

# ThePoint



## A year of change



**GENERAL SECRETARY**  
DAVID BREAR

It's been another hectic year for everyone in education and at the IEU office, it feels like yesterday that we were looking at the challenges of the year ahead.

Though an in-principle deal was agreed upon in late 2022, the eventual Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement (CEMEA) wasn't signed until midway through 2023, and it represented not the end of work for our members, Reps, and staff who had campaigned so tirelessly to achieve workload improvements in that document, but the start of a challenging

phase of implementation to cement those advances in workplaces.

Schools that treated TIL and the 30+8 working model as a rewarding challenge improved efficiency, reduced irrelevant uses of staff time, and improved staff morale.

In Sale/DOSCEL Catholic schools, where the new arrangements have been in operation for an extra year, the changes

are working better by the day. Schools with a genuine desire to collaborate with staff do best.

Every education sector faces similar challenges – a shortage of teachers, workload intensification, a lack of teacher autonomy and inflexible work patterns – and staff in independent schools are now

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## IEU Office Summer Hours

The IEU Victoria Tasmania Offices in Melbourne and Hobart will be closed for the summer break from 4.00pm on Wednesday 20 December. The IEU Switchboard will re-open with reduced hours of 9.00am to 4.00pm from Monday 8 January and a Duty Officer will be available to assist with urgent member enquiries.

Normal office hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday will resume as of Monday 29 January. For non-urgent enquiries during the holiday period, please email [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au) or for matters regarding your membership and fees please email [finance@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:finance@ieuvictas.org.au) and you will be responded to when the office reopens.

## Membership fees update

**It's been four years since we've increased our fees – but in 2024 we need to introduce a modest 2.8% increase.**

This is in large part due to the huge increase in the number, severity and complexity of individual member issues. We are seeing record numbers of members subjected to lengthy, costly and potentially career-ending processes, all too often resulting from poorly-founded or vexatious allegations.

While we try to limit fee increases, ultimately we need to ensure that IEU members continue to have access to expert advice, representation and support when needed and that this does not come at the cost of our collective strength in improving the working lives of our members.

Our tiered fee structure ensures that membership is affordable for all. Please check your fee category and employment and contact details in Member Access at <https://member.ieuvictas.org.au>.

Let's keep fees low by growing in 2024!

## Climate Duty of Care Resource Pack

On page 22, you'll read about the *Duty of Care Bill*, an amendment to the *Climate Change Act* that would ensure politicians consider the wellbeing of Australian children when making decisions about climate change.

Supporters of the Bill have created a resource pack that helps teachers guide their students through creating their own submissions on the Bill.

The pack is aimed at students from Year 5 to Year 12 but can be adapted for all year groups.

To access the packs: <https://rb.gy/t721sm>  
Duty of Care Bill details: [adutyofcare.davidpocock.com.au/](http://adutyofcare.davidpocock.com.au/)

## Graduate Membership: Kick start your education career

**Become an IEU Graduate Member and join the collective voice of your profession. Membership offers you protection at work, professional development, and networking opportunities and the peace of mind that comes with knowing you have experts on your side.**

Graduates in their first year of employment can join at our special rate of \$175.20 if they sign up before 31 January 2024 and \$234 after this date.

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## Contact us

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

**IEU** INDEPENDENT  
EDUCATION UNION  
VICTORIA, TASMANIA

### EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

T: (03) 9254 1860  
FreeCall: 1800 622 889  
E: [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au)  
W: [www.ieuvictas.org.au](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au)

### CONTRIBUTIONS & LETTERS

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

### MELBOURNE OFFICE:

120 Clarendon Street  
Southbank 3006

### HOBART OFFICE:

212 Liverpool Street  
Hobart 7000

*The Point* is published by the Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania.

### EDITORIAL CONTENT:

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

### COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

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Teresa Huddy

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Alexandra Abela

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## Workplace Organising: growth at the grassroots in Geelong

A couple of committed members on the shopfloor can ignite the latent union power in any workplace.

Christian College Geelong (CCG) doesn't have a history of a strong union presence. However, this winter, members reached out to the IEU for support and began meeting to discuss shared concerns and workshop strategies to build the union.

At the end of Term 3, members Heidi Hearps and Craig White stepped up to the roles of workplace Rep at their respective campuses. At the first on-site IEU visit to the junior campus this term, union staff were inspired to see that membership had more than doubled after just one meeting. Meanwhile, the senior campus has put up an IEU notice board in the staffroom and organised their first local sub-branch meeting. As the year comes to an end, the members at CCG are busy building their power and presence in the workplace.

The school's Organiser says, 'These may seem like small steps, but the actions of these active members starting to build a union presence cannot be understated. The members know the value of union membership and the value of building strength and solidarity. Onwards and upwards for our fantastic new Rep and our new members!'

Rep Craig White had taught in the public system for 30 years and been an active member of the VSTA/AEU. He was used to working in 'structured workplace environments' and as a member of numerous Consultative Committees 'that had a voice'.

The situation was different when he first arrived at CCG two years ago – he didn't know who the members were as there was no formalised sub-branch. Policies that affect working conditions varied across the multiple campuses of CCG and it was a challenge to get staff up to speed on their rights and how they could have a say in decision-making.

But Craig was undaunted.

'We are starting from a low level but we will become stronger!' he says.

Heidi had been an IEU member for over ten years but had been unaware of any other members at the college.

'I was excited when our Organiser made contact and met with me and a few other like-minded colleagues from other campuses. I stepped up as Rep because I am passionate about doing what I can to make a healthy and happy workplace environment for my colleagues and I now feel supported to do so.'

Heidi says CCG's low current membership is 'the obvious challenge'.

'I hope to make more colleagues aware of the Union and the role it plays in the workplace. We are at the very beginning of this journey and my hope for now is simply for union memberships to grow and to be able to have a space where we can share openly with one another.'

Craig has a clear vision for the unionism at CCG.

'In the medium term I want to build up membership and have an active sub-branch at the senior campus. In the

long term, I would like to have an elected Health and Safety Representative (preferably an IEU member).'

Currently, Craig is filling in as the HSR, but he's keen to get a dedicated Rep who can have more input on vital decisions which affect staff wellbeing.

What advice do these enterprising go-getters have for new Reps in low membership schools?

'Know that you will have great support from your Organisers, who are only phone call/email away,' says Craig.

'Take the step, you don't have to know everything now, there is support out there from your Organiser and others at the Union,' says Heidi.

In 2024, it's the mission of the IEU to get elected, trained and active Reps in more schools. We will help find enthusiastic members who want to build collective power and solidarity in their workplaces. Many hands make light work!

## Right on the numbers

Stats that matter from 2023.

### **Bargaining**

■ **Catholic:** The CEMEA covered **29,781** employees in **462** schools under **31** employers.

■ **Independent:** The IEU successfully negotiated **22** Agreements which are now in effect, and is at the bargaining table with **27** other employers.

### **Recruitment**

■ **1913** members joined the union in 2023, including **380** Education Support staff and **1298** teachers

■ **173** student members graduated and became full members

### **Training**

■ Consultative Committee training had **221** participants

■ Sub-Branch Rep training had **115** participants

■ IEU Learning Hub webinars were participated in or viewed over **1300** times

### **Calls to the IEU**

■ **19853** incoming calls answered

■ **501 hours, 15 minutes, 37 seconds** spent on the phone with inbound callers

## A year of change (continued from front page)

including workload measures based on our Victorian Catholic Agreements when logging their claims with employers.

In Tasmanian Catholic schools, there was hope at the start of the year that a change of employer negotiations personnel would lead to meaningful action on another long overdue Agreement. That made it all the more disappointing that employers raised contentious new claims 18 months into negotiations, further slowing a far too prolonged process.

As this edition of *The Point* is printed, the fight is continuing, and we're redoubling our support for members in Tasmanian Catholic schools who have waited too long for better pay and conditions.

The IEU supported a Yes vote for a Voice to Parliament and we stand by that decision. We saw the referendum as a matter of justice and fairness. All union members know that genuine consultation leads to better outcomes – and that was the essence of the Voice to Parliament model put to the Australian people.

The fight for better outcomes for First Nations communities must continue, and many of us are now far better informed about the unique nature of that challenge.

After a decade where the union movement was largely excluded from many federal educational discussions, we worked overtime for the second year running to engage with the Labor government on a raft of major educational reviews.

The Victoria Tasmania branch acknowledges the sterling work of the union's national body the IEUA in representing us in all these important forums. General Secretary Brad Hayes, and Assistant Federal Secretaries Veronica Yewdall and Anthony Odgers were extremely helpful to our branch, offering prompt advice on initiatives like the Review of Initial Teacher Education and the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

Long overdue changes in industrial relations legislation will begin to make a difference to workers in 2024 and we continue to lobby for the passing of the *Closing Loopholes Bill* to fix fundamental flaws affecting safety and fairness.

I've been proud to lead the IEU staff who have once again gone the extra yard in their support of our members.

Our team, from Organisers and Industrial Officers to receptionists,

administrators, communications specialists, finance experts and IT specialists are great colleagues and every one of them works with and for our members with pride and commitment. You can rest assured that you have a dedicated group working on your behalf individually and collectively.

Earlier this year we made a suitably grand farewell to beloved long-time IEU leader Deb James. With the support of the leadership team we've done our best to carry on Deb's legacy – and to build upon it with tweaks of procedures and the instigation of a strategic plan process.

Special thanks to Kylie Busk, Deputy General Secretary, for her resolve, insight, and tireless support, and Assistant Secretaries Simon Schmidt, Cara Maxworthy, and Andrew Wood. They all go above and beyond the call of duty to deliver the best results for our members.

One thing that didn't change in 2023 was the outstanding, indispensable contribution of our sub-branch Reps. You support members, build the size and strength of our union, encourage your colleagues, play a crucial role in negotiations, drive internal and external campaigns, and undertake

tough discussions with school leadership in workplaces that are more complex by the day.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the vital work of all our members – teachers, education support staff, and school leaders. Your contributions are essential to building caring, innovative, and respectful schools. You shape the future through education, no matter how challenging the circumstances.

Your IEU staff never forget that members are the union. And each of you who works collaboratively makes all of us stronger.

Happy holidays to all of you and your loved ones.

We look forward to seeing you well rested at the start of 2024, when we look with fresh eyes and new energy at the challenges ahead!



## GOODBYE

# Brian Martin reflects on his long IEU career

Retiring veteran says being an Organiser ‘wasn’t so much a job but a lived commitment to building a better world around us and for those who follow’.

**B**rian Martin is ‘hanging up the boots’ after nearly 30 years working for the IEU, and over 40 years in education, and he is being lauded as a stalwart Organiser and OHS specialist.

IEU General Secretary David Brear paid tribute to Brian’s contribution: ‘Brian has been around the IEU for a long time as an Organiser and for many years as the union’s OHS specialist. He’s covered hundreds of thousands of kilometres driving all over the state to represent members and meet with sub-branches. He’s also trained hundreds of OHS Reps and inspired the IEU to really build our capacity in that space. It’s hard to imagine a person being more passionate about health and safety than Brian. His colleagues will miss his good nature and sense of humour, and the persistence of his message to put Health and Safety first’.

Deb James, David’s predecessor as General Secretary, also praised Brian’s commitment as an Organiser ‘in Ballarat and all over regional Victoria’. Deb agreed that Brian’s greatest contribution was his leadership in the area of occupational health and safety.

‘He ably represented the union and our members collectively and individually in forums including OHS committees, WorkSafe, the ACTU, Trades Hall and working parties with employers. His expertise was unmatched, and he was a highly skilled

trainer who developed approved training courses for our OHS Reps which recognised schools as their workplaces, an idea which was long overdue.’

Brian wanted to be a pharmacist when he was at high school in Gawler, South Australia, but after he met three ‘incredibly motivational and inspiring geography teachers’ his life took a new trajectory.

‘They modelled for me what it means to be passionate about your job,’ Brian says, recounting how he switched to teaching himself, starting in 1980 at Marist College in Invercargill New Zealand, and continuing in 1981 in Victoria’s Latrobe Valley.

Brian had a family background in unionism – his mother was a strong unionist and ‘wouldn’t associate with non-members’ – and he eventually joined the Teacher’s Association (forerunner of the IEU), became a Rep, joined the Committee of Management and after 1985 when the first Occupational Health and Safety Act came in, had a stint as OHS Rep.

In 1995 he started at the Victorian Independent Education Union as an Organiser.

‘Bill Gaskell and I were the first two Organisers to work for the Union as country Organisers, Bill from the Bendigo office and myself from the Ballarat office which was based in the Ballarat Trades Hall.

‘I was fortunate to be appointed and I’m eternally grateful to the union’s leadership

of the day for the faith they placed in me to do the job and for the opportunity to do it.’

Brian says the VIEU campaign for parity of wages with the government sector in 1997 is a ‘definite highlight’ of his career.

‘I feel that was when many members understood we had real industrial muscle. For me, it felt like our Kokoda moment, fighting in our own backyard for our right to receive our pay rises not a day later or dollar less than the government sector. To see so many members participating in stop-work action and marching together along Victoria Street was when I felt we had become a ‘real’ union with ‘real’ power. The employers tried to cripple our capacity to organise by withdrawing the payroll deduction of union membership fees – but we organised, we grew, and we won.’

Personally, Brian gained most satisfaction from his work in occupational health and safety.

He says OHS was where he felt he ‘naturally belonged’ and could make his biggest contribution.

‘I’ve made health and safety my life’s work... The right to go to work and not be injured or made ill is not just a workplace right, it’s a fundamental human right. I’m looking forward to continuing to be a loud voice and advocate for health and safety at work.’

Brian says he’s worked with ‘dozens of highly skilled, committed, wonderful people’ in his 29 years as an IEU Organiser.

‘Going to work each day where the objective of that work is to improve working conditions and create a fairer and more inclusive society for future generations of education industry employees made every day a highlight. It wasn’t so much a job but a lived commitment to building a better world around us and for those who follow.

‘I consider myself to have had good fortune in my working life, to have essentially had two careers, to have got the jobs I wanted and to have had a high level of autonomy over my work. Now I look forward to my third career as an OHS practitioner, trainer, and coach.’

Brian’s final words to would-be members?

‘Deciding to be a member of a union is a very noble choice. You may never need the union’s help or services, but your best friend might, and your best friend will certainly value how your decision to join made the union stronger and more able to give them the help they needed when they needed it most. Do your best friend a favour, join the union.’



## Reps speak up for union rights at senate inquiry

IEU Reps have addressed the *Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill* senate inquiry, sharing their experiences as workplace representatives, and explaining the vital role they play in our industrial relations system.

