only reason the IEU is at the table is because of our members. Our team of Organisers, Industrial and legal staff bring their expertise to bear every day in bargaining – but we ARE our members. A union of members.

The challenge for us is really on now. The deal in Victorian government schools delivers real improvements in key areas including teacher workload.

We must deliver on these issues in Victorian Catholic and independent schools where staff are buckling under the strain of ever-increasing duties. Education Support Staff salaries must be addressed, especially in some independent schools. We must also lock in other positive changes, such as better parental leave.

Ditto the Catholic and independent sector in Tasmania where the TCEO is currently refusing to meet for more than two hours a month to discuss their employee's claims.

Our Organisers are out in schools engaging members in our campaigns. Be loud and proud. Every member cares about what

happens at the bargaining table but it's vital that you leave no doubt in your employer's mind that you know what's going on in negotiations and you are heavily invested in the outcome.

That's because what happens in Enterprise Bargaining Matters. Education transforms lives, but those who deliver and support it shouldn't be driven out of their profession through exhaustion and poor conditions.

#### What you can do

- Invite a colleague to join the union. The more we are, the mightier.
- Keep the union conversation going. Make sure that

everyone in your school is up to date.

- If you are in a Victorian Catholic school, add your face to our Photo Petition by emailing a selfie (along with your name and your school and suburb) to [photos@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:photos@ieuvictas.org.au)

Questions about bargaining? Don't hesitate to contact your IEU Rep, your Organiser or the IEU office on (03) 9254 1860 or [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au)

## GREEN SCHOOLS

## Reconnecting students to nature

We have previously written in *The Point* of the mental health challenges faced by our students after two years of interruptions to onsite learning and periods of time where their only contact with the outside world was via a screen.

There is much research linking the mental health benefits of engagement with our natural environment, of connection via gardening or just being outdoors. We also know that it is more COVID safe to be in the fresh air.

Many schools are planning excursions this year and they are welcome as our students have mostly missed this exciting break from regular schedules in the last couple of years. Through our pre-COVID Environmental Education Conferences the IEU has built strong partnerships over the years with environmental organisations providing amazing natural environment immersions for kids.

The CERES 'School of Nature and Climate' has a range of programs for student groups of all ages. Their programs directly link to Victorian Curriculum requirements and deliver them outdoors in adherence to COVID Safe protocols and public health directives. CERES is currently focused on 'outdoor nature-related activities to help students (and teachers) who have struggled with wellbeing during the lockdown' and their mission is to inspire students to live more sustainably and connect to the natural world.

Ecolinc is another organisation offering a range of onsite, online, outreach or fieldwork programs. For P-10 the programs link to the themes of life, water, energy, air, and earth and the VCE program is designed to address SAC tasks in Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science and Physics. Teacher answer and assessment sheets are also supplied.

The Gould League is a not-for-profit independent organisation which has been supporting environmental and sustainability education for over a century! When visiting a Gould League fieldwork site such as the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary or Toolangi State Forest, students connect with the natural world in a way that enhances their experience in the curriculum, but also engages them with a space that is open to the public at other times. They therefore create a connection to places they may come back to visit as adults, to stay connected to nature and in turn benefit their mental health throughout their lives.

- <https://sustainability.ceres.org.au/excursions-and-incursions/>
- <https://ecolinc.vic.edu.au/programs>
- [www.gould.org.au/locations/ricketts/](http://www.gould.org.au/locations/ricketts/)
- [www.gould.org.au/locations/toolangi/](http://www.gould.org.au/locations/toolangi/)



## Principal Profile: Vince Muscatello, St Paul's Primary School, Mildura

A life-long teacher, Vince is now President of the Principal's Council IEU Victoria Tasmania (and he maintains secure airwaves at his school...)

**How and when did you get into teaching?**

I finished year 12 in 1988 having been a boarder at St Pat's Ballarat from Year 7. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do — my older brother was already at Aquinas in Ballarat and my uncle was a Principal in the Ballarat Diocese. I just sort of followed in their footsteps. So, I went to Aquinas and three years later joined the workforce. There were no teaching jobs when I graduated and spent 15 months doing CRT and working as a labourer before I landed my first teaching role at St Mary's P-8 in Robinvale.

**When did you become a principal?**

I became a principal in 2013 at St Paul's Primary, Mildura after spending the previous nine years as a Deputy Principal at Sacred Heart, Mildura.

**What do most enjoy about being a principal?**

The best part about being a principal is interacting with the children. Because of our school-wide Positive Behaviour Support framework, I get to spend more time with the children focussing on the positive choices they are making. Quite a few of the younger grades enjoy afternoon tea with the principal or being principal for an hour. (The downside of them being principal for an hour is being constantly asked if they can put an announcement over the PA system to tell the rest of the students they can go home because school has been 'cancelled').

**How did you become involved in the union?**

I've been involved in the union for as long as I have been teaching. The union for me was always seen as an opportunity to provide better conditions for staff but also a bit like health insurance. You have it hoping you don't need it but glad when you do.

I had met some great teachers and staff over the years and when I first began teaching, I was told, 'join the union, they're here to help'. So I did!

**What was your role in the union?**

Early on in my career I was a union Rep for the schools I had taught at as a teacher, and I wanted to be able to make a difference in whatever way possible. I am currently serving on the Committee of Management for IEU Victoria Tasmania as well as the President of the IEU Principal's Council and Principal's Rep.

**What are the biggest issues facing teachers and Principals?**

That's a loaded question because everyone is different. Workloads and compliance have placed huge demands on schools. You ask most educators what they want to focus on, the answer is learning and teaching. Unfortunately, compliance and administration are now taking up more and more time.

The other issue is the complexity of the diverse learning abilities of the children coming to school and ensuring your staff are adequately trained to deal with these abilities.

Statistically speaking:

- One in five students receive NCCD funding
- 9.6% of Australian children have a disability
- One in seven Victorian children have mental health needs
- 5.6% of children entering school are at high risk of behavioural and emotional problems.

**What has been the impact of COVID on your school, family, self?**

Like everyone, COVID has had a significant impact on our school community. Unfortunately, the negatives outweigh the positives. Yes, we learnt new ways of teaching and connecting with our children and

families, but we also saw a spike in mental health and wellbeing issues, the social and emotional development of everyone. We found ourselves re-teaching skills the children would have already developed previously.

From my family perspective, we were all working; however, many families didn't have that luxury. In saying that the stress of the pandemic has certainly taken its toll on everyone. It was hard trying to support children and families and dealing with the uncertainty of what the next day brought. Endeavouring to keep your staff focussed on their role and having to come home at night and try not to 'unload' the days problems on your family was a challenge.

At the end of the day, it all comes back to having a growth mindset. What can I control and what do I have to let go of? I was grateful I had a job; I was grateful my family were not ill, and I had not lost any loved ones to COVID. I was grateful I had some amazing colleagues that I could count on to support me and vice versa.



## Support the 2022 Palm Sunday Walk for Justice

Bring banners and other messages of support in solidarity with refugees and people seeking asylum.

Let's work together to make sure the Walk in Melbourne is bigger than ever to demonstrate the growing concern across the community about the harsh

and punitive treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

**About the Walk For Justice**

Across the country people will be turning out on Palm Sunday to support Justice for Refugees. In Melbourne,

people from all unions, community organisations and faith groups have been invited to celebrate this year's theme: *Justice & Freedom for Refugees – End Detention and provide permanent visas and safe and secure futures.*

Australia's treatment of

refugees continues to be cruel and unjust:

- Around 30,000 people have been on bridging visas for many years in the community, facing uncertain futures, and many of these vulnerable people face destitution as the government has



## FOUR EXPLORATIONS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A TEACHER



Teacher Learning Network

# 1. From Aristotle to ANZAC day

We are all teachers or work with teachers and we were all taught by teachers.