**R**ep Abigail (Abbey) has been a teacher in Tasmanian Catholic secondary schools for 14 years and a Rep for 6 years. Eugene is an ACT teacher who has worked in Catholic secondary schools for 20 years and been a union delegate for 10 years.

They spoke in Canberra because the proposed laws recognise that Reps are the key to fair and efficient workplaces and collective bargaining would fall apart without them.

These unpaid volunteer roles deserve and need basic rights and protections.

Abbey and Eugene detailed how their roles underpin cooperative workplaces and what Reps need to effectively support their workmates.

Across Australia, over 2000 IEU Reps – teachers, learning aides, librarians, lab techs, early childhood professionals, school leaders and services staff – volunteer for these crucial unpaid roles, working on behalf of colleagues to offer

advice, consult with union staff and bargain for better wages and conditions.

While the IEU has negotiated successfully for Rep rights in many schools, including the right to paid leave to attend training, many Australian workplaces are not so lucky. If enacted, the *Closing Loopholes Bill* would guarantee the rights of Reps to undertake their role, access union training and liaise with employees and management to help solve workplace issues.

This amendment is vital because:

- Reps help negotiate and implement collective agreements to get wages moving and improve workplace efficiencies
- Reps consult on proposed changes and how they will impact staff – listening to workers leads to better decision-making, staff wellbeing and job satisfaction
- Reps identify and negotiate with management about workplace problems early, so they can be resolved at the local level to avoid costly legal disputes

- Reps participate in Consultative Committees and other management / employee forums to foster open communication and shared strategies for challenges such as staffing or workload.

So much is demanded of workplace Reps, and they achieve so much for colleagues – but they need modest changes to help them make workplaces fairer and prevent the exploitation of employees.

The proposed changes would ensure that Reps are provided reasonable access to communicate with members and potential members about matters of industrial concern and access to workplace facilities. Reps in medium or large businesses will also have reasonable access to paid leave for workplace delegate training.

The proposed amendments will also introduce a general protection for Reps when carrying out their role at a workplace, including preventing an

employer from unreasonably refusing to deal with them, misleading them, or hindering and obstructing the exercise of their rights as Reps.

If the Bill passes, employees will benefit from having trained and capable workplace Reps who can provide effective representation and help them to understand and enforce their workplace rights. While some employers continue to resist these proposals, ultimately they will also benefit from having strong, cooperative Rep structures to help resolve disputes and facilitate positive workplace change.



## WELCOME

### Industrial strength recruit: Liam Hanlon joins the IEU

The IEU office has further expanded its coverage for members with the hiring of well-travelled and versatile Industrial Officer Liam Hanlon.

Liam grew up in the UK and left school at 16, initially training in aircraft engineering. When his family moved to Australia, his British qualifications weren't recognised so he completed an apprenticeship as an electrical fitter, working in that job between 2007 and 2010.

His career took a sharp turn in 2011 when he enrolled in a law degree as a mature age student. He also worked for the IEU Qld/NT in its call centre from 2011 to 2015, and then for three months as a membership officer.

Following this he worked as a lawyer at Maurice Blackburn from 2016 to 2023, initially specialising in assisting injured workers with compensation claims and then working with the superannuation and insurance team on matters including insurance disputes and litigation over negligent financial advice.

He moved to Melbourne in 2021 and took on the role as an Industrial Officer with the IEU Victoria Tasmania in mid-2023.

Liam says his negative experience during his apprenticeship as an electrical

fitter was formative. 'I was working for an employer that didn't really care about its workers and provided pretty rubbish pay and conditions,' he says. He was the only union member in his team and saw first-hand how the failure of workers to act collectively meant they had no power to improve their working conditions.

That negative experience bred a desire to 'represent, protect and advance' the interests of workers.

'From the teachers and education support staff who educate and support kids through their schooling to the admin and school services staff that keep the schools operating; they all deserve fair pay, conditions and recognition and I am excited to be a part of working collectively for that.'

In his first months in his new role, Liam has been surprised by 'how mean-spirited some of the employers can be towards long-serving staff who have dedicated years of service to their schools'.

'Whilst I was expecting employers to act unfairly at times, some of the issues I have dealt with so far on behalf of members has really hammered

home that some employers really fail to value the work of our members.'

Liam's broad experience, varied work experience and passion for fairness and worker's rights make him a welcome addition to the IEU staff family. We trust this latest step in your employment odyssey will be a rewarding one, Liam!

### Striving for more progress on women's rights



**DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY**  
KYLIE BUSK

IEU members have always worked hard to overcome gender inequality, but progress in this area often feels much too slow.

When I started working in a Catholic school in the late 1990s my female colleagues spoke of having to resign when they married or when they became pregnant, and lacking access to parental leave. In the early 2000s, men often made up more than half of the leadership of primary schools, even when 93% of the staff was female. These days, 74% of Victorian teachers are women, but there's still not enough of them in charge.

Our culture still features too much bullying, misogyny, and sexual harassment, and it's so important that children of all genders and backgrounds experience respected teachers and leaders of all genders and backgrounds.

More needs to be done for women, because each improvement is beneficial not just for them, but for everyone. Equality provides safer, more stable families, fairer, more efficient, and harmonious workplaces, and a happier, healthier, and more dynamic society.

The union movement makes a huge contribution to achieving that diversity by lobbying governments and education authorities for laws which protect women's rights.

A good example are changes to the federal *Sex Discrimination Act* which have created a Positive Duty for employers to prevent discrimination and harassment, which will make workplaces safer and more respectful.

Upcoming psychosocial regulations in Victoria will put an OHS framework around harassment and bullying, thereby treating them for what they are – workplace hazards for educators.

In schools, bargaining delivers important changes for members. In 2023, the IEU has been concentrating on the implementation of new Agreements in Victorian Catholic schools, which, amongst many other measures, improve parental leave, clamp down on the roting of fixed-term contracts, limit the spread of working hours for part-time staff, and offer a model to 'fence off' core teaching duties from time-wasting, stress-inducing administrative duties and excessive meetings. These measures improve day-to-day life for female members, and indeed for all staff.

We need to continue that mixture of Big Picture policy work and local action in your schools to win further change because women remain under-represented in leadership roles, and inflexible workplaces mean they struggle to juggle family and career. We also need better job share structures, part-time arrangements, and more support for carers.

The IEU will continue to push, encourage, and support employers to make these improvements.

We are currently undertaking a strategic planning process to further embed such imperatives in the IEU's organisational DNA. (See page 25 for details.)

## Setting your sights Highview

Negotiations on a new Agreement at Highview College Maryborough have concluded, with excellent outcomes for staff.

There's no mystery to these advances – IEU membership density at Highview is over 90% and members' willingness to take industrial action was crucial to the good outcomes. Highview is also a paragon of solidarity: teachers took a stand with general staff to ensure improvements for their colleagues. Teachers had already won an increase, but management were holding out on general staff; their win was only achieved because teachers were prepared to hold off on a deal.

General staff have won a base salary increase of between 5% and 19%, lifting their salaries closer to those in Catholic and government schools. There have also been significant improvements in leave entitlements: staff working through the holidays have had their

paid leave entitlement increased from 4 to 6 weeks, and those working school terms have had their salary recalculated to reflect this increase. These achievements been won through the strength of the solidarity between teachers and general staff.

Teachers receive a 3.7% to 3.8% pay increase now, with the top of scale salary moving to \$118,000 then \$122,767 by the end of the Agreement in 2025. The next two years see increases of 2% each year for all teachers. These increases have been back-paid to April 2022.

There is now also a new entitlement to take up to 5 days of 'discretionary leave' from an employee's personal leave allocation.

A strengthened conduct management clause allows employees the right to know an

outcome before a Reportable Conduct allegation decision is made so they can make submissions to the decision maker.

General staff have won the right to request remote working arrangements, and a first aid allowance is now available for general staff if first aid is part of their role.

Notably, Highview has become one of the first independent schools to incorporate the workload reduction model which the IEU made a cornerstone of the recent CEMEA deal. That includes a reduction in face-to-face teaching time to 18.5 hours, the introduction of time in lieu, and the adoption of the 30+8 model, whereby 30 hours is set aside for teaching, planning and preparation and 8 hours is 'employer directed time'.

# From the President



**UNION PRESIDENT**  
TERRY HUDDY

The new President of the IEU Victoria Tasmania Teresa (Terry) Huddy has a globetrotting story of education and union involvement. Here's just a snippet, and her vision for our Union.

I started teaching in 1985 at the Mary N Smith Middle School in a rural area of Virginia, USA. The school was named after Mary Nottingham Smith, a veteran educator recruited by Accomack County to supervise the education of Black students in 1921, who worked tirelessly to raise the funds necessary to build the county's first high school for African American students in 1932.

I worked there for 7 years before I travelled to the Seoul International School in South Korea, Bandung International School in Indonesia, and finally Melbourne, where I worked as a CRT in public, Catholic and private schools. I landed my ongoing position at Eltham College in 2001.

I've always taught students ages 11 – 14 in years/grades 5 – 10, starting as a general classroom teacher before specialising in science when I left the United States.

Science education is a passion of mine and the thing I love best is to be in front of a classroom watching student minds being expanded by the wonders of the world and universe through science.

## Unionism

I've been a unionist since I joined the Student Education Association when I attended Virginia Tech (university) in 1980. While teaching in Accomack County, Virginia, I was active in the Accomack County Association, becoming president in 1996, lobbying local and state legislative bodies to improve teachers' pay and conditions.

I joined the IEU when I started working at Eltham in 2001 and I was elected Rep not long after. As Rep, I've always aimed to build bridges between the staff and leadership. My role also involves advocating for individual staff members on a wide range of issues and representing staff in multiple EBA agreements.

I was elected to the IEU Committee of Management in June 2017 as Independent Council President, became IEU Deputy President in February 2019 and IEU President in August 2023.

## The role of the IEU

The IEU plays a crucial role by advocating for the rights and interests of all school staff, ensuring their voices are heard and needs addressed. To me unionism is vital as it empowers workers to collectively negotiate for fair wages, better working conditions and job security. It promotes worker solidarity, protects rights, and provides a platform to address workplace issues, contributing to a more equitable and just society. Who wouldn't want that!

As President I look forward to working with members, union staff and colleagues on the Committee of Management to continue growing our union so we can all enjoy better working lives, to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our students.

I hope you all have a safe, restful, and rewarding holiday season amongst family and friends, and you come back in 2024 eager for the challenges we face in schools and as a union.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### A new twist: flexible unpaid parental leave

Changes to parental leave provisions in the Fair Work Act and improvements to government-paid parental leave provide greater flexibility for employees with responsibility for a new child.

Under the changes to the **government-paid parental leave scheme**, parents will be able to claim up to 20 weeks of government-paid leave to use between them (this is in addition to employer-paid leave), while single parents can access the full amount of parental leave pay. Previously, fathers could take only two weeks' leave concurrently with their partner. Now, for example, a couple can choose to take 10 weeks each, which can be taken at the same time, overlapping, or separately.

However, changes to **unpaid parental leave** are just as significant.

Key changes to the entitlement to unpaid parental leave under the Fair Work Act include:

- **Removal of restrictions for parenting couples.** Employee can now access unpaid parental leave regardless of how much unpaid parental leave their partner has taken
- **Simplified notice requirements.** Employees are now required to provide one notice period of 10 weeks before the anticipated birth of their child, irrespective of how the unpaid parental leave will be taken
- **How leave can be taken.** Unpaid parental leave can be taken in a continuous period or as flexible leave
- **Use of gender-neutral language.** The term 'parental leave' now replaces 'maternity leave'.

**Flexible parental leave** is unpaid parental leave that can be taken flexibly by an employee. This means it can be taken as a single day or a combination of multiple days.

Previously, eligible employees could take up to 12 months of unpaid parental leave, which usually had to be taken in one single continuous stint. However, under the revised legislation, this unpaid parental leave can be taken at any time in the 24

months following the birth of the child. Previously, it had to be taken within 12 months of the birth.

The Act also provides employees with the ability to take up to 100 days of their unpaid parental leave entitlement outside of a continuous block of unpaid parental leave, up from a previous limit of 30 days.

These 100 days of leave can be taken at any time between six weeks before the anticipated birth of the child or the date of placement or adoption, and 24 months after the birth, placement, or adoption, and can be taken as a single continuous period or separate periods of one or more days.

Please note that there are still relevant notice periods which apply for requesting leave from your employer.

If an Agreement applies in your workplace, you will have greater entitlements than what is listed in the *Fair Work Act* – the above entitlement is the bare minimum entitlement available to all employees.

If you have any questions, please contact the IEU.

## Workload: enemy number one

The IEU's national body says workload is the primary issue of concern for the nation's educators.

'Members across the country are fighting back against unsustainable workloads and incessant growth of administrative tasks and compliance paperwork that is undermining our time to teach,' said IEU Federal Secretary Brad Hayes.

Solutions require IEU members to win improved conditions in local campaigns and collective bargaining, but also 'a national intervention from governments, peak employers and education authorities'.

### Federal IEU priorities to tackle teacher workload:

- **IEU campaign to streamline compliance and end task duplication:** We are working with education authorities and policy makers to end unnecessary duplication of compliance work. Once

reasonable expectations are confirmed, employers need to stick to what is required and stop adding more demands.

- **National School Reform Agreement (NSRA):** The IEU is proposing innovative changes that link school funding and resources to tangible workload reductions.
- **National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP):** The IEU is working with the federal government and authorities on the implementation of key NTWAP Actions that can help address workload.

- **Workload Impact Assessments:** Our Union has called for all new education policies and initiatives to first be subjected to workload impact tests to break the cycle of 'add-on duties'.

- **Parliamentary Inquiry into AI in Education:** We're dealing with extra work due to new AI integrity rules, which are meant to enforce ethics and education but also increase the administrative burden on teachers and school leaders.

- **Initial Teacher Education and Support for Early Career Teachers:** The IEU is providing detailed input into best practice induction guidelines for new teachers and lobbying for greater early career support programs including dedicated work time for professional mentoring.



## Committed to Consultation

Consultative Committees are not new. They have long been the forum for discussion of such matters as class sizes, positions of leadership and workload.

**B**ut under the new Victorian Catholic Agreements, staff and union representatives on Consultative Committees are newly empowered, and the success of workload measures depends on staff making their views and experiences known via their Consultative Committee representatives.

Under the new Agreements, Consultative Committee Reps are now entitled to paid leave to attend IEU training – and in Term 3 we started rolling out an ongoing training program with a series of online sessions.

In October, we ran our first full-day in-person Consultative Committee training at union headquarters in South Melbourne. General Secretary David Brear addressed 26 enthusiastic Reps from all over the state, saying that when he was a Rep, staff meetings were much more consultative, and a lot of issues of concern to staff were discussed there.

'Now staff meetings are more like information sessions. Opportunities for genuine consultation in our schools have narrowed, so we must make sure the voice of staff is heard through Consultative Committees.'

David acknowledged that while in some schools, Consultative Committees were working really well – staff were listened to, were able to express their concerns, and could affect change – in many others the situation was not so rosy. Hence the need for greater education of Reps, to arm them with knowledge and techniques to build power for their workforce.

'It's important you canvas opinion widely in your school to make it obvious to leadership that you are representing a lot of people, and not just taking in personal agendas. Take strongly, deeply, and widely held views of staff back to your Consultative Committee meetings.'

'Be a strong advocate for people you represent – the sustainability of school communities, the health and wellbeing of staff and the quality of education for our kids depend on it.'

In a snap poll taken during the day-long session, three quarters of attendees identified that their school's Consultative Committee was functional but with room for improvement, while one quarter considered theirs to be essentially 'not functioning'.

The first activity undertaken by participants was to turn to the person next to them and discuss how their school's Committee was working. As important as instruction on such days is the opportunity for Reps to share stories, ideas, and solutions between themselves.

Kezi Todd, from St Francis Catholic College, said the two aspects of CC training go 'hand in hand'.

'The teaching is important because teachers are time poor, staff in schools are time poor so we haven't had time to sit down and nut through all the details. So having it there presented explicitly is helpful. But then also hearing about other people's experiences helps provide more clarity.'

Jacky Merrey from St Patrick's School

appreciated hearing that staff in other schools were experiencing similar situations to her and her colleagues.

'Days like this are really good because we can come together to share ideas about what's happening, what's working well, and what's not – and to learn that it's not just my school uniquely doing things in a particular way.'

Hearing 'in black and white' how Consultative Committees were meant to work would clarify explanations to colleagues at school.

She was confident her participation in the training day would 'make things better at her school'.

Daniel Lodder from Genazzano College also appreciated the opportunity to meet with people from across the sector 'to get an impression of what is actually happening out there'.

He said it was 'empowering' to know more about the consultative process.

'I think sometimes you sit in consultative, and you know there's an issue with what's being said but you just don't have the knowledge to be able to contest it.'

Reps at training discussed what a successful Consultative Committee should look like, then explored how to make that vision a reality. The training included interactive elements to ensure Reps took away action plans to put in place for the particular conditions in their schools.

Like many, Gemma Burnheim and Samantha Carbonara from Holy Rosary School, new to their roles, were eager for

the 'nuts and bolts' specifics about how to gather member viewpoints and promote them in Consultative Committee meetings.

'We've heard from other schools that there's different ways of running it, and some ways work really well. So we wanted to come here to learn how to run ours properly so we can be as efficient as possible and run the best possible version for our school,' said Samantha.

Gemma, a graduate teacher, was keen to pick up some more specific details about time in lieu for sacraments and how to call and run meetings.

Kezi had taken extensive notes on how to improve her feedback to members.

'Now I know that I can be much more open and I can use a surveying tool. I'm more confident now in knowing that I'm able to just be the voice of those union members when I'm going in to consultative meetings.'

'I was a bit hesitant before – what was I allowed to do, what was I not allowed to do? And now I feel a lot more confident moving forward knowing what's within the scope of that role.'

## GOOD NEWS

### Filling the belly, mind, and heart

The simplest observations can lead to incredible outcomes if enough people are committed to the cause.

**M**ornings in the library are often a great opportunity to get to know our students, but four years ago a short conversation with hungry students sparked an idea for library staff member, Cheryl Taylor, that resulted in the formation of the highly successful Breakfast Club at Galen College, Wangaratta.

Now, every Wednesday lines of hungry students find their way to the front of the Soul Food Café and happily collect a hot toastie and a piece of fruit. The aim is to encourage better behaviour through better nutrition, ensuring all students have access to a substantial breakfast before commencing their day.

There have been several very welcome spin offs, foremost being positive

interactions with students.

Openly appreciative students say Breakfast Club makes Wednesday 'the best day of the week' and 'a special day'.

'That's why we do this each week,' said Ms Taylor of the supportive student comments. 'This is what makes it all worthwhile.'

The benefits don't stop there.

Students who volunteer in the kitchen enjoy working as part of a team alongside teaching and support staff, and gain the opportunity to obtain a commendation or even a reference for their resumé. They can now also add their Breakfast Club volunteer work as evidence to support completion of outcomes in some subjects.

Volunteers say they enjoy the experience and gain a lot from the



interaction with staff and students.

The weekly initiative also enables House leaders to add a creative spin to their Feast Day breakfast and for students to grow their understanding of the spirit of service through their assistance at Breakfast Club.

The volunteer-run kitchen runs like a well-oiled machine, with six toasters working at full speed creating up to 400 toasties before the first bell rings for homeroom. Students line up waiting patiently for their parcel of yumminess and their good humour is a testament to the success of the venture.

Breakfast Club had humble beginnings and just a few passionate staff, two toasters and a lot of energy. Now the club is generously supported by local businesses Appin Street Bakery and La Bella Rocca,



the school leadership, and the Parents and Friends Association.

It's become a service that offers much more than just a hot meal.

**Cheryl Taylor is Head of Learning Resources at Galen Catholic College.**



## GOOD NEWS

### Students say Yes to Indigenous education

In a primary school in Tarneit, the Voice to Parliament referendum proved that children want a future informed by a First Nations perspective.

For five years Simone Myall has conducted a weekly Indigenous program at St Francis of Assisi Primary School in Tarneit to Year 1 – Year 6 students.

'In Term 3, the focus of the Year 3 – Year 6 students was on the referendum,' Simone told *The Point*.

'I thought that the students would find it extremely boring, but they surprised me and turned into social justice warriors and advocates of the Yes vote.'

Simone says this was never her intention; she was merely providing pupils with information about the upcoming referendum they could share with their families at home.

'The students provided families with websites and information to help them make an informed decision. I am so proud of the students and how they embraced this learning.'

Despite the No vote at the referendum, Simone's students were 'passionately eager' to discuss the results.

'My focus and teachings in the lead-up to the referendum were always to be considered and unbiased; it was extremely important that I explored perspectives that encouraged and enforced student voice and reflection.'

'Although many students were astonished and disappointed arriving on that day, we openly discussed how important it is for all of us to continue our journey with empathy, understanding,

hope and love, and that future generations, such as them, will be educated in creating purposeful change that will ensure First Nations people, culture and history will be meaningfully recognised.'

Simone's program celebrates First Nations culture and people, 'sharing knowledge with the students as well as highlighting the histories of Australia from a First Nations perspective'.

She says she's received 'extremely positive' feedback to the course from students and families, and her students are 'taking their new knowledge home and sharing it with whoever will listen'.

Simone believes upper primary students have a lot to teach Australian adults.

'They would explain that Indigenous issues in Australia are complex and individual to their communities. The students would say that First Nations people face social and economic disadvantage because their communities were displaced and the teaching of their language and culture was prohibited.'

'Students have said that because of the complexity of Australian history, it feels like we are too far gone to help correct wrongdoings, but we must continue a path to reconciliation and meaningful change for all.'

#### Origins and building teacher confidence

Simone initially suggested the program to her principal after noticing that the early years sector 'consistently and visibly' celebrated First Nations People and their culture.

'However, as students transition into primary school, a noticeable disconnect from these practices became apparent within the school and classroom settings.'

'Our conversation continued as we both agreed that it was imperative to ensure students were gaining and building knowledge and understanding of First Nations' history and culture, so the program was implemented as a weekly specialist subject.'

Simone said it had become clear that teachers were uncertain about how to respectfully teach the content and implement the method of instruction in their classrooms.

The Indigenous program was introduced as a trial specialist class for a year, and its success meant that staff gained 'greater confidence in incorporating diverse teachings into their daily curriculum'.

'Now, many staff members feel empowered to engage in discussions and exchange ideas for building a secure and inclusive learning community by embedding First Nations' learning in classrooms.'

#### Advice for schools considering an Indigenous program

'Go for it! There are many teachers who are enthusiastic and eager to share their experiences and knowledge of culture. Find these teachers within your schools and embrace their proficiency in this area. Connect with local communities and Elders, and meaningfully build relationships with Traditional Owners.'

'The wonderful experience at St Francis of Assisi has been in building connections with families, local agencies, and community members. This is not for one person to do alone; it is for the school community to come together and build something wonderful and meaningful.'



## Two weeks as an 'Anna': Lisa's story

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project is a two-week leadership training and development program designed to encourage greater participation from women in their unions and to help develop female leadership.

The program honours the memory of Anna Stewart, a journalist and active Victorian union official who tragically lost her life aged 35.

Participants complete formal training at Trades Hall for one week of the program and are placed with a union for another week.

Education Support Staff IEU member Lisa Hunter recently completed her Anna Stewart Memorial Project with the union at Clarendon Street. Following are her reflections on this unique program.

When I applied for the Anna Stewart Memorial Project, I didn't know the full extent of Anna's contribution to the rights of women at work.

Initially I wanted to be more involved by learning more about the processes behind unionism and personal growth to help me be stronger so I might make a difference.

My first day as an 'Anna' was quite

liberating: I felt I was in a safe and supportive environment where I was accepted for me, the person I am, for being a woman.

Once the icebreaker introductions were done, it was evident what a diverse group of people the participants were, and I was eager to spend time with them and learn as much as I could about them and the roles they play in their workplaces.

We then moved onto a Women's Rights at Work chat, which went really well. We learned more about the challenges women still face today and floated some ideas about how we could develop actions for change.

Then came the stunt! We had to come up with an action that we would act out in public as a peaceful protest. We decided to support the campaign against the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements to silence women who have suffered sexual harassment in the workplace. Women

are made to sign NDAs so they can't tell anyone, not even their families, what has happened in contentious incidents that often end their employment.

While we worked on this project we also met with varied groups of women from different industries and learned about the issues they faced and how they were negotiating.

My time with the IEU further boosted my confidence and gave me a real sense of purpose. As soon as I entered the front door I was welcomed by all staff members in a way that made me feel at home. I witnessed the diligence, dedication, and passion staff have for what they do and formed an understanding of what drives them. Even with their busy schedules the staff did not hesitate to take me along with them to their various appointments, allowing me to sit in on meetings and have input on their discussions. I felt genuinely

valued and did not feel out of place or in any way an intruder.

I love the way the staff support each other and the genuine way they interact with colleagues and the people they are working with to help.

I will be forever grateful for having the opportunity to be a part of the Anna Stewart Memorial Program, all the wonderful women (and men) that I met along the way who supported this program and the women I sat beside both at Trades Hall and at the IEU.



## The cost of pushing teachers too far

The federal branch of the IEU has pointed out an unsavoury and startling fact: many teachers and support staff can no longer afford to live near where they work.

'Widespread staff shortages continue to disrupt schools and early childhood education centres,' the union stated. 'The staffing crisis now faces yet another complication, with essential education workers being priced out of housing near their workplace.'

'The fact that teachers, even at the top of the pay scale, are unable to live and work in the same town or in the local area adds to the intense pressure on schools trying to deliver high-quality education.'

The IEUA cited the *Australian Educational Researcher* which found that 90% of advertised teaching jobs are in areas where teachers cannot afford to rent or buy a home.

'For new teachers on lower pay rates, or support staff on limited part-time hours, options are especially dire and are leading to unprecedented levels of housing stress.'

Because teachers and other essential workers are denied access to work from home, school staff are forced to decide between high levels of household debt or lengthy daily commutes that exacerbate workload exhaustion and 'exclude employees from the very community that supports and services their school'.

The IEUA wants higher pay for education staff, but also 'broader government and industry intervention to restore access to affordable housing and ensure the viability of local schools'.

The IEUA called for:

- **Access to flexible work options** for staff. Flexible hours or, where possible, remote work, help ease commuter burden and work-life balance.
- **Dedicated federal and state essential worker housing policies** to improve housing access. This will require enabling legislation and consistent funding.
- **Repairs to the broader housing sector.** Clear the backlog of planning proposals, provide new incentives to councils and rezone land in transport corridors.
- Remote area employers should **directly invest in housing stock** for their employees.
- And importantly – **pay teachers and support staff what they're worth!**

Jim Stanford, Economist and Director of the Centre for Future Work recently said that companies raising their prices more than their costs (34%) and government policies (32%) are the greatest causes of inflation and the resulting cost-of-living crisis, not workers demanding higher wages (5%).

He said that when prices rise more than wages, the real purchasing power of workers' wages (called the 'real wage') declines.



### Be careful what you post and where

The internet does not have a delete key. Once you've posted a comment or image, you can't erase any copies that others may have stored. So, reconsider before sharing anything online that you wouldn't be comfortable with a parent or a prospective employer discovering.

Likewise, you wouldn't hand out personal information to strangers in person, so don't hand out personal or contact details to strangers online.

To safeguard your privacy, consider maintaining a secondary email account specifically for sign-ups and subscriptions, separate from the one used for work or communication with friends and family.

### Be aware of your digital footprint and online reputation

Search for yourself with a popular search engine to see how others view you and your profiles. Use the 'View As' function on your Facebook profile to see how your profile appears to the public or to a specific person.

#### Your online reputation is formed through:

- Posts by you
- Posts by others but about you or linked to you
- Posts by others pretending to be you.

## Online safety hints for educators

You know you should change your passwords – but here are a few less obvious tips.

Remember that when you post something online it will always be there.

### Further social media and email basics:

- The employer owns the school's email system and may monitor it
- Employers check Facebook
- Employers can check your work internet history
- Never send an email in anger
- Don't assume that things are private
- Never communicate with students on anything other than the school's systems or in person
- Keep work on work devices and personal communication on personal devices.

### Overall safety tips

- Keep software and operating systems updated
- Check that websites look and feel reliable
- Review your privacy settings
- Be careful of suspicious links and where you click
- Make sure your devices are secure
- Backup data regularly
- Close unused accounts
- Be careful what you download
- Be careful what you post and where.

**A detailed article about cybersafety is available on the IEU website at: [www.ieuvictas.org.au/news](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au/news)**



## MEMBER COMMENT

### Reclaiming the joy of teaching: Let's reconnect with our purpose in 2024

Teaching is a rewarding profession, but it's also challenging. We've all had moments when we wondered why we chose this path.

Do you remember that initial spark, that sheer joy that brought you into the world of education? Well, it's time to rediscover and reclaim that joy. Teaching is such a special calling; nobody becomes a teacher for the hourly pay. We're driven by a deeper purpose—the profound desire to make a difference in the lives of our students.

The reality is that our profession is at a breaking point, with workloads and burnout attributing to inordinate shortages. Nobody leaves the profession as a Plan A. I am confident in saying for the majority, this is a last resort. To counter that, I ask: how do we find our purpose and passion again?