**B**ut where does the concept of being a teacher originate from? What are the origins of our profession? I want to take you on a journey that begins around the time of Aristotle and ends with ANZAC Day and why these questions matter.

Teaching can be performed by any person; you will see it in your classrooms every day as children and students teach each other. It also takes place in homes by parents, carers, and grandparents; we have seen plenty of that in the last two years. In this article I am interested in the formal role of teacher, someone who is trained and registered as a professional.

I'm further narrowing the definition of a teacher to Western customs. I have great respect for eastern traditions of teaching, but I have limited knowledge in that field. I also acknowledge that a lot of dead white men are about to get a mention. It would be good if it were otherwise, but the work of uncovering the influence of women educators is still unfolding.

### Plato and Aristotle

Purists might not link these two philosophers but they are the architects of the classical tradition. They defined subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and Music and added them to the teaching of philosophy in the Academy (Plato) and the Lyceum (Aristotle). This differentiation of the curriculum into specific subjects now shapes secondary schooling.

Plato held to a hierarchical view of society. Some people were to be educated in the trades, some in the sciences and literary pursuits, and only the elite few were to access the sciences, cultural pursuits and the main game of philosophy. Both gave importance to physical exercise, though it was given greater emphasis in Aristotle's work. Here we have the origins of trade schools, specialist academic schools, the streaming of classes in mainstream schools and teacher beliefs

that students are suited to particular types of knowledge. Organised sporting competitions were also included in the school curriculum in the belief that exercise is good for the development of a student's intellect and character.

### Isocrates

Isocrates is the lesser known of the formative ancient scholars. An Athenian from the 4th Century BCE, he is credited with giving prominence to rhetoric, oratory and a focus on words and literary skills in education. In the Isocratic tradition, instead of learning trade skills, budding politicians were trained in the speechmaking they required to perform their public roles as administrators and lawmakers. Nowadays, teachers and schools that see themselves as 'preparing future leaders' such as politicians, lawyers and writers, are continuing the Isocratic tradition. Mr. Keating in the film *Dead Poet's Society* is an example of an Isocratic teacher.

### Dewey, Freire (and Saint Paul)

A more modern influence on pedagogy has come through John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and Gert Biesta (and many others) with dialogic education. Their approach to the educational encounter involves a relationship between the student and teacher. There is less focus on communicating pre-determined knowledge and greater emphasis on the skill of the teacher in leading the student to an understanding of themselves and the possibilities in life, and the skills, knowledge and dispositions needed to make their way in the world.

Saint Paul is a forerunner to the work of Dewey, Freire and Biesta. He gets a lot of bad publicity, but his work had a major influence on the western education tradition. The formation of a community of learners and the importance of a two-way, caring relationship between teacher and student are unique contributions by Paul to our understanding of education.

I would be surprised if IEU members in primary schools do not see those qualities as the first two elements of their pedagogy.

*(With apologies to Socrates, Quintilian and a bevy of Jewish, Islamic and Christian scholars who carved out an educational niche which still echoes through some schools in contemporary Australia, e.g. the many Aquinas Colleges.)*

### Why does it matter (and so to ANZAC Day)?

Any IEU members involved in the debate about the changes to the history curriculum, the maths curriculum or the never-ending literacy wars? Let me ask: is it the role of the teacher to interpret the meaning of ANZAC Day for students, or to work with the students to give them the skills and knowledge to develop an informed opinion about ANZAC Day?

Currently, the Federal government is arguing that the history curriculum must consist of set content and how students should be taught to think about ANZAC Day, and how literacy and other curriculum areas should be taught. The education minister believes in the 'banking model' of education where students are treated as empty minds to be filled with knowledge. Is that your philosophical approach to teaching? It is important to understand what has influenced your pedagogy and that of your school. Have you tended toward a Platonic or Aristotelian view, an Isocratic or a Pauline view (Dewey and Freire)? That knowledge shapes what you do in the classroom, and how you respond to such education debates.

I welcome your emails to continue the conversation.

**Michael Victory**  
Teacher Learning network  
[mvictory@tln.org.au](mailto:mvictory@tln.org.au)

## Rep Profile: Margie Ahearn, St Joseph's College Echuca

A lifelong teacher, Margie has made the voyage from blackboards to laptops.



### How and when did you get into teaching?

Since I was a kid in primary school in Sydney, I always wanted to be a teacher. Luckily for me it worked out. I started studying to be a teacher in 1984 and I have continued learning my craft ever since.

### How did you become involved in the union?

I have been a Union member ever since I commenced teaching. I have participated in Union protests in support for better conditions within our profession.

### How and when did you become a Rep?

I became a 'proxy' Rep when my current school's Rep was away on leave. When that person left our school for a new position, I was then voted in by my beautiful and trusting colleagues.

### What do you most enjoy about being a Rep?

I really enjoy being a 'listening ear' for my colleagues and being able to hopefully help them with any issues they have.

### What are the biggest issues facing education staff in your school?

Workload, workload, workload, plus meetings, meetings, meetings.

### What has been the impact of COVID on your school, family, self?

Funnily enough, COVID has benefited me in a rather quirky way. I have learnt how to teach from a different platform – online. I'm one of the teachers who has gone from blackboards, whiteboards, and overhead projectors to what we rely on today, laptops and internet.

The 2022 **Walk For Justice For Refugees** will be held on Palm Sunday 10 April at 2pm, commencing at the State Library (music from 1.30pm).

withdrawn income and housing support for most, and they have difficulty getting full-time employment, having been denied the right to work for many years. The federal government is still not offering permanent protection to the families brought here from Nauru in 2018, so their

uncertainty continues.

- Hundreds of people remain in detention across Australia, including the Medevac refugees still held in the Park Hotel in Carlton.
- After nearly nine years, around 250 people are still stranded in Nauru and in Papua New Guinea, with

no prospects for permanent resettlement – the New Zealand resettlement offer needs to be accepted to provide safe futures for these people.

- Thousands of people are stuck in limbo on Temporary visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas – even though they are

refugees and should have been permanently resettled here years ago. Children of refugees have grown up here, but still do not have a secure future.

**Support the Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees, and stand up for justice, decency, and compassion!**

# Graduate teacher checklist

Welcome to the IEU and congratulations on entering the teaching profession! The initial years of a teacher's career can be challenging but your Union will be with you every step of the way.

**W**ith so many new experiences there will be times when it will be vital to access support and advice. Whether you are working in the Catholic or independent sector, or as a CRT, the IEU is here to help you navigate any difficulties, protect your rights to a safe and fair work environment and develop your skills as an educator.

To get started, here is a useful checklist to help you transition into your first teaching job:

## • Contract advice

Ideally before you sign a contract you would get advice from your Union so that you fully understand it. Your contract is a legally binding document outlining some of your conditions of employment, such as salary and leave entitlements, so it's always wise to get advice on a new contract – particularly if you are employed on a fixed-term contract. The most common reason to be on a fixed-term contract is to cover a staff member who is on leave, but there are a few other valid reasons. If you're unsure about your contract send the IEU a copy and we will happily look it over for you.

## • Know your IEU Reps

Get in touch with the IEU sub-branch rep at your workplace and seek out your Occupational Health and Safety Rep. These Reps can help you find your feet in your new setting and ensure that proper support arrangements are in place.

## • Take care online

Online activity is one of the most frequent causes for graduates finding themselves in hot water and needing IEU representation. Make sure you are familiar with your employer's online policies. Lock your social media accounts so your students and employer can't find

you and be cautious about what you post online. Be mindful that your employer may look at any devices you use for work if they have a reason to be suspicious of your activity, so keep personal things off work devices and vice versa.

## • Your induction program

Most schools assign a mentor to new staff to provide support and assistance. Use this resource so you know where to find things and how to gain access to internal procedures. It's important that you are familiar with discipline and behaviour management, reporting hazards, communication with parents and students, first aid and using social media. If you are doing CRT work in a school, it may be useful to ask whether there is someone other than a Principal, Deputy, or Daily Organiser (who are often incredibly busy and hard to access during the day) who might be a mentor or contact point for you.