#### Reflect on Your Why:

Take a moment to reflect on why you became a teacher. Was it to inspire young minds, foster a love for learning, or make

the world a better place? Reconnecting with your initial motivations can reignite the passion that once fuelled your teaching journey. Remember, you have the power to shape future generations. It is important to find joy in the classroom. It highlights the idea that teaching is not just a job; it's a calling that has the potential to bring immense satisfaction.

#### Find a 'Partner in Joy':

We all have a colleague or two we use as a sounding board to air our grievances. But let's turn our attention to having collegiate conversations in the staffroom that focus on success stories in your classrooms and the reason we became teachers in the first place – because we love to teach and feel good when students learn. Building a strong support network can rekindle your passion through shared

enthusiasm and remind you that you're not alone in facing challenges.

#### Focus on Student Relationships:

Amongst the most rewarding aspects of teaching are the relationships we build with our students. Access to archaic staffroom couches and overused staff microwaves aren't the reason we enter this profession. When there is a mutually nurturing and respectful environment, it's hard not to feel the exhilaration of teaching. The buzz of co-operation when both staff and students feel valued and respected is a recipe for self-care and rediscovering the magic of learning.

#### Celebrate Small Wins, Reclaim the Magic:

Teaching can be a tough gig, and it's easy to get caught up in the daily grind. Make it

a habit to celebrate small victories, whether it's a student's 'aha' moment, a successful lesson, or a heart-warming note from a parent. These small wins can remind you of the profound impact you're having.

Teaching is a noble profession that should be filled with satisfaction and purpose. Reclaiming what brought you into this field is essential for your wellbeing but also for the success of your students. Reflect on why you became a teacher, connect with peers, focus on student relationships, and celebrate the small wins.

Let's rediscover the magic of teaching and continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those we teach. Together, we can bring back the joy that makes teaching truly extraordinary.

If we don't, who will?

**Jack Andrews,  
Sacred Heart College, Geelong**



# You are what you read

The torrent of education news, research and opinion is never ending. So where do a union leader, a teacher, a principal, and an education academic get their information?

**V**eronica Yewdall, Assistant Federal Secretary IEUA, ploughs through thousands of words every day.

The federal office of our union engages with the Commonwealth government through meetings with the Minister for Education and agencies such as the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The IEUA also monitors peak employer bodies such as the National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Australia, and regulatory authorities including the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority because the work of these bodies has 'significant impacts on teachers and support staff in classrooms and/or early childhood centres'.

The IEUA subscribes to a service that sends them notifications about politics and media announcements related to education as soon as they come out.

'This allows us to respond quickly, sometimes issuing our own response to the state branches, to keep members informed of developments and the advocacy of the IEU on various issues. Sometimes there are multiple political alerts in a single day.'

Veronica must also read everything pertaining to the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, a major response to the teacher shortage crisis.

That includes a plethora of discussion and consultation papers developed by the Federal Department of Education, the Productivity Commission, the National Artificial Intelligence taskforce, and the Australian Education Research Organisation.

'In order to respond, it is essential that federal officers understand the issues and can point out the critical errors or unintended consequences of proposals outlined in these often-lengthy papers.'

'Our representation carries greater weight if we can clearly demonstrate a considered approach to their proposals, based on our knowledge of their documentation.'

One example was the development of an Evidence Fact Sheet for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability (NCCD) which helped the IEUA 'clearly demonstrate the boundaries of necessary compliance for the NCCD'.

Full-time teacher, OHS Rep and committed IEU Victoria Tasmania Rep **Brendan Nicholls** receives up to 50 emails a day, and much of his time is spent responding to this correspondence and taking any issues it raises to leadership.

His teaching workload means that his reading is confined to 'areas that are pressing and support others in a quantifiable way'.

'If I could simply teach and not have to be concerned about all of the other 'problems', I might find a passion for new educational research, but I can't see schools changing the way they operate so for now its industrial matters and OHS for my 'reading'.

Brendan 'continually reviews' the new Agreement covering his members, IEU materials supporting its implementation, the OHS Act and the OHS Rep website created and maintained by Trades Hall.

This focus on serving fellow unionists yields rewards, however, he receives 'plenty of news and ideas' from IEU Rep Facebook groups.

'I have also recently started making use of the Teacher Learning Network (TLN) IEU Learning Hub which has an amazing variety of material that is on-demand and specific to the kind of information that is practical and helps teachers go about their job.'

**Sally Buick**, Principal of Killester College, is also time poor. She'd love to have three or more hours a week to read but 'it is simply impossible most weeks... there is so much to read and so little time!'

She relies on 'a heap of social media pages' for daily news.

'At the moment, I am really focusing on what is happening in the AI space and there is a lot of really interesting reading on LinkedIn and Facebook. I also belong to a lot of mailing lists from organisations

such as ACEL, NCCD, and different leadership experts, and I listen to the ABC and read the ABC news online every day.'

Sally recommends the ABC for a 'balanced insight into what is happening in general discussion around education in the broader community'.

She says the best ideas arise when dialogue with colleagues and students results in 'the handing around of well-thumbed books that share a similar vision about what we're aiming to do with our school community'.

Ideas emerge from conversation 'then we source experts via reading to help us explore them in greater detail.'

Sally also reads educationalists such as Yong Zhao and The Big Questions Institute.

'I read a lot about leadership and particularly enjoy the work of Julie Diamond, Chris Lowney and Michelle McQuid. Other than that, I read a lot for spiritual development and will always dip into John O'Donahue, Joan Chittiser, Richard Rohr.'

**Michael Victory**, the Executive Officer of the Teacher Learning Network, focuses on the 'why and how of teaching and education' with his reading.

'The why is important because it helps teachers and educators get through the difficult days when things do not go well, and the how is important, because when a teacher can articulate how they go about their daily work in the classroom, then they can see areas they can keep developing and improving. This is what we try and communicate in our work at TLN.'

He receives a daily feed of education news from sites such as *The Conversation*, *The Guardian*, the ABC, and several online education journals.

'They help me understand how a broad range of educators think, even those who have views that are diametrically opposed to my own.'

Michael is a member of the Australian Association for Research in Education, which produces a peer-reviewed journal, and several blogs and publications.

'This keeps me in touch with the latest Australian research on teaching and

education and challenges me to ensure that TLN professional development is based on good quality research.'

Michael also subscribes to *Quarterly Essay*, *The Monthly*, *The Saturday Paper*, various online digests and online journals *Eureka Street* and *Inside Story*.

This reading can have a direct effect on TLN output. Michael says articles on reconciliation by Dr Yunupingu and ALP Senator Pat Dodson in *The Monthly* 'directly influenced' the latest TLN journal *Steps to Reconciliation*. (Email TLN for a copy of the Journal – it's free for all IEU members: admin@tln.org.au)

He also picks up plenty from his work. 'TLN has a circle of 50 high quality teachers and leaders who present our courses. I am privileged to talk with some of Australia's leading educators. How can I not be inspired by their ideas?'

And he ventures outside work and the news cycle for broader insights.

'My favourite education writer is Gert Biesta; one of the best contemporary thinkers on the purpose of education. He draws on thinkers such as Dewey, and Hannah Arendt. After spending half an hour with one of their books, I am always brimming with ideas.'

## IEU LEARNING HUB

### ACCESS THE BACK CATALOGUE OF RECORDED SESSIONS AT

<https://ieulearninghub.topclasslms.com/topclass/>

All courses are listed under 'Browse Catalogue', you can then filter by 'On Demand' to view the library.

**OHS**

# Minimising work-related violence in schools

There is an urgent need to update attitudes about occupational health and safety in education. To help affect this change, the IEU is producing a guide to minimising work-related violence in schools, after conducting a thorough review of existing workplace safety guidelines in the non-government sector.

**The following are excerpts from that upcoming guide.**

Every school requires a clear, straightforward step-by-step process to minimise work-related violence and respond effectively to violent incidents. Schools are not only places of learning; they are also workplaces where every staff member deserves a safe and secure environment.

Employing authorities and principals bear the responsibility of providing a safe learning and working environment for both students and staff, and they are responsible for identifying and managing the risks associated with work-related violence. They must implement measures that either eliminate risks to students and staff or reduce them to the extent practically possible.

Staff safety in schools should be viewed as an occupational health and safety (OHS) concern, like it is in construction or at manufacturing sites.

To fulfill this duty of care, it is imperative to recognise and proactively respond to disruptive, aggressive, and potentially violent behaviour before it escalates into a crisis. In case behaviour does escalate to violence, it is critical to have the necessary skills and support structures in place to safeguard everyone involved.

There must be a comprehensive safety plan for all members of the school community, including staff. This plan must be more than a set of instructions for responding after a violent incident occurs.

The plan must be an enforceable, straightforward document outlining how the school can minimise violent incidents. It must be developed in consultation with and be made available to all employees.

Regardless of whether a student has special needs, **student-initiated violence** is a workplace hazard, and it is an employer's

legal duty to inform all staff members about any potential behavioural issues to minimise the risk of injury to the student, other students, and employees.

Using the OHS framework, each school's work-related violence plan should identify hazards, assess risks, including the likelihood and potential severity of harm, implement controls to reduce the risk, and communicate risk factors to all relevant school staff.

Unfortunately, in many schools, current OHS arrangements are often haphazard, compliance is inconsistent, and understanding of legal obligations deficient.

**Background**

Historically, many schools, including staff and leadership, have accepted violence against staff as 'part of the job'. This outdated perspective has hindered progress in ensuring worker safety in the education sector. Fortunately, the introduction of new OHS psychosocial regulations will hold even the most resistant organisations accountable.

When these regulations are enforced, not only will risk-assessment become mandatory, but schools will also be required to regularly report on their violence prevention plans and their response to violent incidents.

Surveys conducted by the ACTU in their *Work Shouldn't Hurt* campaign have exposed the grim reality of work-related violence (WRV). Workers in the education and health sectors are most likely to report exposure to traumatic events, aggressive clients or students, and workplace violence. Shockingly, three in ten workers surveyed in these industries have experienced an injury in the past 12 months, and they also suffer from the highest rates of mental illness.

A student-first approach should not

be an excuse to neglect staff safety. Safety for all must be the paramount consideration in schools.

The teaching profession has never been more demanding, with administrative burdens and parental expectations reaching unprecedented levels. The scourge of social media abuse adds a new challenge to the job. Additionally, the faulty Reportable Conduct scheme is unjustly persecuting many dedicated teachers. These stressors are contributing significantly to the growing teacher shortage crisis.

Up to date OHS practices counter staff burnout. When teachers are supported by their employers, they miss fewer days and continue working longer in the profession they love and have chosen.

**Common excuses for not maintaining proper OHS standards in schools**

There needs to be a culture change in schools, from all sides. Outdated attitudes are putting staff at risk. The following are examples of excuses given for not properly implementing staff safety measures:

**'We can't do anything because the child has a disability, and we'll be in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act.'**

**Yes**, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 s.22* makes it unlawful for an education institution to deny or limit student access to educational benefit and makes it unlawful to expel a student or subject the student to any detriment.

**BUT:** The *Disability Discrimination Act s.22 (3) & (4)* also make it clear that it is not unlawful to discriminate against a student if avoidance of discrimination would place an unjustifiable hardship on the provider.

**And** the Act provides an exemption for anything done by a person in direct compliance with a prescribed law s.47 (2).

**Yes**, the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 Act* requires education institutions to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability. (Standard 3)

**BUT:** Standard 3.4 (e) also makes clear there is no requirement to make an adjustment that is unreasonable. The determination of what is unreasonable considers the effect on anyone else affected, including the education provider, staff, and other students. In some situations, the risk of violence cannot be reduced to a safe level despite all controls, in which case the employer may be in contravention of the OHS Act by failing to provide a safe workplace.

**'We'll deal with this violent incident, but it must stay confidential.'**

**No**, it must not. *The OHS Act Victoria 2005 s.69* states that an employer must allow a Health and Safety Representative to have access to information that the employer has relating to actual or potential hazards. The only exception is access to any medical information concerning an employee without the employee's consent.

Employers must also:

- Provide such information, instruction, training, or supervision to employees as is necessary to enable those persons to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health
- Keep information and records relating to the health and safety of employees
- Consult with employees when identifying or assessing hazards or risks to health or safety at a workplace as well as when making decisions about the measures to be taken to control risks.

This consultation **MUST** involve the HSR if there is one.

## What is work-related violence?

WorkSafe defines work-related violence as 'when a person is abused, threatened, or assaulted in a situation related to their work.'

It covers physical assaults but also includes a broad range of actions that can create a risk to the health and safety of employees. Examples of work-related violence include:

- Biting, spitting, scratching, hitting, kicking
- Pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing
- Throwing objects
- Verbal threats or abuse
- Threatening someone with an object or weapon
- Armed robbery
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Online harassment, threats, or abuse
- Assault with a weapon.

Unacceptable behaviour from parents or carers can also affect the health, safety, and wellbeing of staff members. Unacceptable or unreasonable behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- Being violent or threatening violence of any kind, including physical intimidation, aggressive hand gestures, or invading another person's personal space
- Speaking or behaving in a rude, aggressive, or threatening way, either in person, via email, social media, or over the telephone
- Sending demanding, rude, confronting, or threatening

letters, emails, or text messages

- Discriminatory or derogatory comments
- The use of social media or public forums to make inappropriate or threatening remarks about the school, staff, or students.

**Student behaviour as an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) issue**

Every school must identify potential issues related to student behaviour before they escalate into dangerous actions. This is done by following the standard OHS cycle – identify the risk,

assess it, put controls in place, then review those controls.

**Identifying Student Behaviour Hazards – Key Questions to Ask:**

- What specific behaviours pose a risk to employees and others?
- Who is most at risk, and who else may be exposed to these behaviours?
- What triggers or circumstances provoke these behaviours? When and where are they likely to occur?
- What contributing factors should be considered, such as medication, the need for a strict routine, medical conditions, or diagnosed disabilities?
- Has the school screened the

enrolment information of new students to identify those with a known propensity for violent or aggressive behaviour?

- When allocating new classes, has the school reviewed past incidents to identify potential behaviour issues when parents are involved in school activities, such as excursions and parent-teacher interviews?
- Has the school considered working arrangements for school holiday periods to prevent employees from working in isolation?

2023

# The year in review

## VICTORIAN CATHOLIC SECTOR

### Consult, consult, consult: making the CEMEA work

After three long years of bargaining, the IEU finalised an Agreement for most of the Victorian Catholic sector in late 2022.

After all the delays to negotiations, it should have been little wonder that it took until halfway through 2023 for the Agreement to be signed.

The *Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2022: Diocese of Ballarat, Diocese of Sandhurst, Archdiocese of Melbourne and Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon*, (CEMEA) was approved by the Fair Work Commission on Monday 31 July and became legally binding on Monday 7 August.

The IEU had already negotiated with employers for pay increases to be backpaid to December 2021, and for many improvements to take effect from the start of 2023, including reduced Scheduled Class Time and improved paid parental leave. Many other improved conditions have been phased in over the first half of the year, including the full counting of TIL accrual. As of 7 August, however, every single condition won and improvement made was legally enforceable.

The CEMEA improvements, major changes to IR laws, and hopefully some streamlining of employer procedures should mean the next bargaining period is less onerous.

The union congratulates and thanks all the hard-working, persistent, and patient IEU members who toiled through two winters to make the Agreement a reality.

The next huge challenge, of course,

was implementation of the Agreement.

The changes won in the Agreement are far-reaching, and immediately improved the working lives of staff in Victorian Catholic education.

### The key to making the changes work proved to be a genuine desire from leadership to cut workload, and a genuine desire to consult all parties – staff, leadership, and union staff.

However, some changes, such as the fundamental change to the regulation of the working hours of teachers, were always going to take time to bed down. Schools with proactive leadership who embraced the Agreement's 30+8 and time in lieu provisions found that staff adapted readily, and the 'fencing off' of teacher time was beneficial for the entire school community. Those keen to make it work reaped the benefits.

Teething issues were inevitable,

but the union sought to send staff to as many schools as possible to assist with implementation. Staff also shared examples of schools where the new regime was working smoothly, ran extensive training sessions, especially on Consultative Committees – so important to the operation of the Agreement's measures, and continually communicated the benefits of the Agreement in person and through publications online and in print.

The key to making the changes work proved to be a genuine desire from leadership to cut workload, and a genuine desire to consult all parties – staff, leadership, and union staff. The more that Reps talked with union staff and each other, the more they understood how they could make the model work in their schools. The more genuine the buy-in shown by school leaders, the better they could achieve harmonious outcomes for staff that suited the needs of their school.

Intransigent bosses and leaders looking to cut corners or claim staff 'owed' them time in lieu ended up with unhappy staff and untenable timetables. Put simply, if employers and school leaders approach the CEMEA and their staff with goodwill, this Agreement works.

It is all there in black and white – from the outset this document's intention is to ensure 'no employee shall be required

to perform an unfair, unreasonable or excessive workload' (Clause 9.2).

And: 'The parties are committed to working together in development strategies to support the workload of Teachers and Principal...' (Clause 9.3).

With sincere engagement and cooperation, 'The Workload Agreement' can benefit all staff in Victorian Catholic schools. The alternative was a continuing spiral into workload oblivion that was costing education its workforce.

We are very confident that in the long term these changes will make a huge difference and will provide staff with a very solid new foundation to build upon in future Agreements.



Ask your Organiser for a Consultative Committees mini guide

### THE KNOX SCHOOL STAFF WIN:

- Three 3% pay increases, with backpay to February 2023
- Removal of 'soft barriers' to salary progression
- Reduced Scheduled Class Time
- 18 weeks of Paid Parental Leave for primary carers, 4 weeks for partner
- 26 weeks of Superannuation payable on parental leave.

### AITKEN COLLEGE WIN

- Pay increases for all staff
- Paid Parental Leave from 14 to 16 weeks
- A doubling of Non-Primary carer leave to 20 days
- Domestic Violence Leave doubled to 10 days
- A reduction in maximum extras
- A reduction in class sizes from 30 to 26 students
- Better protection for part-time staff around changes to time fractions and their spread of hours.

### STAFF AT TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL KEW WIN

- 1st registered agreement for the school
- Sector-leading three-year pay increase of 10.2%, including back pay from 1 Feb 2023
- Transparent salary structure for general staff
- Sector-leading workload conditions for general staff and clear workload limits for teachers
- Commitment to enshrine transparent and accountable consultation about matters that impact staff
- Training for the IEU Rep and a guaranteed spot on the Consultative Committee
- Retention of fee-concessions for employees' children.

# Victorian independent bargaining

Workload concerns are not confined to one sector - in 2023, provisions won in Catholic bargaining began influencing staff seeking better working lives in independent schools.

## At the table

At **Camberwell Girls' Grammar School** bargaining has commenced with members and employers presenting their claims.

IEU members at **Preshil** have been working with their Organiser to survey staff and develop their log of claims ready for endorsement.

Initial staff discussions and recruitment are occurring at **St Margaret's and Berwick Grammar School** in preparation for the sub-branch to formulate their claims and commence formal bargaining meetings.

At **Yarra Valley Grammar**, discussions are aiming to consolidate the separate Teachers Agreement and General Staff Agreement into one covering all staff.

Bargaining at **North-Eastern Montessori School** is concluding with the school preparing to test the deal with a vote. Concerns around the expectations of staff to attend after school, night and weekend events have not been adequately addressed by the employer.

Negotiations are progressing at **Hester Hornbrook Academy** with the aim to conclude bargaining before the end of the year. The current 2% salary increase offer is unacceptable to staff.

The employer at **Lauriston Girls' School** has improved a provisional salary increase, now offering 3%, and other claim items are being finalised. Members are meeting shortly to determine if there is support for an in-principle agreement.

The IEU claim for the removal of extras at **Overnewton** has proven a challenge for the employer. Members are meeting to discuss this key workload issue before bargaining recommences.

The IEU is at the table alongside the HSU and ASU for the **Berry Street Education and Training** negotiations. Our focus is on salary increases, parental leave and protection of school holiday periods for Education Support Staff.

In-principle agreement has been reached for the **Bayview College** Agreement, with 28 employee claims addressed and union membership growing throughout the bargaining process. Teacher salary rates 2% higher than the VGSA are seen as compensation for the TIL being offered at the state and Catholic level.

Bargaining at **Ilim College** progresses with staff considering a salary offer of 2.5% above VGSA rates. The Agreement

will reference the school's Consultative Committee and payment for extras. The camp allowance rises to \$150 and negotiations to include workload concerns within school-based policy continue. Members are meeting to determine if they support an in-principle agreement.

Bargaining for the **Lutheran Education (Victorian Schools) Multi Enterprise Agreement** has concluded without in-principle agreement. Members and staff remain opposed to the continued averaging of scheduled class time in accordance with the number of days the students attend, as well as the 'small rural school exclusion' which means teachers in 5 Lutheran schools can potentially be compelled to do between 3 and 4.5 additional hours of scheduled class time per week over the life of the proposed Agreement.

However, the lengthy negotiations have delivered some fantastic results for members. For the first time scheduled class time is included within the Agreement and automatic progression is applied to all staff regardless of their time fraction. Parental leave has been increased to 16 weeks and superannuation will be paid on 36 weeks' of unpaid leave. Partner pay has been increased to 4 weeks and the camp allowance has been raised to \$100 per night for all camps. Consultative Committee provisions are strengthened, so all 15 covered schools now need to have a functioning CC that meets no less than once a term. Improvements have been made to the General Staff classification structure and 2 more days off have been added to the 3 current Christmas shut down days.

Bargaining has commenced for **Seventh Day Adventist** schools, with the employer providing negative examples of budgeting implications if wages increase by more than 2%. There are 23 different bargaining representatives, and we are looking to find common ground within claims to ensure unity and the best outcomes for our members.

**Ballarat Grammar School** Assistants and ELC Staff bargaining Reps are awaiting the employer's wage offer. When reached, that Agreement will have the same expiry date as the Agreement covering teachers, with the intent that in the future there will be one document covering all staff.

At **Flinders Christian Community College**, bargaining for General Staff has finished with the staff vote to occur shortly. Major gains include 16 weeks paid parental leave, 2 weeks paid partner leave and 8 weeks unpaid partner leave, 2 days pre-natal leave, and natural disaster leave. The employer will recognise all public holidays that fall within the school holiday period as paid leave, bringing paid leave to 5.2 weeks. Wage increases are offered at 2.25% per annum with a 2% sign-on bonus.

Bargaining continues at **Kardinia International College** where employer and employee claims have been presented.

In-principle agreement has been reached at **Oakleigh Grammar** and voting will occur shortly. Offered salaries are in line with current VGSA rates; however, the teacher increments will be 4% above the government scale. General Staff receive increases in line with teachers and an adjustment increase to their salary scale when the Agreement is approved. A pay parity clause will ensure pay rates don't fall below Government rates in 2026 and beyond, and 16 weeks paid parental leave, an increase to paid partner leave and an increase to severance pay have all been agreed. Automatic progression and recognition of Masters qualifications will now be included, as well as a camp allowance of \$75.

A first-time Agreement is being negotiated at **NECA Education and Careers**. The employer's wage offer was rejected by the bargaining team and negotiations will continue.

**Monash Foundation Year** bargaining has commenced with claims tabled and employee bargaining Reps awaiting the employer's salary offer.

Positive gains have been made in bargaining at **Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar** for a 3-year Agreement. Negotiation topics include paid parental leave, partner leave, and family & domestic violence leave, and increased security around the alteration of teachers' time fractions. The bargaining team is considering an extensive workload policy.

A new teachers' Agreement is close at **Beaconhills College**. Improvements include the reduction of face-to-face hours at both Junior and Middle school; salary increases of 3.25% in 2024 and 2% in 2025 and 2026; a reduction in the number of extras allowable per cycle and across the year; a limit of 2 hours of meetings

per week; quarantining of 1 unallocated period per week by teachers where they cannot be directed by management; and increases to paid parental and partner leave and to DFV leave.

Bargaining at **Newhaven College, Knox School** and **Shelford Girls' Grammar School** has concluded with excellent gains for members. All are to be voted on shortly.

**St Catherine's School** negotiations are proceeding steadily. EBAs for Teachers and General Staff will be combined so staff receive the better conditions where there is variation. The school has paid a 3.25% increase from 1 February 2023 and is offering the same for 2024 and 2025, but the bargaining team is holding firm to ensure salaries remain competitive with other independent girls' schools. There have been small reductions in face-to-face teaching hours, but many issues such as extras, co-curricular loads and time in lieu remain unresolved. The school has agreed to cover employment conditions for Instrumental Music Teachers for the first time.

At **Xavier College**, after two years of negotiations, primarily focused on unpaid co-curricular workloads, IEU members at Xavier College took out a Protected Action Ballot Order (PABO), paving the way for potential industrial action. The College is proceeding to a vote which will go to members shortly.

At **Trinity Grammar**, members remained steadfast and united during 18 bargaining meetings over 15 months to achieve the school's first-ever registered Enterprise Agreement and the best salary outcome of all independent schools in 2022-23: increases of 3.5% (back paid to the start of 2023), 3.1% in 2024 and 3.25% in 2025. This, despite all the employer's protestations about the imposition of the payroll tax (while it recorded a \$10M surplus). The process ended with the school making considerable concessions, including dropping a claim for consent arbitration. The four bargaining Reps took on specific roles in research, analysis communications and negotiations to ensure the deal was done.

## Approved Agreements in 2023

- ✓ Aitken College
- ✓ Anglican Schools Commission
- ✓ Cobram Grammar and Cathedral College
- ✓ Bacchus Marsh Grammar
- ✓ Beaconhills College
- ✓ Billanook College Teachers
- ✓ Billanook College General Staff
- ✓ East Preston Islamic College
- ✓ Geelong Grammar
- ✓ Highview College
- ✓ Kingswood College
- ✓ Melbourne Girls' Grammar
- ✓ PEGS
- ✓ PLC Teachers
- ✓ PLC General Staff
- ✓ Southern Cross Grammar
- ✓ St Leonard's College
- ✓ St Paul's Anglican Grammar
- ✓ Tintern Grammar
- ✓ Trinity Grammar

2023

# Tasmanian topics 2023

In the Apple Isle, it's been a busy year for members, Reps, and IEU staff.

## Religious Education curriculum for Years 11, 12

Members made us aware of a new proposed RE curriculum to be introduced for year 11 and 12 students. They were concerned about the new curriculum's content and that its implementation could lead to a reduction in enrolments. Also worrying was the decision to make RE compulsory in both years, despite some of the material not being accredited with Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification. We are monitoring this situation, and we will continue to communicate concerns to Catholic Education Tasmania.

## Farewell Dino Ottavi

During 2023, Tasmania-based Organiser Dino Ottavi ended his long career with the union. A position based in the Tasmanian office has been advertised and a new Organiser will be commencing work with us in 2024.

## Stood Down and Shut Out

A worrying trend continued in 2023 whereby IEU members are stood down and are then blocked from any contact with their school colleagues. To quote from CET documentation directly:

'During the stand down period I am directing you to comply with the following directions:

- You will not be required to undertake any duties
- Not access any work locations, computer systems or equipment
- Contact only myself or (principal)
- Not contact any students, parents, or staff by any means, former or current

- Not discuss this matter with any other staff of (school) or CET more broadly.'

Staff are then threatened that any breach of these directives could lead to separate disciplinary action.

This aggressive communication, supposedly intended to protect the integrity of any investigation, has a negative and isolating impact on a staff member who is already facing an investigation, which could, in some circumstances, lead to the termination of their employment.

It leaves their colleagues to speculate about what they may have done to disappear so suddenly and completely. The isolation based on an allegation has a direct impact on the health and safety of the person involved, and often leads to the union being the only source of support for the person at the centre of the allegations.

The IEU has raised our concerns about this 'sledgehammer' approach to dealing with employees and insists that a more subtle and nuanced approach can be developed to protect the accused employee while maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation.

## Paid Breaks

The IEU helped several Teacher Assistants at a northern Catholic school receive back-pay for paid breaks that they had not been receiving due to an incorrect interpretation of the Catholic Agreement by their employer. Their school felt that the employees in question had not worked a consecutive period of 2.5 hours and, as a result, were being forced to take the entire recess break as an unpaid rest

break. Members received backpay on these unpaid breaks for the previous 6 years where an eligibility to a paid break was established.

## Workers Compensation Claims on the Rise

In 2023, the IEU helped an increasing number of members to navigate the complex workers compensation process. They were mainly stress-related claims due to negative interactions with colleagues, students, or parents. In many cases, claims were accepted by the employer and a positive return to work process was implemented. As always, we are grateful for the support that Worker Assist and Hall Payne provide to members requiring workers compensation advice.

The rise in workers compensation claims highlights the need for schools to have an elected Health and Safety Representative, so that employees are consulted on health and safety matters in their workplaces. During 2023 the IEU worked with several schools to commence the process of electing a WHS Rep.

The IEU also supported members in complaints against school leadership or colleagues. Many schools now seem unwilling to deal with the concerns of employees unless they raise a formal complaint, a step that many staff feel very uncomfortable commencing without the support of their union.