## • Understand your work arrangement

Do you clearly understand your face-to-face teaching hours and days? In many workplaces graduate teachers are entitled to a reduced load to assist in providing them with increased planning and preparation time away from the classroom. Extra-curricular obligations are often an area of great uncertainty for new teachers, so make sure that you understand what's expected of you so that you can fulfil your professional obligations. You'll find that colleagues are very willing to help you – so please make sure that you are seeking assistance from them as you need. Remember they were all beginning teachers at some point too!

## • Professional Development opportunities

The IEU offers a range of free PD for members including Early Career Teacher visits at your school and the IEU's Professional Development Webinar program. Early Career Teacher visits offer an overview to your duty of care and professional conduct obligations, as well as your employment rights and how the union can help you. ECT sessions can be organised at your school or over Zoom through your workplace Rep or Principal – get in touch with us if you'd like to book one. Our free webinar series offers many quality sessions on a variety of topics so you can target your individual needs. Don't miss the toolkit series for Early Career Teachers – you can register online through the IEU member hub!

## • VIT / TRB requirements

Victorian teachers should register for Victorian Institute of Teaching Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) Information Sessions, which are designed to help you understand the specific requirements for moving from provisional to a fully registered teacher. The Teacher Registration Board in Tasmania offers online learning modules through the TRB website. IEU publications such as *The Point* and other communications keep you up to date with any changes to VIT and TRB processes, so IEU membership helps you stay connected with this – and if you have any issues with your registration, don't hesitate to contact your union for advice.

## • COVID-19 & your workplace

The IEU continues to strongly advocate for the workplace safety and employment security of our members throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Keep an eye on the COVID-19 information page on our

website for regular updates and advice about your workplace health and safety rights. Remember to contact us if you have any concerns about employment arrangements at your workplace.

We hope your first year is a positive one and is the start of a long and rewarding career! The IEU is a strong union: as a member you are united with over 20,000 colleagues. Throughout your career we will be there to provide you with advice, support, and professional education.

Contact us if you have any questions about your work. We are here to help.

**For more information or assistance on graduate matters talk directly to our Graduate Teacher Officer, James Rankin.**  
Email [jrankin@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:jrankin@ieuvictas.org.au)  
Phone (03) 9254 1860

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# Being 'smart' in the best way: Al Fricker and Indigenous education

Last year, Dr Aleryk (Al) Fricker's seminar *Decolonising the Classroom* was rated the highlight of the IEU/AEU Student Teacher Conference. We spoke to Al to find out why early career teachers react so strongly to his teachings.

**A**l Fricker, a proud Dja Dja Wurrung (central Victorian goldfields) man, is a passionate educator and researcher, and a highly respected initial teacher educator. He is currently employed at RMIT University as a lecturer in the School of Education and he previously taught in primary and secondary school settings. But as a student, he may not have expected a future career as an educator – Al says his own experiences at school were 'a near constant struggle against what I perceived as rules for the sake of rules.'

And there was worse.

'I still have vivid memories of my Year 7 history teacher proclaiming that Australia was discovered in 1770 by Captain Cook, and the humiliation I felt when I was removed from the class for asking about my Aboriginal ancestors and being 'smart'. This is an experience that I never want another First Nations student to experience.'

Outside such formative traumas, Al's views on education were shaped by his interactions with teachers.

'My journey as a teacher was largely inspired by a desire to be like the teachers that I loved so that I could encourage my students to enjoy their time as learners in the classroom, the same ways that I had with the few teachers who had supported me. I also wanted to ensure that I did not repeat the same errors that the teachers I loathed had done.'

Al says he felt a 'fierce loyalty' to teachers who earned his respect. And this informed his future career as a teacher educator. He wanted to help teachers ensure that they 'increase the visibility of First Nations contexts in their classrooms'.

Al worked for a major metropolitan newspaper in Melbourne while studying for his undergraduate degree. He says this work honed his writing skills for broader audiences than university assessors and

still helps make his research and teaching 'as accessible as possible'.

'This period also gave me great insight into the dark machinations within the private media industry and the power that they had to shape national discourse on issues related to racism and First Nations rights. On a practical level, this has provided me with much material to support the learning of my students.'

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**'Before we can begin the process of decolonisation, we need to consider our own inherent biases and assumptions. The next step is to seek out appropriate information that can challenge these biases and assumptions.'**

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Al's stint as a classroom teacher gave him 'a far greater understanding' of the limitations of First Nations content within the curriculum.

'I also gained great insight into the challenges around the implementation of Indigenous education policy in schools, as well as the great need to better integrate First Nations pedagogical practices and increase teacher training to focus on these aspects within the classroom.'

He says teaching in a remote school in the Aboriginal community of Papunya as part of his PhD research taught him

about the challenges 'still inherent within the Australian education system' and highlighted that decolonising the classroom has important outcomes for all students 'regardless of their cultural contexts'.

Al's teaching now focuses on practical ways that teachers and schools can modify their day-to-day business to achieve better outcomes for First Nations communities.

He says new teachers have a huge appetite for better First Nations education.

'Even today, when I'm working with my post-graduate students, I will usually get several who are disgusted about how little they learned about First Nations people in their schooling and undergraduate years.'

His students say working with First Nations pedagogies is 'transformative' and they want to share such experiences with their future students.

'They also comment about how engaging with this content provides an opportunity to demystify the whole process and allow them to engage with it with confidence.'

Al says he often finds teachers are intimidated by the challenge of teaching First Nations history.

'The vast majority of teachers know that engagement with First Nations contexts in the classroom are currently not good enough, and know that they should be doing more, but struggle to figure out where to begin and where to find appropriate resources. Part of my job is to address their discomfort and build their skills and confidence to be able to find and use appropriate resources.'

'My golden rule is always, if you're not sure, ask.'

He says the first step for teachers is usually a 'focus on self-reflection'.

'Before we can begin the process of decolonisation, we need to consider our own inherent biases and assumptions.'



The next step is to seek out appropriate information that can challenge these biases and assumptions.'

'I have had the privilege of working with Matilda Education on their Good Humanities series of textbooks and these are excellent resources to use in the classroom and are full of important information for students and teachers. I have also been working with Australians Together as a cultural consultant and they are completing a project creating teacher resources that link directly to the Australian Curriculum for all year levels and disciplines.'

Al also encourages teachers to engage with local community events like marches, community celebrations, sporting carnivals, galleries, exhibitions, and plays.

'These are great ways to get to know the community and for them to get to know you.'

Al's work is so popular that he's now working with several schools to provide follow-up professional development after delivering his initial courses.

'This has been limited by Covid, but this is certainly something that I am seeking to expand for 2022 and beyond. Anyone who attends my seminar is welcome to contact me should they have any follow up questions or requests.'

**IEU LEARNING HUB**

**TERM ONE HIGHLIGHT**



**WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS AND  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CURRICULUM**

Incorporating Indigenous perspectives effectively into the curriculum is beneficial to all students as well as First Nations students. This presentation will support you to think beyond the lesson plan and engage effectively with First Nations content. This session will provide you with 'go to' resources that you can access with ease and feel confident when implementing in your lessons.

**FRIDAY 22 APRIL  
10:00-3:00PM**

Presented by Al Fricker

Book online at  
[www.ieuvictas.org.au/  
webinars](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars)

## CAREER CORNER

## CRT work in the time of COVID

Labour turnover in 2020-22 has been labelled 'the great resignation' and the IEU office has been inundated with calls from members who have brought forward their retirement or reduced their hours on the back of a challenging couple of years.

However, this phenomenon, along with border closures and fewer skilled migrants and student teachers graduating, brings opportunities for many who have not been successful in securing ongoing work previously, and for those who have no interest in locking in full terms of work. So how do you turn this opportunity into paid work?