## Consultative Committees

During 2023, the union ran online Consultative Committee training for employee representatives, and worked with schools individually to ensure that



committees were working effectively. In schools where consultation was working well, principals were keen to get the union involved in these discussions.

## Voice to Parliament

This year, the IEU supported the Yes campaign by welcoming Lee Archer into our Hobart office space. Lee was one of the Tasmania based organisers of the Yes 23 campaign and worked with some of our Reps and members to share the message of why an Indigenous Voice to Parliament was so important. While the result did not go as hoped, we thank her for sharing her knowledge with our members and wish her the best with her next steps as an advocate for First Nations people.

## Tasmanian independent bargaining

It has been a very busy year for enterprise bargaining across the state's independent schools.

At **Fahan School**, Teachers and General Staff bargaining continues with most claims settled. Wages remain the outstanding issue with the current employer offer of 5% for the first year of the Agreement and then CPI, where CPI increases are capped at 5% and a base of 2.5%. Employees continue to push for 5% per annum for the life of the Agreement and incremental scale levels to be at least 101%

of the Tasmanian state sector. The employer has only agreed to ensure 101% is maintained in the first year of the new Agreement.

Bargaining meetings have concluded for the **Friends' School** Teachers Agreement. The school has agreed to establish a Consultative Committee, with terms of reference to be designed after the ratification of the EA. Salary rates will be set at a maximum of 2.5% for three years, due to

increases of 13% in previous two years. Superannuation will now be paid on a portion of unpaid parental leave.

Negotiations have also concluded at **Scotch Oakburn College** for the General Staff Agreement and voting will be conducted shortly. Substantial changes to the salary structure have been obtained, with extra increments and staff being reclassified to higher levels in some instances. Bus driver wait

time and junior rates have been removed from the Agreement. Paid superannuation for unpaid parental leave has been won and parental leave will now be counted as service rather than paid as an allowance. There have also been increases in domestic violence leave and the redundancy schedule.

The bargaining team are awaiting a draft of new classification structure from the employer and a final salary

offer at **St Michael's Collegiate** for the General/Childcare Agreement. Within the Teachers' Agreement the employee Reps are seeking more detail on face-to-face teaching time, guaranteed preparation time, and caps on meetings and duties. Members are also seeking the establishment of a Consultative Committee to monitor workload and issues relating to the Agreement during the life of the EA. The school is yet to provide

# The IEU's bargaining 'blitz' of Tasmanian Catholic schools

Despite having since September 2021 to serve the union with its own log of claims, the employer waited until this year to do so, further delaying an Agreement for the sector.

The union felt it was vital to update staff about negotiations and hear their concerns first hand. So, in late August, ten union staff, mostly from Victoria, spent a week visiting 27 different schools and campuses from Burnie in the North-West to Geeveston in the South. The message was simple: If you aren't a union member, join; if you are, encourage your colleagues to join you in the fight to protect and improve working conditions.

Both members and non-members were also encouraged to send an email to Catholic Education Tasmania to let them know what people working in schools thought about their proposed changes to the Agreement, and about the delay in getting a new deal done.

The team from Victoria loved their visit to Tasmania and the opportunity to engage with members. They revelled in the company of their Tasmanian colleagues and members and were thankful for the 'food and the coffee in the Hobart cafés, the Paradise Burgers in Huonville and the lime milkshakes up north'.

Some schools who heard about the campaign once it was underway made last minute calls to be included on the itinerary.

One member captured many complaints succinctly: 'We are sick and tired of waiting for the new Agreement to be finalised.'

'It is not good enough to bring new claims to the table at such late notice.'

'It is not good enough to stall for so long.'

'It is not good enough that our conditions are not matched with those working in government schools.'

'It is not good enough that an organisation so heavily focussed on social justice does not practise what it preaches.'

'Come on CET. Get your act together!'

Another member said CET's late claim to enable it to forcibly transfer staff from one school to another showed 'a complete disregard for the mental health of that staff member... and their

family and home life arrangements.'

'It treats teachers like pawns on a chessboard, being able to be moved around in order to be able to fill a void or solve an equation.'

That member said forced transfers would cause only 'misery, increased pressure, instability and fear' for teachers.

The increase to the number of days teachers are required to work was described as 'a smack in the face' for teachers.

'To push for this would be to totally disrespect all the extra unpaid work that teachers do on a continual basis, and the continual and increasing additions to their teaching loads...'

There were also concerns about attempts to lessen the scope of matters that Consultative Committees can cover in their meetings with principals.

'This is one of the few valuable means that staff have to consult and communicate with their principals in a meaningful and collective way and should not be eroded in any way.'

CET was told that worsening working conditions would exacerbate teacher shortages.

'The CET should give up stalling and pushing for these detrimental changes, and return to the table with genuine, good-faith negotiations that recognise the valuable work staff perform in Catholic schools. We have been very patient with the length of these negotiations - but enough is enough!'

The intensive visit campaign has encouraged the employer to pick up the pace with negotiations. Encouragingly, there was also solid growth in union membership because of the increased number of visits to various Tasmanian Catholic schools.

## Tasmanian Catholic bargaining 2023

In Tasmanian Catholic schools, there was hope at the start of the year that a change of employer bargaining personnel would lead to more meaningful negotiations on the long overdue Agreement.

There was heartening progress early in the year, when meetings actually took place – a step forward from 2022.

However, employers sullied the process mid-year with outrageous last-minute claims, including an increase in the number of attendance days for teachers, the introduction of a compulsory transfer policy, and a reduction in power and scope of the Consultative Committee.

IEU members in Tasmanian Catholic schools were fed up; the new claims, mostly unreasonable, further delayed negotiations on an Agreement that had expired way back in September 2021.

So, the union redoubled its efforts with leadership spearheading a 'blitz' of schools in late August, and encouraging members to email the Catholic Education Tasmania with their concerns and forward their correspondence to the union.

The result was thousands of words of frustration about teacher shortages, pay inequities and conditions still not matching those of colleagues working in government schools. (*see article alongside*).

Other major concerns of members included:

- full payment of the Lower Income Payments delivered in government schools
- a reduction in Scheduled Class Time for primary teachers
- a better School Support Employees classification and wages structure
- improved paid parental leave entitlements
- top-up payments for Deputy Principals and Education Officers
- 15 days personal leave for all staff
- workload reductions for graduate teachers and mentors
- limits to meetings
- extending the period of notice that teachers are required to give on resignation.

Despite all of this, there was some in-principle agreement reached, and improvements made in areas such as redundancy, performance and conduct management, and break periods for support staff. All these improvements should lead to increased clarity and less disputation in the future.

As we go to print, there are several important matters yet to be resolved, but it is still hoped that a new Agreement can be finalised prior to the end of the 2023 school year.

their salary offer.

For the first time, **Tarremah Steiner School** has had an EA ratified that covers all staff at the school under a single Agreement, quite a rarity for Tasmania.

The IEU has also been at the table on behalf of non-teaching staff at **Hutchins**.

The payment of superannuation on unpaid parental leave at Friends and Scotch Oakburn raises expectations for other

Tasmanian independent schools to also address gender inequality with these types of provisions.

Scotch Oakburn has also completely removed junior rates; and Tarremah and Friends have introduced special paid leave for staff of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent to participate in cultural activities. Collegiate (20 days) and Friends (15 days) will now

provide additional paid leave for staff dealing with family and domestic violence.

Most schools have now moved away from the National Employment Standards entitlement for redundancy and are offering fairer payment for experienced staff at their schools.

Our bargaining aims to match the salary rates for non-teaching staff with the rates that are available in the Tasmanian Catholic Sector.

Because we've established competitive salaries in Catholic education, schools like Scotch Oakburn and St Michael's Collegiate have reviewed their salary structure to remain competitive.

### STAFF AT **TARREMAH STEINER SCHOOL** *win*

- 3 days of paid cultural and religious leave. The cultural part of this leave was specifically designed for First Nations staff.
- Inclusion of all staff under the one Agreement for the first time.
- 1 wellbeing day.



2023



# Principals

This was a busy year for principals, with many implementing new staff work arrangements.

Principals in Victorian Catholic schools adapted to a fundamental shift in workload administration after the signing of a new Agreement.

It was great to see so many principals working constructively with staff, IEU sub-branches and Consultative Committees to make the new Agreement work in their schools. Thank you for approaching the challenge of implementation with a collaborative spirit and open mind. Colleagues facing ongoing challenges are encouraged to reach out to the union for support and advice, but it's also worth touching base with some of the school leaders presiding over successful transitions to the new model.

The union understood that the new arrangements represent a huge change for principals, especially the new framework for administering staff work hours. However, there are extensive resources to help you implement the new Agreement, including examples of best practice and Know Your Agreement explainers covering the operation of time in lieu and the 30+8 workplace model. These remain prominent on the IEU website.

Key to successful implementation is the renewed emphasis on the role of Consultative Committees, which are an indispensable asset to school leaders if a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect is established.

In 2023, COVID continued to impact schools, resulting in more teachers getting sick and an increase in mental health and behavioural

problems among students.

The ongoing staff shortage crisis continued to impact school practices and processes, as borne out by the Australian Catholic University's (ACU) annual *Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey*, which revealed that the pressure created by the national shortage of teachers was the third highest source of stress for school leaders, up from twelfth the year before.

**One in two school leaders are at risk of serious mental health concerns, including burnout and stress, and school principals are 11 times more likely to be subjected to physical violence than the average Australian.**

The survey, reported on by *The Point*, revealed that principals are grappling with 'the highest rates of burnout, sleeping troubles, stress, and depression in a decade'.

One in two school leaders are at risk of serious mental health concerns, including burnout and stress, and school principals are 11 times more

likely to be subjected to physical violence than the average Australian.

The IEU demanded that principals be allowed to take actions that deter inappropriate student behaviour, particularly where the safety of other students or staff is put at risk. This includes immediate suspension and expulsion without the threat of legal action against the principal or the school. There is also a need to inform parents of the actions that can be taken against them if their behaviour is inappropriate.

Education authorities must fully support principals and put in place process and practices that support principal action against dangerous student and parent behaviour.

Principals in our sectors said governance requirements and increased workloads were major stressors in 2023.

In Victorian Catholic schools the costly, clunky, outdated, inadequately supported, and ineffective ICON administration system was a continued source of frustration contributing to principal burnout. The IEU will continue to help school leaders dealing with ICON as it is finally phased out over the next few years.

In Tasmania, our support for member principals focused on the following areas:

- Contract renewals
- Principal wellbeing
- Reportable conduct.

The IEU Principals' Council has met regularly over the year and used the meetings as an opportunity to build a collegial network. The Annual Conference was held in Echuca this

year and was well attended by Council members and local principal members. The theme of the conference was language for leadership, with a focus on developing skills and management techniques to facilitate having important conversations. Next year's conference is expected to be held in Lancefield.

Many individual principal members were assisted with employment concerns and issues this year. They were able to access high quality legal and industrial support, and access our Principals' Officer at any time.

This year, as always, we celebrated huge contributors to education at the IEU Retiring Principals Lunch. This annual celebration of experienced colleagues is always a highlight of the year, offering a chance to reflect but also to share notes on the year.

Thank you to all the retirees – and all other principals – for your tireless efforts.

## What do IEU leaders want for Christmas?\*

Not one of them asked for a candle warmer lamp, wireless mobile mini colour printer or satin pyjamas set. Read on for IEU wishes for the holiday season.

\*And all celebrations of all denominations occurring in the school holidays.



**Cara Maxworthy, Assistant Secretary**

All I want for Christmas is for our members to be recognised and respected as professionals who contribute holistically to our society by educating and developing the next generation.



**Frances Matisi, President Principal's Council**

What I want for all educators is the reduction of paperwork and administrative tasks so we can focus our time and energy on planning and delivering quality education for our students.



**Marcus Corlett, President, Catholic Secondary Council**

Forget about work for the long break, come back knowing your situation is better with the new Agreement and that we will continue to fight to improve the work/life balance for everyone working in schools.





# Education Support Staff

In 2023, support staff continued their wonderful support of their students and colleagues. Thankfully, the IEU was able to step up and deliver some improvements for this vital educational cohort.

In the Victorian Catholic sector, the new agreement eradicated the Level 1 classification for support staff, a big positive for our Learning Support Officers in particular. The removal of Level 1 means that LSOs must be employed at a minimum of Level 2, which more accurately reflects their roles and responsibilities and rewards them accordingly. This was a big win and will bring sizeable pay increases to many ES staff.

Another major win was the clarification of the entitlement to compensation for time spent on school camps. While this has been a long-held entitlement for Education Support Staff, there has always been ambiguity around how to apply this to camps, particularly overnight.

A union-led decision in the Fair Work Commission around teacher time in lieu had the flow-on effect of removing this ambiguity: Education Support Staff now need to be compensated for every hour outside of their normal working hours that they are on camp. This should be paid at overtime rates when they are 'on duty', and at 50% when they are 'on-call' overnight. This compensation can be a combination of payments and time in lieu, but it's important to remember that Education Support Staff (unlike teachers) cannot be obliged to accept time in lieu instead of payment for additional hours worked.

In many schools, implementation of the new Catholic Agreements has been fruitful, due to genuine consultation between leadership and IEU members, and changes have been managed professionally and flexibly; in others the process was not so smooth. We encourage

all support staff to talk to their IEU Reps so their feedback can inform decisions made in Consultative Committees, which are now even more important in governing working lives in schools.

The struggle continues in **independent schools** to get better terms and conditions for support staff. Some of these schools treat their support staff with respect, as demonstrated by appropriate pay, terms and conditions. However, some schools still refuse to bargain for an Agreement with their ES staff. In some cases an employer will use the bare-bones minimum conditions of the General Staff Award to pay a 0.8 weeks per year accrual rate for Long Service Leave for ES staff while allowing teaching staff to accrue the same leave at 1.3 weeks per year. We continue to push for an end to these unjustifiable practices.

We are also bargaining hard in schools to win support staff parity of pay and conditions with staff covered by the Victorian Government Agreement. There are still too many schools where the teaching staff has parity, but Support Staff do not. We are going from school to school to organise staff in schools without a comprehensive Agreement to get involved with the IEU and work hard to secure better terms and conditions for support staff.

**Occupational Health and Safety** is coming under the spotlight due to the rising incidence of student and parental violence. Unfortunately, support staff are often the first to face such abuse, so the IEU is working with employers to strengthen the guidelines around

this issue. In Victoria, long promised psychosocial regulations are not yet in force but they should be enacted soon. These regulations place a stronger onus on employers to ensure safe working conditions and demand regular checks of procedures and identification of risks. They will also assist support staff to raise concerns in their workplace.