**Marketing 101**

Firstly, make sure your personal branding is up to date. What's your CV like? Does your cover letter reflect the current COVID situation? Have you shouted loud and clear that you are registered (limited, provisional, or full) and fully vaccinated? Flexible and available? What's your online presence like? Update LinkedIn for reference checks and referrals, and Facebook for damage-limitation. Which former employers and colleagues are prepared to act as your 'brand champions'? When did you last contact these people to ask how they're going and if they're still happy to vouch for you? Perhaps today is a good day...

**Networking 101**

Lockdowns and COVID isolation notwithstanding, you can't network effectively from behind a keyboard or a phone; you need to get out and eyeball your people. This means re-establishing contact with your trusted professional networks, be they individuals or

organisations. Your number one agenda item should be to re-connect with these people and update them on your circumstances. Tell them you're actively looking for more or different work, you'd be interested in discussing opportunities, and you're happy where you are at present but mindful that we live in a dynamic environment.

**Pathways to CRT work**

You essentially have three distinct pathways to employment as a Casual Relief Teacher: direct, indirect and commercial.

**Direct**

As you would expect, this means directly approaching prospective employers with your updated 'marketing documents', introducing yourself or reminding them about you and saying that you're available for short-term teaching or other employment. Some schools are currently employing excess staff in anticipation of employees having to isolate for seven days and therefore need known professionals on standby at short notice. You might have a previous connection with an employer, or they may be within 30 minutes' commute of your house, meaning you are a good option as a last-minute replacement. Let them know, and emphasise you're available to work on as many year levels, subjects, and duties as possible. Nothing should be too much trouble – throw yourself in the deep end.

Persistence will pay off.

Before approaching the school, check the employment pages of their website and do a job search. There may not be any current vacancies at the school but you may be able to register your interest and give permission for them to keep your information on file should something come up. Try to get the name of the Daily Organiser or Deputy responsible for managing absences and contacting casuals. If they use an agency, ask which one and get the details of their contact person.

**Indirect**

In addition to your Union, there are various voluntary CRT networks around Victoria and Tasmania whose role is to connect like-minded professionals and act as a central communications hub. There is a list of them on the VIT website ([vit.vic.edu.au/register/categories/crt](http://vit.vic.edu.au/register/categories/crt)). As with the Union, these networks are well connected in local and regional schools, and at the very least could put you in touch with the appropriate person at a given workplace.

**Commercial**

There are plenty of organisations prepared to take your money, and that of their client schools, so do your due diligence, including finding out how much, if any, of your daily rate the agency will retain. The IEU is not affiliated with

any such agency but is aware of some which offer restrictive contracts that imply you are locked in to working solely with them (as a casual!), which is incorrect. Avoid these and try web-based job boards, including sector-specific ones such as for Melbourne Catholic schools – [macs.vic.edu.au/Working-in-our-schools/Job-Search.aspx](http://macs.vic.edu.au/Working-in-our-schools/Job-Search.aspx). There are also large agencies such as Tradewind, ANZUK, and Smart Teachers and many smaller operators who have a commercial interest in securing you as much work as possible.

**Closing the loop**

Of course, with every new engagement comes a new network of teachers, staff, and employers able to advocate for your skills and aptitudes. Make sure you spend time with your colleagues in each new workplace. Introduce yourself widely, share contact details and make sure the Principal and Deputies know who you are. Add each employer to your CV and LinkedIn profile and update your referees – recency and relevance are critical.

Enjoy the new opportunities this situation brings and recognise the benefits of being extended beyond your comfort zone. Good luck!



## CRTs kickstart connections with students

How has pandemic affected our students, and what should we do to reconnect with them?

These questions were asked during the first AEU/IEU CRT Kickstarter Conference of 2022, hosted by the Teacher Learning Network.

Keynote speaker, Kristy Elliott from Restorative Pathways, presented on Managing Effective Classrooms post COVID. The talk focused on reconnecting with students and ways to identify trauma in students.

CRT and IEU member Patrick Bennett said the presentation was especially useful for those working in schools where students, staff, and parents have struggled over the past two years.

'The slide show Kristy shared was invaluable dealing with student wellbeing in a COVID environment and Brain Breaks and their effective use.'

Brain breaks are defined as 'planned learning activity shifts that mobilise different networks of the brain. These shifts allow those regions that are blocked by stress or high-intensity work to revitalise.'

The second half of the conference discussed conditions for CRTs in Catholic schools, recent changes to the modern Award, an update on Catholic bargaining and details of the IEU's claims for CRTs and finished with a presentation about Health and Safety protocols for dealing with COVID in schools.

Not surprisingly, Patrick says the most important current issue for CRTs is COVID safe practise in schools.

'What is the administration doing to ensure they enable the

safest possible workplace in schools?

'Schools should allow CRTs to participate in school-based PD, especially in First Aid updates and special education needs, to ensure CRTs are professionally updated and up to date with practises in the schools in which they are regularly employed.'

He also said schools 'need to allow in their budgets sufficient funds to employ CRTs and not overburden full time or part time staff working in Catholic schools with splitting classes or even pressing principals and deputies to work extra hours to cover classes'.

Despite the late change to an online platform, CRT members embraced the event with enthusiasm and in good numbers.

**Watch Kristy Elliott on demand**

Kristy conducted the seminar *Classroom Management - Routines to support student wellbeing for our Learning Hub*.

Classroom and behaviour management are complex challenges - made more complicated by two years of interrupted schooling. This session looked at classroom and school routines and their role in creating positive, safe and inclusive learning environments that minimise off-task behaviour and promote classroom wellbeing. Kristy focussed on how routines encourage calm and safe learning environments and the importance of encouraging students to take responsibility for the management of the class and in their own

learning. The examples used in the session were appropriate for students in years 4 – 9.

You can view the webinar at [ieuvictas.org.au/webinars](http://ieuvictas.org.au/webinars)

# IEU women

Much as we all hoped for a more straightforward and less challenging start to the 2022 school year for women and diverse folk in our schools, it was not to be.

Yes, there was COVID – still! But now instead of keeping ourselves and our students at home to avoid it all costs, we had to shift our thinking to a new COVID ‘normal’ where everyone is back on site, with an increased risk of exposure to the disease we have all spent the last two years trying to avoid. This has presented challenges for everyone and increased pressures on our effort to eliminate gender inequity in our workplaces.

## Religious Freedom Bill

The IEU campaigned for the *Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021* legislation that was introduced to Victorian parliament over the holidays and against the federal government’s flawed and failed attempt to overhaul religious freedom laws. The IEU has long been instrumental in challenging attempts to discriminate against our members on the basis of personal attributes which have no bearing on your ability to perform work. We want to ensure our workplaces are safe, respectful, and equal for all our members.

## Taking a stand for women’s rights

To mark International Women’s Day on 8 March this year we put the call out to our members to join the IWD march in Melbourne organised by the Victorian Trades Hall Council. IWD is the day where women and folk from around the world and across Australia unite in our fight to be safe, respected, and equal. We know that gendered violence is all too common in workplaces across Victoria, and this includes our schools. To make our workplaces safe we know we must unite, work together, and take action to demand change. By getting out on the streets we made it clear that enough is enough and we won’t be silenced. This year the patriarchy has met its match.

Following on from IWD there will be opportunities for IEU members to become more involved in the Safe Respected Equal campaign including through *Feminism at the Hall* sessions and campaign skill sessions. With a federal election looming we want to be certain that our agenda is front and centre. Contact us at the IEU for more information on how you can take part.

## Anna Stewart Memorial Project and IEU BOLD

Are you interested in becoming more active in the IEU and the union movement more broadly? Do you want to develop your leadership skills and work with other union women to nurture voice, opportunity, and change?