**Reportable Conduct allegations** are on the rise in Victoria, and we are about to see a similar scheme introduced in Tasmania. Support staff are not immune from these often spurious and career-damaging reports. The IEU made a comprehensive submission to a review of Reportable Conduct legislation 12 months ago demanding an extensive overhaul of what has become a problematic and destructive scheme, but we are yet to see the government's legislative response. Support staff of all stripes have been impacted by accusations that do not fit the criteria for reporting this sort of conduct yet send staff through a long and torturous process anyway. We will keep members posted on changes to the scheme.

**Fixed-Term Contracts (FTC)** are now under the microscope, with the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022 about to outlaw practices which keep workers with ongoing employment on temporary arrangements with inadequate entitlements. This is the result of a long union-led campaign in which the IEU actively participated.

From 6 December 2023, fixed-term contracts for two years or more (whether through a single contract or renewal) are prohibited unless an exception applies. A

fixed-term contract includes a 'contract of employment for a specified period of time, for a specified task or for the duration of a specified season'.

A single fixed-term contract must not be for a period greater than 2 years. A contract cannot be renewed if this new contract would exceed the two-year limit – and a contract cannot be renewed more than once even if the period would be less than 2 years.

Basically, this means an employer cannot ask you to enter a third consecutive fixed-term contract.

Insecure work is an issue that disproportionately affects women, who fill the majority of Education Support roles. Many schools have used fixed term contracts in an abominable way, endlessly rolling staff on to one-year FTCs, permanently denying them job security.

Members on fixed-term contracts, please note: your school is required to furnish you with a 'Fixed-Term Contract Information Statement'.

This is a great piece of legislation that affords far more protection for members to have more secure employment into the future.

As always please be in touch with the IEU if you have any questions about your working conditions.



**David Brear,**  
General Secretary

For Christmas, or whatever else you're celebrating or doing over summer, I wish members peace, rest, time with loved ones, good food and a good dose of fun.



**Maree Shields, President,**  
Victorian Catholic  
Primary Council

I would love for all educators in schools to get a PA... that would relieve so many stressors!



**Andrew Wood,**  
Assistant Secretary

A relaxing time with family and friends, free from the pressures of school, and for the 2024 school year to start to see a return to a sense of normality.



**Kylie Busk, Deputy**  
General Secretary

I want schools to be resourced to meet student needs; for staff to relax and celebrate what they've achieved this year with students; and for governments and employers to properly address the workforce crisis that is driving too many great people out of education.



**Terry Huddy, President**

I would like to see fair pay for fair work across the board for all staff in schools. I'd love more people to recognise teachers as the professionals we are and support us to allow children to grow to be the best versions of themselves. That would be the best Christmas present ever.

2023

## Training

After several years where COVID forced a mix of in-person and hybrid events and many cancellations, in 2023 the IEU was able to resume a normal training program for Reps.

**W**e offered Level 1 training for Reps new to the role where they learnt about their role within the wider IEU and how to be an effective leader for their colleagues at school.

Level 2 training refreshed experienced Reps in how to map their workplace and conduct targeted recruitment conversations. Both these programs were well attended and we look forward to welcoming even more of our Reps to such events in the future.

This year also saw the return of Regional Rep training days in Geelong, Mildura, Bendigo and Wangaratta. Reps enjoyed the opportunity to connect with peers in their area and discuss matters of local interest, while also examining how they could target and sign up new members to their sub-branch. We ended our Rep Training program with full-day sessions for Tasmanian Catholic Reps in Hobart and Launceston.

Consultative Committee training also returned to Tasmania, and we had a large contingent of Reps connect via Zoom. They learnt about how these crucial committees function to ensure the voice of staff is heard and heeded when policies are formulated in their school.

The newest addition to the training calendar in 2023 was for Victorian Catholic schools adapting to the new Agreements in their sector. Consultative Committee Reps from Sale Diocese schools connected via Zoom for a half-day session learning about how the changes to Consultative Committees should affect meetings in their schools.

Consultative Committee Reps across the other Dioceses initially connected online to learn about the changes following the signing of the CEMEA, before attending in-person at various locations throughout Term 4 to learn how to practically implement the changes.

At the first CC training session on October 11 at IEU headquarters in South Melbourne, General Secretary David Brear addressed 26 enthusiastic Reps from all over the state, many of whom had been able to attend because a day's leave for training was one of the new measures won in the CEMEA.

All participants took away with them action plans to ensure their school had a functioning and purposeful Consultative Committee implementing essential workload reforms.

**You can read a full article on the Melbourne Consultative Committee training day on page 7.**



### Pay improvements for CRTs

In 2023, CRTs in Victorian Catholic schools outside the Diocese of Sale moved to a CRT rate of \$423.23 per day, \$18 per day more than a CRT receives in a Victorian Government school. Many independent schools in Victoria are paying a similar daily rate. These rises in CRT rates come about on 1 July each year for the life of the Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020 (ESTA).

This year, the ESTA increase was 5.75% from 1 July 2023. Thanks to a significant improvement to the calculation of CRT rates in the new Catholic Agreements, the result of this increase is that a Casual Relief Teacher in a Victorian Catholic school is now being paid over \$447 a day, up from \$423 – almost \$40 a day more than daily rates in a Victorian Government school. This Award increase informs bargaining on behalf of CRTs in many independent schools.

### CEMEA changes

The new Agreement in many Victorian Catholic schools combines the previous categories of 'Emergency Teachers' and 'Casual Relieving Teachers' into a single 'Casual Relief Teachers' category.

Casual Relief Teachers can be appointed for up to 30 consecutive days in the one school. After those 30 consecutive days of employment in one school, if the employer wishes to continue the appointment, the teacher must be appointed as ongoing or, if permissible (see previous section), on a fixed-term contract.

Payment for Casual Relief Teachers has significantly increased – the casual loading has increased from 20% to 25%,

## Casual Relief Teachers

Our new Victorian Catholic Agreements had positive outcomes for CRTs, and the benefits should flow on to independent schools.

and CRTs will now be paid \$1 higher than the rate of pay at Level 5 of the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*, adjusted in accordance with Fair Work Commission decisions (1 July each year).

Know your rights: if you have been kept on as a casual relieving teacher for more than 11 school weeks or you have been put on a fixed-term contract without a reason, or you cannot identify who you are replacing, you should speak to your Union Rep or Organiser.

### Training

Professional Development can be difficult for CRTs to access because of their changeable work schedules, so the IEU offers flexible access to PD through the Learning Hub. All webinars offered live are also available On Demand, meaning CRTs can glean your nuggets of wisdom from expert education experts whenever it suits them. For more information: [www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars)

### Respect

In our Term 3 edition of *The Point*, the union focussed on the study *An Exploration of the Experiences of Substitute Teachers: A Systematic Review* published in the *Review of Educational Research*.

This international study confirmed what many casual and relief teachers already knew: 'substitute teachers are an essential part of the teaching workforce...and play an important role in the education of students, yet little is known about who substitute teachers are, the nature of their work, and how they experience substitute teaching, including the types

of supports provided and other supports they might need'.

The IEU responded by saying that schools should ensure they have a proper induction process for CRTs as they do with permanent staff, and establish a pool of CRTs they use regularly. CRTs should be included in staff meetings and professional development activities at the school level.

Under the Agreement negotiated with the Diocese of Sale, CRTs who work a minimum of 15 days in a school year in a school now receive two paid days for professional development. We welcome this commitment and hope it sets an example for other sectors.



## WOMEN AND EQUITY

# From leave wins to parliament day, another busy year for IEU women

In 2023, as always, the IEU campaigned strongly for women's rights, supporting measures to improve the lives of women and gender diverse members and continuing our in-person mentorship and leadership training.

### Bargaining

The union continued to bargain in independent schools for Enterprise Agreements which include clauses that close the gender pay gap. Examples of some recent wins in Agreements include:

- Superannuation paid on unpaid parental leave
- Limits on fixed-term contracts
- Better part-time arrangements, including limits on spread of hours/days
- Clauses which commit to working to eliminate gendered violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

In Victorian Catholic Agreements the IEU won improved parental leave, with better paid leave entitlements and superannuation paid on (and service recognised for) the first 52 weeks of leave for the primary carer. Other important provisions minimise the spread of hours for part-time workers to limit how many days they are required to attend school and limit the use of fixed-term contracts.

These changes affected bargaining in the independent sector, with similar measures finding their way into Agreements after successful bargaining. We are claiming for better provisions around payment of superannuation (payday super), reproductive leave, and flexible work arrangements.

### Anna Stewart Memorial Project

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project is a two-week leadership training and development program designed to encourage greater participation from women in their unions and to help develop female leadership.

This year, there were two intakes for IEU members, with Ash Meagher and Rebecca Long (pictured below, right) participating in Term 1, and Lisa Hunter completing her course in October. Lisa said her time with the IEU boosted her confidence and gave her a 'real sense of purpose'. Read Lisa's story about 'being an Anna' on page 10.

### International Women's Day

IEU supporters again marched with regional Trades and Labour Councils to show employers, governments, and the media that women are speaking up and demanding change.

The Melbourne event on 8 March coincided with VTHC's Women's Rights at Work (WRAW) Festival, a series of events at Trades Hall in Carlton and online covering a range of key gender equity issues including Women and Superannuation, Reproductive Leave, and Women as Health and Safety Reps.

Retiring IEU General Secretary Deb James addressed the marchers from the steps of parliament in one of her final public duties as President of the Victorian Trades Hall Council.

### WRAW Chats

Since 2016, WRAW Chats have been a valuable tool in organising union women and developing a feminist agenda for change in their workplaces. This year, we worked with Trades Hall on the launch of new WRAW Chat materials and rolled these out in schools to help women to take action for safety, respect, and equality.

### Unions Tasmania Women's Conference

On Friday 4 August Unions Tasmania held their annual women's conference and IEU members were enthusiastic participants.

The Conference, opened by ACTU secretary Sally McManus and featuring a speech from Olympic Gold medallist Chloe Dalton, focused on winning improvements for working women, and participants discussed campaigning for the Voice to Parliament.

### WRAW Conference 2023: Safe Respected Equal Organised

On Unequal Pay Day, 25 August, the Women's Rights at Work Conference provided opportunities to learn from and engage with feminist leaders during a full day of panels, workshops, sisterhood, and solidarity about the emerging issues

for women at work. The IEU sponsored several places for the conference.

### Positive changes to the Australian Government Parental Leave Pay (PLP) Scheme

Eligible employees who are the primary carer of a newborn or newly adopted child now get up to 18 weeks' paid leave on top of their employer entitlements, paid at the National Minimum Wage.

The union has engaged with members as to how flexible PLP works, providing case studies to help them understand the responsibilities of employer and employee when a worker returns to work following parental leave.

### The fight for Reproductive Leave

Reproductive health is a workplace issue overdue for proper recognition in Australia. Personal and sick leave entitlements are not always sufficient to allow women to manage menstruation, menopause, IVF treatments and other reproductive health care needs. This is why unions are now campaigning for reproductive leave and other supports to be included in workplace agreements.

### Gender Pay Gap and The Women's Gender Equality Agency

Under the Gender Equality Act (2012), non-government organisations with over 100 workers must report their gender pay gap to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

From the WGEA report, members can find:

- if their school has a policy on promotions or succession planning
- if employees have been consulted on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace
- what flexible work options are offered
- if there is a strategy for the prevention and response to sexual harassment or a policy to support employees who experience family or domestic violence.

In addition, following changes to the Sex Discrimination Act, employers now have a positive duty to eliminate, as far as possible, the following from their workplaces:

- discrimination on the grounds of sex in a work context
- sexual harassment in connection with work
- sex-based harassment in connection with work
- conduct creating a workplace environment that is hostile on the grounds of sex
- related acts of victimisation.

The ACTU has welcomed these changes 'as a positive step to ensure greater transparency and accountability by businesses regarding their gender pay gaps'. Reporting will begin in 2024.

### Women's Parliament Day focuses on Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

IEU members have been active in supporting the VTHC campaign to end the misuse of non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements in the settlement of workplace sexual harassment cases.

On Thursday 22 June, 65 women visited Victorian Parliament to share their experiences with state MPs, and to call for a ban on NDAs. The delegation met with Parliamentarians of all stripes and informed them about the horrendous effect of NDAs upon victim/survivors.

We know that NDAs cause significant harm to victim-survivors of workplace harassment and gendered violence who are effectively silenced and prevented from talking openly about what has happened to them. They also allow employers to cover up their failures by effectively sweeping the matter under the carpet and covering up sexual harassment.

As a result of action and campaigning on this matter, including by IEU members who have joined the VTHC activist network, a draft bill is almost ready to be introduced to the Victorian parliament which will, if passed, restrict the use of NDAs.



2023

## First Nations



In 2023, the union's indigenous advocacy focused on the recognition of Australia's First Nations peoples in our constitution and the establishment of a Voice to Parliament.

Like the rest of the union movement, the IEU believed the referendum on the Voice was an opportunity for the nation to embrace fairness and justice for First Nations Australians and we endorsed this position to members. The union received only a handful of objections to this stance, and many members made wholehearted contributions to the campaign.

Debate surrounding the referendum uncovered already existing attitudes, rather than 'dividing' Australia, as critics claimed. Fear of change and lack of knowledge about our history were not created by talking about the disadvantage facing Indigenous Australians and the waste of money in governing them without appropriate local input.

And political opportunists were determined to turn what could have been an important, constructive national conversation into a divisive partisan dispute.

Meaningful debates were being drowned out by those in politics and the media who have leapt at the opportunity to platform themselves and further their own careers by feeding the flames of fear and suspicion.

This relentlessly negative messaging was amplified by mainstream media (and social media) reactionaries, who labelled anyone keen on fairness and listening to the wishes of our First Nations fellow citizens as 'cultural elites', even though the call for a Voice to Parliament emerged from a representative and democratic process, which produced the landmark Uluru Statement from the Heart.

However, the proposition put to the Australian people was quite simple: constitutional recognition of the original inhabitants of this continent, and the formation of an advisory body.

Tasmanian teacher Raymond Blizzard summed up our position in *The Point*: 'This vote is not a sinister power grab, or a move designed to divide the country. (It) helps us along the path of becoming a more mature, caring and understanding nation.'

To that end, we encouraged members to have conversations about the Voice and to help spread the positive message that this change could help bridge the gap.

Research had proved that most of us are swayed on such issues by people we are familiar with; the opinions of friends and loved ones have as much influence as the best arguments of the learned and famous. So our staff and members did the hard yards, handing out fliers, knocking on doors, turning up to hand out at polling stations, sharing information through all our communication channels, promoting the Yes merchandise, and having the tough conversations.