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project is a two-week internship program designed to develop leadership in union women. It is an opportunity to spend time with women from other unions at Trades Hall and to intern with the IEU.

The IEU Building Our Leadership Development (BOLD) program is national IEU initiative to encourage and support women to become strong workplace leaders and powerful activists in their schools and communities.

**Admission to both of these programs is by application. For further information email [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au) or speak to your organiser.**

## Patriarchy has met its march!

In Melbourne, IWD 2022 included a cheeky detour to the Melbourne Club.

IEU members and staff joined thousands of women and allies in the streets of Melbourne on 8 March to campaign for safety, respect, and equality on International Women’s Day. We convened outside the Treasury Building and heard from a range of speakers on the importance of maintaining the fight for equality for women and diverse folk in the lead up to the election. We then marched down Collins St with a brief stop outside The Melbourne Club where women in HAZMAT suits taped off the area due to a spill of ‘toxic masculinity’. A fantastic stunt.

The march continued along Swanston St and finished with a gathering at Victorian Trades Hall.



## Why International Women’s Day matters

International Women’s Day (IWD) is celebrated annually on March 8th, celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women everywhere.

It is celebrated all over the globe and is not country, group, or organisation specific.

As well as celebrating the contributions of women globally to all areas of society, IWD is a chance to reflect on what still needs to be done to achieve equality.

Women and girls are involved in sustainability initiatives around the world, and their participation and leadership results in more effective climate action. It is essential for sustainable development and greater gender equality that opportunities that empower women and girls to be equal players in decision making are identified. Without gender equality today, a sustainable future remains beyond our reach.

### The theme of IWD 2022 is ‘Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow’

Women are increasingly being seen as more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change, mainly because they represent the majority of the world’s poor and are proportionally more dependent on threatened natural resources.

Worldwide, women have less access than men to resources such as land, credit, agricultural inputs, decision-making structures, technology, training, and extension services that would enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change

### To improve the adaptive capacity of women locally and worldwide IEU members call upon the Government and employers to:

- Adopt initiatives that identify and address gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly those such as inequalities in access to resources, including credit, extension and training services, information, and technology.
- Actively address women’s priorities and needs in development planning and funding. Women should be part of the decision making at national and local levels regarding allocation of resources for climate change initiatives. It is also important to ensure gender-sensitive

investments in programmes for adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building.

- Zealously involve women in the development of new technologies to ensure that they are adaptive, appropriate, and sustainable. At national levels, efforts should be made to mainstream gender perspective into national policies and strategies, as well as related sustainable development and climate change plans and interventions.

### How did International Women’s Day begin?

After years of debate and unrest surrounding equal rights, and the introduction of National Women’s Day in America in 1909, Clara Zetkin (Leader of the ‘Women’s Office’ for the Social Democratic Party in Germany) proposed the idea of an international day for women at a conference in Copenhagen. Over 100 women from 17 countries unanimously agreed with the suggestion, and the first International Working Women’s Day was observed on the 19th of March 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland.

## NATIONAL IEU ROUNDUP

## Northern Territory: freezing is not a bonus!

Negotiations for new Agreements in the NT Catholic and Lutheran sectors continue, with wages being the last major outstanding issue.

The NT Government has imposed a wage freeze policy and is instead offering employees in the public sector a 'bonus' of \$10,000.

The Essington School is also set to commence bargaining this year, with members demanding that their new Agreement provide further clarification on teachers' non-contact time.

Last year, St Philip's College members achieved wage increases for teachers matching the 2.5% public sector increase. They also secured a clause stopping employers discriminating due to religious doctrine – a positive outcome given employers can do this under the current NT Anti-Discrimination Act.

## South Australia

SA schools settled for a graduated start to the year due to the spread of the COVID virus. The IEU's preference would have been to delay all year levels for two weeks.

Consequently, there was little time to establish COVID procedures and protocols for a safe return, particularly in the Catholic sector.

The staggered start and attendance of essential workers' children raised the spectre of the 'hybrid' model experienced in other states, where teachers are expected to teach face-to-face and online at the same time.

## Queensland

The review of the school officer classification structure continues in 2022, with the Joint Working Group starting 'job analysis' to assess the workability of new model.

Without reliable position descriptions, accurate classification decisions for school officers will be impossible. The IEU review of position descriptions revealed alarming deficiencies in many current position descriptions.

The process involves interviews with each school officer member and a comprehensive review of their duties, skills, and responsibilities.

The timeline for replacing Queensland Catholic Agreements is key for the new model and possible implementation in schools.

## NSW

IEU NSW/ACT Acting Secretary Carol Matthews gave evidence on 2 February before a NSW Parliament Upper House Inquiry into proposed changes to NSW workers compensation legislation.

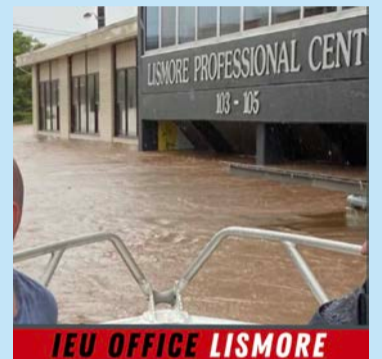
The NSW Government had proposed legislation requiring workers (including school employees) to prove they caught COVID-19 at work in order to receive compensation.

Teachers listed as a close or household contact of a COVID case were expected to attend school as usual, subject to daily negative Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs).

Matthews argued that staff should not be forced to take their own personal/carer's leave if they catch COVID and the employer's insurer doesn't accept that they contracted COVID at work.

In late February, the NSW upper house committee tabled a report recommending the changes be rejected.

*Finally, we send our best wishes to our colleagues at the IEU Lismore office as they roll up their sleeves for a very big clean-up job after the recent floods...*



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# Behind the Whiteboard term 1

*Well, what a term it has been, folks! So much going on in schools that it's been hard to keep up.*

**R**ead on for a sample of the weird and wonderful that came across our desks here in The Bunker. Keep your amazing stories coming via [btw@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:btw@ieuvictas.org.au).

## CCYP debacle

The CCYP legislation continues to present challenges for our sector. In one case, a parent is taking action against a large independent school and some IEU members claiming their child has ongoing psychological trauma from not having been selected for a major role in a school production. The investigation is entering its ninth month and shows no sign of abating, at considerable cost to the members' mental and emotional well-being. The principles of Natural Justice appear to have become misplaced somewhere along the journey. Rest assured, your union is assisting members caught up in this action.

## Fair warning

You know this already, but it's worth mentioning again: if you receive a request for a meeting with someone from your leadership team, make sure you get in touch with your union. We've had several recent reports of schools scheduling meetings with staff with less than twenty-four hours' notice and without an agenda. You all have the right to know what any proposed meeting is about, and you need to be given time to seek advice before you attend. In these situations, your best defence is knowledge and having time to marshal your thoughts is entirely appropriate – anything else is an ambush! Contact your Organiser before you attend any meeting.

## After hours work?

It would be naïve to suggest that the work of teachers finishes when the children have gone home. But a request to call every single parent of a sports team

at 8:30pm on a Friday? Hmm... Sure, notifications about a possible Covid-19 exposure need to be done in a timely manner. However, such a conversation, with potentially serious ramifications for the students affected and their families, needs to come directly from the school and 'from the top'. The responsibility should not rest with the staff member who was coaching the team on the day. We are happy to report that after a call to their Organiser the member in question was 'relieved' of this responsibility by a member of the school's executive team.

## Getting involved

The IEU is bargaining in more independent schools than usual at present, given the backlog which built up during lockdowns. There seems to be some misunderstanding about the requirements to nominate to join bargaining groups at the negotiation table. When you receive the Notice of



Employee Representational Rights (NERR) from the school, you simply need to liaise with your Rep and inform the Principal you intend to join the discussions. Because the IEU is the default bargaining representative in non-government schools, as an IEU member you have a right to be present and you do not need to specify who you are representing. Some are told they can only represent themselves or have to be nominated by others. Neither of these is correct. What's the answer if you're unsure...? That's right – contact your Organiser!

*As always, dear Reader, thank you for all your efforts in your workplaces this term. We made it through another testing time! This edition of BTW was brought to you by the cool reggae/funk of Fat Freddy's Drop... If you don't know it, (as Molly used to say on Countdown) do yourself a favour! Enjoy the break from work if you are having one.*

## STARTING A NEW JOB?

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[ngssuper.com.au](https://ngssuper.com.au)  
1300 133 177

## Rep Profile: Keisha-Lee Dean, St Anne's College, Kialla

For Keisha-Lee, the decisions to teach and to become a union member were made early.



### How and when did you get into teaching?

I made the decision to work in education in my teens. I enjoyed helping out at the childcare centre which my mum worked at. I mostly worked with the older kids and lent a hand to the staff who worked there. Mum loves to tell the story of me sitting on the floor surrounded by the kinder kids with a pile of books they had requested I read. By the time I was 16 I had decided I wanted to either teach or work in childcare.

### How did you become involved in the union?

I got involved in the union in my first year of teaching. I was working in a state school and at the time the AEU/IEU were in the middle of negotiations for a new bargaining agreement and were beginning strike action. I felt it was important to get involved and be a part of the collective voice that was fighting for our rights and conditions.

### How and when did you become a Rep?

I didn't become a Rep until 2020 when I started at St Anne's. The school had only opened one year prior and until that point had not had an elected Rep. Since then, I have held the role as the college has grown and as our member numbers have increased.

### What do you most enjoy about being a Rep?

I enjoy being able to advocate for my colleagues. Being able to provide my colleagues meaningful support both on the small issues as well as the larger ones has brought me great joy.

### What are the biggest issues facing education staff in your school?

For me, I think the biggest challenges facing teachers is the fact that there never seems to be enough hours in the day. There is always something that needs to be done and ensuring staff maintain a work/life balance is crucial.

### What has been the impact of COVID on your school, family, self?

COVID has had big impacts for all of us. In my school the constant transitions between online and onsite learning have presented significant issues around how we connect with students and deliver high quality learning programs. For myself, the biggest impact has been on seeing my family and friends and spending time with people that I care about the most.

## LABOUR HISTORY

# Melbourne's dynamic derneks

The January 2022 edition of *Jacobin* magazine contained a remarkable article by human rights lawyer and researcher Eda Seyhan about how Turkish migrants to Melbourne established 'thriving cultural associations that organized strikes, education, mutual aid, events, and solidarity campaigns'.



These all-encompassing entities are known as derneks, and in the 1970s and 1980s, these centres organised workers, supported political refugees, influenced unions and 'brought together families, friends, work, culture, and politics'.

By 2013, it was estimated the Turkish Australian community in Melbourne numbered almost 300,000, and many had settled in the city's north-west.

Seyhan writes that four broadly leftist derneks eventually represented and supported this community, attracting hundreds of people to organising meetings, operating all-day drop-in centres, employing full-time organisers, and influencing unions and politicians.

They offered migrant workers advice about accessing welfare and finding employment and accommodation. They provided childcare and interpreters, helped with asylum and immigration issues and co-ordinated extensive cultural activities. They organized concerts by exiled musicians, wrote and staged consciousness-raising theatre, operated soccer and volleyball teams, and organized excursions and summer camps. They ran weekend Turkish-language schools for children, provided music, dancing, and English classes and produced newspapers and weekly community radio shows.

The 'wholeness' of this support was a crucial part of their success.

The other fundamental was 'deep, local-level organising', born of a strong belief in class struggle.

Seyhan quotes a worker at the Ford factory in Broadmeadows: 'We had district committees of four to five people... who would visit houses of Turkish-speaking people. We would have tea or coffee, ask them about their problems, inform them about our work, and so build relationships with people, even some conservative people, who might otherwise not come into the dernek.'

Some derneks ran classes on union organising in Turkish, held at Melbourne's Trades Hall. Graduates later led strikes.

And when there were strikes, derneks supplied invaluable support.

'At workplaces like Ford and the Kortex textile factory, the derneks set up barricades, camped overnight, supplied homemade food, and took care of the strikers' children,' Seyhan writes.

Speaking to *The Point*, Seyhan said the most unique aspect of derneks was their level of self-sacrifice. Lowly-paid factory workers and fruit pickers donated to derneks, enabling the community to buy their own buildings.

They also gave up their weekends to run Saturday schools for children and camped out at other members' picket lines.

'Their unwavering belief in their political vision and values of community, mutual aid and discipline meant a degree of self-sacrifice that is increasingly rare in our more individualist and atomised society.'

Seyhan experienced the derneks as a child, and feels young people today are searching for the 'wholeness' they provided.

There was one place where you could 'get help finding a new job, have a raucous birthday party, perform in a play, learn about socialism, and organise a solidarity action for your Chilean comrades! I think that wholeness provided a sense of connection, rootedness, and purpose that younger generations are yearning for.'

She says the dernek experience is still relevant for two reasons.

Firstly, recognising the importance of community organising over activism. So much of our political efforts are focused on activism now – organising or attending actions like marches, demonstrations, occupations, etc. The derneks combined political actions with community organising, aggregating their members around their common interests, and exerting their collective power, whether on picket lines, in front of the Immigration Department, at Labor Party meetings, etc. This requires long-term and deep engagement to understand the

needs of, and to educate and empower, the community.

'The internet now provides a fairly quick and easy route to mobilising a predictable crowd, but to reach new people and build power, we should learn from the community organising and 'all-in-allness' of the derneks.

'Secondly, the derneks did not shy away from ideology – they were explicitly socialist and anti-imperialist groups. In our era, it's more common for political groups to revolve around single-issues or particular identity categories and avoid more ideological language. But ideology doesn't have to mean a blinkered view of the world – it gives people a way of understanding how their personal experiences relate to broader systems and making sense of an increasingly chaotic world.

'The derneks connected the hardship of their members to wider systems of capitalism and imperialism, and this shared vocabulary provided the basis for solidarity with other struggles at the time, from First Nations peoples campaigning for land rights, to workers opposing job cuts, to South Africans fighting apartheid.

'Reviving that vision of universal emancipation – where all enemies and our victories are one – is something which we can do today.'

To read Eda's piece about derneks, go to: [rb.gy/zqcstp](https://rb.gy/zqcstp)



# Union summer internship

To kick off an exciting year for pre-service teacher organising, the IEU and the AEU employed four student teacher members for three weeks as part of the Union Summer internship program through the Young Workers Centre at Victoria Trades Hall.



From left, clockwise - Oscar and Emily, interns and IEU staff, interns at Midsumma

The program is designed to get young people more involved in unionism by giving them first-hand experience of union work. It's an incredible opportunity for young people to contribute to building and shaping our union movement in Victoria, and to develop their campaigning and activist skills. The program combines training run by the Young Workers Centre team at Trades Hall, guest speakers from the union movement and other social movements, and placement at the AEU Victoria and IEU Victoria Tasmania.

Here's what this year's interns had to say about the program:

## Oscar Jolly, student member, Melbourne University

'Over the course of our internship, there was one thing that stuck out. It was how such passionate, talented, and powerful people from all corners of our union movement can work together to achieve genuine change. As a young person living in times where capital has such great control over our lives, and where the strength in our power as workers has been actively decimated, to see the scale and strength of our union movement from the inside was inspiring.

'From interacting with teachers and staff who have utilised their industrial strength to win historic wins in new agreements, to working alongside union organisers and staff who have a multitude of invaluable skills, determination, and drive for the workers who employ them, I can see a true future in not only our union movement, but in organisations of all types that will be required to achieve the changes we need. I hope that all young people get a chance to experience this strength, as it is utterly inspiring and empowering, and I hope to work with our union and fellow young union activists to share this strength for many years to come.'

## Uyen Tran, student member, Victoria University

'Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone from the AEU and the IEU, especially my mentors from the program, for

supporting and providing us interns with many opportunities to learn and meet with many wonderful people during this internship. During the internship, the topic that interested me the most is the differences between Awards and Agreements in terms of pay and conditions for teachers. This is one of the most obvious factors that demonstrates the Union's critical role in workers' lives.

'The student membership is also a highlight of the program. As a student member of the AEU and IEU, I receive valuable resources about the work of a teacher and critical knowledge about working conditions to prepare myself for future employment in teaching. This membership shows how much our education unions invest in the future education workforce by providing us with free access to professional development and training courses.

'The work of unions, what we are fighting for, and the support provided to members gives me hope and confidence entering the workforce after I graduate. Having a union membership made of fellow preservice teachers and school staff ensures our issues are at the front of what we are trying to achieve: a safe, healthy, and fair working environment.'

## Emily Dickey, student member, Melbourne University

'This summer I was lucky enough to undertake the union summer internship with the IEU & AEU. As a current pre-service teacher, studying secondary teaching, the knowledge I gained around organising, union values, bargaining tactics, workload and pay will be crucial for my future career in teaching and hopefully one day as a union Rep!

'One aspect of the internship that I found particularly interesting was being able to talk to, and shadow, organiser training. I found this especially interesting, as we are in the process of setting up a union sub-group for pre-service teachers at Melbourne University. The organiser training I was able to shadow was incredibly useful for understanding

how a union supports members to organise themselves. I can't wait to use my new organiser skills to build our inaugural sub-group!'

## Lloyd Skinner, student member, Melbourne University

'The topic of enterprise bargaining interested me because I am fascinated by the application of union power and agency within the workplace and the dialogue between union organisers and employers.

'Throughout the internship, I received exposure to bargaining from speaking with organisers and attending the recent AEU council meeting which voted on the new Victorian Government Schools Agreement. I learnt that while bargaining is central to advancing workers' rights without engaging in industrial action, employers can influence the bargaining process in their favour by drawing out negotiations or refusing to participate altogether. To this effect, bargaining is not always a just and equitable method of fulfilling the mutual interest of workers and employers.

'Importantly, I now know that the more union members there are in a workplace, the higher the likelihood that unions have the resources to engage in bargaining which may produce an agreement which advances the pay, rights, and conditions of workers.'

## Principal profile: Michelle Bruitzman, St Therese's Primary, Cranbourne North

Michelle is a lifelong teacher and unionist. Here she reflects on what she loves about her job and the resilience built by pandemic learning.



### How and when did you get into teaching?

I started teaching in 1994 and at that time there were too many teachers coming out of uni. After travelling for a time as there were no teaching jobs available, I came home and started out as a CRT. By the end of 1994 I was offered a position as classroom teacher at one of the schools I had done CRT work for and the rest, as they say, is history!

### When did you become a principal, and what do you enjoy most about the role?

I became a principal in July 2018. I had held many leadership roles and was DP for many years before this.

I love the diversity of the work that I do and love working with teachers, especially graduates, to realise their potential and of course I love the students. They are what keep me motivated to keep doing what I do.

### How did you become involved in the union?

I have always been involved in the Union. As a young teacher, I was encouraged by the school to be a member. This year I am the principal Rep for the Sale Diocese.

### What are the biggest issues facing teachers and principals?

I think the biggest issue is the work that takes you away from the core business of schools that is learning and teaching. There seems to be an ever growing amount of administration and compliance work to be done!

### What has been the impact of COVID on your school, family, self?

I think the biggest impact of COVID for me has been the challenges of the never-ending changes to procedures. Having said that, the challenges of leading a school through COVID have really developed my resilience and highlighted my appreciation of the partnership between families and schools. While we had to lockdown for much of 2020 and 2021, we had to reach out more than ever to ensure our families were OK and the students were staying connected to their classrooms and school.

I am also grateful for the amazing work my staff did throughout remote learning times and now in putting in place the targeted interventions needed to support students who have experienced two years of interrupted learning.

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TEACHERS

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

ES STAFF

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

TEACHERS AND ES STAFF

### TERM ONE

**MARCH 23** ● FIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH ASD *6:00 - 7:00PM*

### SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (VIC + TAS)

**APRIL 19** ● LEADERSHIP SKILLS - LEADER AS COACH AND MENTOR *9:00AM - 12:00PM*

● UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP - EDUCATION LEADERSHIP  
IN CATHOLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS *12:30 - 3:30PM*

**22** ● WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS AND  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CURRICULUM *10:00AM - 3:00PM*

### TERM TWO

**MAY 4** ● FIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH ADHD *6:30PM - 7:30PM*

**18** ● STUDENT WELLBEING - SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING ANXIETY *6:30PM - 7:30PM*

**JUNE 1** ● DEVELOPING A TOOLKIT - LITERACY TEACHING FOR ALL SUBJECTS AND GRADES *5:00 - 6:00PM*

**9** ● ISSUES THAT MATTER - THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH *6:00 - 7:30PM*

### SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (VIC)

**JULY 6** ● LEADERSHIP SKILLS - MANAGING CHANGE *9:30AM - 12:30PM*

● LEADERSHIP SKILLS - MANAGING A BUDGET *1:00 - 4:00PM*

**7** ● UPGRADE YOUR SKILLS - RESUME WRITING, JOB APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW SKILLS *1:00 - 2:00PM*

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## NATIONAL UNION ROUNDUP

### NSW: landmark couriers decision includes gig workers

The Transport Worker Union had a significant win in NSW in February that will see couriers receive enforceable pay rises between 36 and 46 per cent over three years.

The NSW Industrial Relations Commission determined that owner-drivers of vans with a carrying capacity between 1.5 and 3 tonnes will be entitled to an enforceable rate of \$43.74 an hour.

The TWU consulted with industry groups and major transport companies such as FedEx, Global Express and Toll in their campaign.

In a world first, Amazon Flex drivers will be entitled to an enforceable rate of \$37.80 an hour, rights to dispute resolution, union representation and collective bargaining.

'Gig economy employers have been put on notice today – Australians will not tolerate this business model that relies on poverty wages and worker exploitation,' said ACTU Secretary Sally McManus.

'Today's decision will be the first significant pay rise that many drivers have seen in 15 years, over which time operating costs have increased dramatically, leaving many drivers earning below minimum wage.'

However, she said the national gig economy crisis would remain unless the Morrison Government regulates to ensure that all workers have basic rights.

#### NSW: transport treachery

The Rail, Tram, and Bus Union (RTBU) has condemned the New South Wales government's unilateral shut-down of the Sydney train network on 21 February and its attempt to blame the union for the ensuing chaos.

Premier Dominic Perrottet and Transport Minister David Elliot withdrew their case against the union in the Fair Work Commission (FWC) after a successful messaging campaign pointed out that the union was not on strike and that rail workers were ready and willing to start work.

RTBU NSW secretary Alex Claassens said the shutdown was 'a huge dummy spit' by the NSW government, supported by their federal counterparts.

The RTBU has campaigned for a new Enterprise Agreement since its previous Agreement expired last year. The union had to undertake industrial action during its official bargaining period because the government refused to negotiate.

Claassens said workers would resume their protected industrial action and that the union was 'always willing to work with the NSW government if it means reaching an agreement to keep our railways safe and moving'.

The union wants a government commitment that no train services, or lines, will be lost to privatisation and a guarantee that any changes to services will leave workers 'as safe or safer'.

The government withdrew its FWC application on February 22 after the union called on it to reveal the 'risk assessment' its shutdown of the rail network was allegedly based on.

'It is clear to everyone that the shutting of the rail network... was a brazen stunt and an attempt to strip our hard-fought conditions by using the unfair industrial relations laws in our country against us. There was never any real safety concern,' the union said.

#### Victoria: unions step in to try to save iconic Curtin Hotel

The Victorian trade union movement is discussing how to save a Carlton pub famous for its union and Labor Party history.

'This place can't be made into apartments. It's a Melbourne Labour Movement institution. We must save it!' tweeted Luke Hilakari, Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) secretary, when the sale of the property was confirmed.

Named after wartime Labor prime minister John Curtin, the pub was long a



John Curtin Hotel

meeting place for Labor and union figures, including former prime minister Bob Hawke. Former premier Steve Bracks, then-opposition leader Bill Shorten, and Premier Daniel Andrews drank to the memory of Hawke when he died in May 2019, just before the 2019 federal election.

As well as becoming a live music venue in recent years, the Curtin remained a watering hole for the labour movement – Victorian Trades Hall, the oldest trade union building in the world and the birthplace of the Australian Council of Trade Unions is across the road.

Hilakari says the VTHC says it is considering buying the historic venue to protect its cultural and historical significance.

He told ABC radio he was 'very hopeful' the union movement could raise the millions of dollars required to purchase the pub. Crowdfunding is an option.

'We'll need some large people investing, but this is something we just can't let go.'

## Union solidarity with Cambodian workers on strike

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA joined with unionists representing education unions to show solidarity with striking workers in Cambodia.

The Independent Education Union, National Tertiary Education Union, United Workers Union, and the Australian Education Union rallied outside the Cambodian embassy in Canberra on 7 February.

Workers at Cambodia's largest leisure resort, NagaWorld hotel and casino complex, are facing a crackdown for being on strike for more than 50 days. Cambodian authorities have imprisoned 11 union leaders, most of them women, for their involvement in this strike.

The Canberra rally delivered a letter from Michele O'Neil, President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, addressed to Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen urging the government to drop the charges against the union activists and release them immediately and unconditionally. The rally also called on NagaWorld to reinstate 365 unfairly terminated workers and negotiate with the union to restore the rights and protect the wellbeing of 4000 union members.

As part of the Global Day of Action, rallies were also held in Indonesia, the

Philippines, Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the US, and the UK.

In response to the rally in Canberra, NagaWorld workers flooded Union Aid Abroad's social media pages with messages of thanks including: 'We need union in NagaWorld' and 'NagaWorld must respect labour law of Cambodia'.

#### Background to the strike

In December last year, workers at NagaWorld casino and hotel began striking to protest management's refusal to engage in good faith negotiations over the forced mass redundancy of over 1,300 workers that left many destitute.

By the end of the month, police began arresting workers involved in the strike. A turning point came on 4 January, when union president Sithar Chhim was violently arrested on the picket line by plainclothes police. Other union leaders were also arrested.

Eleven people have been held and charged with incitement offences which carry a sentence of up to 5 years imprisonment. They are not being

allowed to contact their families, despite requesting family support.

#### Using COVID-19 laws to break the strike

In February, the situation escalated. Under the guise of COVID-19, authorities insisted striking workers were tested for COVID-19, following reports that one NagaWorld worker may have had the virus. Despite the union agreeing that workers would get tested, the government broke up the strike and forcibly moved workers on buses to COVID-19 testing sites.

After isolating for a week, strikers again tried to set up their protest outside the headquarters of NagaWorld. But once again police moved in and arrested 64 protestors on February 21, claiming they were obstructing health measures.

Human Rights Watch has criticised the Cambodian government for 'abusing public health measures to repress workers' right to strike and other basic rights'. Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch said:



'The Cambodian authorities are stooping to new lows by bringing criminal charges in the guise of public health measures to end a strike.'

#### International solidarity

The NagaWorld strike is an important campaign for workers in Cambodia because it will determine their ability to freely exercise their rights to peacefully assemble, strike and form unions.

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA is continuing to campaign in solidarity with the NagaWorld workers until all arrested unionists are released and the charges are dropped.

*Since 1984, Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA has acted in solidarity with working people around the world. We now support over 30 projects in 16 countries in the areas of women's rights, trade union development, climate justice and refugee and migrant rights.*

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# COMING UP AT THE IEU

## MARCH

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 Webinar - OHS Basics
- 4 .....
- 5 .....
- 6 .....
- 7 OHS Webinar  
International Women's Day March  
International Women's Day
- 8 Learning Hub Webinar
- 10 .....
- 11 .....
- 12 .....
- 13 .....
- 14 Labour Day (Vic) 8 Hour Day (Tas)
- 15 .....
- 16 NCCD Project Discussion Forum  
Level 1 Rep Training  
St Patrick's Day  
National Close The Gap Day
- 17 .....
- 18 .....
- 19 .....
- 20 International Day For The  
Elimination Of Racial Discrimination  
National Harmony Day
- 21 .....
- 22 .....
- 23 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 1/5  
Learning Hub Webinar
- 24 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 2/5  
HSR Initial OHS Training Course 3/5  
Principals Council
- 25 School Strike 4 Climate
- 26 .....
- 27 .....
- 28 .....
- 29 Level 2 Rep Training
- 30 NCCD Project Discussion Forum  
HSR Initial OHS Training Course 4/5
- 31 Transgender Day Of Visibility

EVENTS AND TRAINING  
UPDATED REGULARLY.

## APRIL

- 1 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 5/5  
World Autism Awareness Day
- 2 Ramadan Begins
- 3 Daylight Savings Ends
- 4 .....
- 5 .....
- 6 .....
- 7 .....
- 8 HSR Refresher OHS Training Course  
Victoria Term 1 Ends
- 9 .....
- 10 Palm Sunday Rally For Refugees
- 11 .....
- 12 .....
- 13 .....
- 14 Tasmania Term 1 Ends  
Good Friday
- 15 First Day of Passover
- 16 .....
- 17 Easter Sunday
- 18 .....
- 19 Learning Hub Webinar x 2
- 20 .....
- 21 .....
- 22 Learning Hub Webinar  
Orthodox Good Friday
- 23 Last Day of Passover
- 24 Orthodox Easter
- 25 Anzac Day
- 26 Victoria Term 2 Begins
- 27 .....
- 28 World Day For Health  
And Safety At Work  
International Workers Memorial Day
- 29 .....
- 30 .....

## MAY

- 1 May Day  
Eid Teacher Appreciation Week
- 2 Tasmania Term 2 Begins
- 3 Level 3A (Special) Rep Training  
Learning Hub Webinar
- 4 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 1/5
- 5 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 2/5
- 6 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 3/5
- 7 .....
- 8 Mothers Day
- 9 .....
- 10 .....
- 11 .....
- 12 .....
- 13 .....
- 14 .....
- 15 .....
- 16 Level 1 Rep Training  
Education Support Staff Day
- 17 IDAHOBIT
- 18 Learning Hub Webinar
- 19 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 4/5
- 20 HSR Initial OHS Training Course 5/5
- 21 .....
- 22 .....
- 23 .....
- 24 Learning Hub Webinar
- 25 .....
- 26 Sorry Day  
Principals Council
- 27 Reconciliation Week (until 3 June)
- 28 LGBTI Domestic Violence  
Awareness Day
- 29 .....
- 30 .....
- 31 .....

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR  
FURTHER INFORMATION.

## JUNE

- 1 Learning Hub Webinar  
Level 2 Rep Training
- 2 .....
- 3 MABO Day
- 4 .....
- 5 World Environment Day
- 6 .....
- 7 .....
- 8 .....
- 9 Learning Hub Webinar
- 10 .....
- 11 .....
- 12 .....
- 13 Queen's Birthday
- 14 .....
- 15 .....
- 16 Corpus Christi
- 17 .....
- 18 .....
- 19 .....
- 20 World Refugee Day
- 21 .....
- 22 .....
- 23 .....
- 24 Victoria Term 2 Ends
- 25 .....
- 26 .....
- 27 .....
- 28 .....
- 29 .....
- 30 .....