As the union supports fairness, justice, and a better future – we would do so again in an instant.

# Industrial report

In 2023, there was more of the same for IEU Industrial Officers. Much more. Little wonder that the team expanded to five members (see the welcome to Liam Hanlon on page 5).

### Issues and Disputes

Reportable conduct investigations, misconduct allegations and professional registration matters again dominated the workload for the IEU industrial team in 2023.

There was a continued upswing in disputes and WorkCover claims, and industrial officers were heavily involved at the bargaining table for the Victorian and Tasmanian Catholic Agreements and supporting bargaining in independent schools.

Industrial Officers also assisted IEU Organisers and employers to properly implement the provisions of the two new Agreements in Victorian Catholic schools.

In the past year, the union represented members with more than 600 issues and disputes and many more sought advice that enabled them to resolve their own matters.

The fight against the misuse of fixed-term contracts continued, and we helped hundreds of teachers and support staff members achieve ongoing employment in both Catholic and independent schools. As in previous years, other common issues included 'due process' disputes; bullying and harassment; and return to work arrangements after maternity leave.

There has been another significant increase in the 'Category C Conduct' inquiries that VIT conducts during the renewal of registration period under the *Education and Training Reform Act*.

There's also been an increase in VIT re-reviewing previous indictable offences conducted during the teacher's application for renewal of registration period which require the teacher to make submissions and provide information.

We also pursued an independent school for a member whose employment was terminated whilst they were on a fixed-term contract. The matter came before the County Court and settled with the employer paying penalties for breaching the limits on fixed-term contracts.

### Tribunal and Court Matters

The IEU ran several matters in the Fair Work Commission and in Courts in 2023.

In Tasmania, the IEU filed a dispute in 2022 in the FWC about the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office's refusal to grant Communicable Diseases Leave under the Agreement to employees who

contracted COVID during the course of their employment. The matter has been resolved and the employer has agreed to pay the leave in accordance with the Agreement as interpreted by the IEU.

Two court matters involved taxation of redundancy payments to members at an independent school. One matter was resolved on review by the ATO, and the second matter has been filed for a hearing in the Federal Court. The employer taxed the members' redundancy payments as an employment termination payment (ETP) instead of a redundancy.

The IEU brought a general protections claim on a member's behalf against an independent school, maintaining that the school dismissed the member to avoid her accessing her personal leave. The matter was listed for mediation, then was settled with a very satisfactory outcome.

For over two years, the IEU has pursued a matter on behalf of a member who suffered discrimination because of her disability. After fruitless attempts at mediation, the matter will likely proceed to a hearing early next year.

### Beware the WWC/VIT trap!

In 2022, the IEU lodged a VCAT Appeal on behalf of a member who had their Working with Children Check excluded after allegedly engaging in Category C Reportable Conduct. The matter proceeded to trial this year and the VCAT found in favour of our member and her WWC was granted. This case is a reminder for teachers to be mindful of the risks associated with holding simultaneous WWC and VIT registration. In this instance, the member was subject to separate enquiries from VIT and the Department of Justice about the same matter. When a WWC Check exclusion is issued, you are unable to re-apply for a WWC Check for five years, which also precludes you from VIT registration.

### Termination of Employment

This year the IEU also represented many members facing unfair dismissal or adverse action concerns. Some of these cases required an application to the Fair Work Commission, in others satisfactory settlement agreements were reached.

The IEU continues to assist many members with VIT Inquiries and teacher registration matters.

Last year, the IEU provided a comprehensive submission to the Review of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, outlining the legislative deficiencies governing the scheme and the terrible effect these can have on the wellbeing of our members. The postponed findings of the Review will be vital to the sustainability of the teaching profession and change is urgently needed.

### Workers' Injury Compensation (WorkCover)

We've also been kept busy providing WorkCover advice and support for members injured at work. We've been lodging claims, advising on wage and weekly payments, medical benefits and other costs covered, assisting in disputes over rejected claims and Return to Work Plans (particularly in respect to modifications to hours of work, timetabling, and physical work environments), and settling lump sum claims for permanent injury and negligence cases. We referred members' Workcover disputes to conciliation, and to the union's solicitors for further advice.

There was another increase in the number of WorkCover cases the IEU dealt with this year.

### WorkCover in 2023:

- 47 new cases
- 31 cases of dispute conciliations (Union Assist referrals)
- 17 cases of solicitor referrals to Maurice Blackburn in respect to permanent injury claims and genuine dispute outcomes
- 5 cases referred to Worker Assist (Tasmania)
- 3 cases referred to solicitors (Tasmania)
- 18 cases of assisting injured members in their return-to-work negotiations with their employer.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

# New laws start levelling the playing field

A lot of younger Australian workers don't know it, but for much of the 20th Century employees had more rights than workers do today.

The right to strike was intact. There was a simple process to get industrial grievances arbitrated.

And in 2023, despite more workplace laws being in place, there are more prohibitions on worker rights than last century.

The *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs Better Pay) Act 2022* was the first real attempt to address the imbalance towards employers this century, and arguably since the 1970s.

It's important for union members to understand the progress of industrial relations reform; their future prosperity and health depends on it.

Some important areas to consider:

### 1. Right to industrial action

The IEU and Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation have done the hard work here seeking to reinstate rights previously held years ago. Effectively, employers have controlled the right of employees to conduct industrial action.

Now, members have the right to industrial action, but there's still hoops to jump through. Dr Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work, says, 'Union members can legally strike only after negotiations, ballots and specific plans for action have been publicly divulged (thus fully revealing union strategy to the employer).'

The Centre previously released research which pointed to a 'close statistical relationship' between the decline in strike action and slowing wages growth. Dr Stanford said the link was a 'no-brainer'.

'If workers don't have the ability to stand up to their employers and say we want more wages or else, then employers don't feel any sort of compulsion to take their wage demands and other demands seriously,' he said.

### 2. Multi-Enterprise Bargaining

The 2022 reforms mean it is easier to bargain collectively, so unions have the option to consider whether a group of schools with similar issues should bargain together. This makes it easier than having to organise and bargain individually in hundreds of individual schools. To be viable, that multiple-enterprise bargaining requires strong membership support.

Where the employer won't change an Agreement, the union can now go to the Fair Work Commission which can arbitrate claims (settle the dispute).

This change will make an enormous difference to our strength in Victorian Catholic negotiations. Members in this sector have long been denied the right

to take protected industrial action – in fact this example provided significant weight to the union movement's push to plug this loophole.

The first example of the new multi-enterprise bargaining regime in action is in Western Australia, where Catholic schools have gone 6 years without an Agreement and the employer won't agree to any claims. The IEU is now pursuing an intractable bargaining declaration (IBD) on behalf of Catholic school teachers which could lead to FWC arbitration for the whole Agreement.

After making the IBD and at the conclusion of any negotiating period, the Fair Work Commission makes a Workplace Determination where disputed terms and conditions can be arbitrated and determined by the Commission.

This is something of a 'test case' for the entire union movement to see how the process works, and to set a precedent that gives workers some leverage when dealing with an intransigent employer.

### 3. Flexible work arrangements (FWA)

The Term 3 edition of *The Point* carries a detailed explanation of the criteria employees must meet to be eligible for FWAs. The most important takeaway is that if an employee is eligible for FWA, the employer must have specific business grounds for refusing their request. Previously, the law left workers powerless in this area. Now, the FWC can arbitrate on flexible work arrangements.

It's time that the outdated attitudes to those with caring needs were challenged. Some workplaces still hold the attitude that 'part-time work equals part-time effort' – and education remains one of the most inflexible sectors despite featuring a majority female workforce, carrying the bulk of society's caring load.

It is important that employees who are wrongly refused flexible arrangements have the support of their unions to raise a dispute at the FWC. It's time to take aim at unfair refusals.

### 4. Closing Loopholes Bill scaremongering/propaganda

The second tranche of federal industrial relations legislation, aiming to improve worker safety and job security, is being opposed by major employer groups including the Minerals Council of Australia, which is preparing to spend \$24 million on radio, print, television, and social media advertisements to try to 'bury' the laws.

Australian Council of Trade Unions Secretary Sally McManus says workers 'desperately need these loopholes closed to get wages moving in a cost-of-living crisis'.

The new laws will increase job security, help stop wage theft, make workplaces safer, and help get wages moving again.

This includes essential changes like minimum pay and conditions for gig workers, stopping big business from using labour hire loopholes and providing more support for casual workers.

A recent example of this was the illegal sacking of 1700 staff by Qantas, which exploited labour hire loopholes during pandemic lockdowns despite receiving massive assistance packages from the federal government.

### 5. Positive duty to prevent discrimination and harassment

After changes to the Sex Discrimination Act, organisations and businesses now have a positive duty to eliminate, as far as possible, the following unlawful behaviour from occurring:

- discrimination on the grounds of sex in a work context
- sexual harassment in connection with work
- sex-based harassment in connection with work
- conduct creating a workplace environment that is hostile on the grounds of sex
- related acts of victimisation.

Crucially, the 'harassment' referred to above includes harassment by students, parents and other members of the school community. These legal changes are designed to ensure employers make workplaces safe and respectful, and have a responsibility to take action on gender equity.



## KEY CHANGES AT A GLANCE:

### Enterprise Bargaining

#### Opportunities:

- There is a new right for employees engaged in multi-employer bargaining to take legal industrial action in support of their claims
- There is a capacity to initiate multi-employer bargaining in areas where we previously had to bargain school by school
- Where protracted bargaining doesn't result in agreement, we can seek to have our claims arbitrated by the Fair Work Commission.

#### Challenges:

- The process of Fair Work Commission for approval of industrial action is slow and bureaucratic
- Where employers oppose multi-employer enterprise bargaining, we will have to demonstrate that we have the support of over 50% of employees in order to commence negotiations for a new Agreement
- When the Commission arbitrates intractable bargaining disputes it determines all outstanding claims, (including those made by the employers).

### Fixed Term Contracts

#### Opportunities:

- Most employers will no longer be able to use revolving fixed-term contracts as a method of employment
- Employees should have an opportunity to convert to ongoing employment.

#### Challenges:

- The legislation is flawed and needs to be amended to deliver on the government's commitments.

### The Positive Duty on Employers to prevent Discrimination and Harassment

#### Opportunities:

- Employers must address and rectify existing discriminatory practices, including underrepresentation of women in leadership positions
- Employers must also act to prevent harassment by students and parents.

#### Challenges:

- Resourcing compliance
- Most employers will do the bare minimum and redress is through complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

## GREEN SCHOOLS

# Young activist pushes for duty of care climate change law

Climate activist and former School Strike for Climate leader Anjali Sharma, 19, is spearheading a campaign to introduce a duty of care to protect young people from the impacts of climate change.

Anjali Sharma, now a first-year law student, is working with Senator David Pocock to legislate the duty of care through the Federal Parliament. After welcoming the IEU's support for the School Strikes, one of which was addressed by then IEU General Secretary Deb James in her role as President of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, Anjali has urged members to sign a petition supporting the Bill.

'As a union that holds a public profile in mainstream society, you have a unique ability to reach the general and working public and focus attention on issues of social and intergenerational justice. Your support could be invaluable in assisting us with passing this bill and enshrining a legislative mechanism that safeguards the futures of generations of children to come.'

'Like so many of my friends, I'm increasingly scared about my future. The past few years have seen temperatures that have broken records and climate fuelled natural disasters unfolding across the world. And all evidence shows us this will only get worse unless we act. We are at a crossroads in history, the government

can either act in accordance with its duty to young people to deliver us a safe and liveable future or set us on a path to climate catastrophe.'

The *Duty of Care Bill* is an amendment to the *Climate Change Act*. It would legislate a duty to consider the health and wellbeing of children in Australia when making decisions contributing to climate change and prevent the government from making certain decisions if they pose a material risk of harm to the health and wellbeing of current and future children in Australia.

The Bill has been referred to the Senate Environment and Communications Committee and will be debated in parliament next year.

Senator Pocock and Anjali are seeking 'broad and widespread public pressure' to encourage the federal government to pass the bill.

'It is well established that the policy decisions in relation to climate and fossil fuels that are made in the next decade will have ramifications that affect the health and wellbeing of current and future children for generations to come,' says Anjali.

Pocock, Independent Senator for the ACT said, 'We should be thinking about young people when we make decisions. It's our duty as politicians and policy makers to make sure the climate young people and future generations inherit is one they can live and thrive in. I want to be part of a parliament, and more importantly a country, that takes this responsibility seriously'.

### What does the *Duty of Care Bill* do?

The Bill seeks to add the two conditions requiring children's welfare to decisions made under six existing pieces of legislation that facilitate the financing and development of projects that could harm the climate.

The Australian government currently has no duty of care to protect young people and future generations from climate change.

The *Duty of Care Bill* builds on a legal case that Anjali Sharma took against the Minister for the Environment.

Although that case was initially successful, the federal government appealed the decision, and it



Pictured: Anjali (left) with former IEU General Secretary Deb James and Ella Simons at a School Strike 4 Climate rally 2021

was overturned.

The judgement stated that the judiciary could not impose the duty and it was a 'core' matter for the executive and Parliament.

Anjali and Senator Pocock felt the case proved the need to 'embed in legislation the principle that governments should care about the health and wellbeing of children'.

**Read more about the Duty of Care legislation at: <https://adutyofcare.davidpocock.com.au>**



## GREEN SCHOOLS

## An IEU member with a passion for environmental activism

Teacher Rob Mahoney, a 10-year IEU member, was a street level activist during the 70's and 80's and more recently has felt the need to become involved in environmental protests again.

He says he'd been a 'Slactivist' for years, 'signing petitions and going on the occasional march', but not as involved as his family.

'My parents and my partner's parents had long been involved in activism, my parents in NZ Labour Party grassroots organising and Judy's parents in Environmental/First Nations and social justice advocacy, so it felt right to finally be taking the baton from them.'

'I'd known about the threat of global warming for most of my life so I'm as guilty as most for not taking it seriously enough.'

That is, until 2019, when he joined Extinction Rebellion (XR) and PECAN, the Port Phillip Environmental Coalition.

'XR has three demands to our politicians: Tell the Truth, Act Now, and form Citizens Assemblies to advise Government on climate action. We believe the climate movement must place itself beyond politics and include all sectors of society. Climate activists

are facing increasing state oppression and media bias, hence the importance of voices from all across civil society speaking out on the Climate Emergency.'

### Rob says climate action is everybody's cause 'but not everybody is aware of it yet'.

Rob says that for him and many others, climate disaster is 'the overriding issue of our time' and our lives are in imminent threat from the ensuing chaos that is mounting up around us all over the world.

'We are in an increasingly dangerous situation which is not being treated honestly by our leaders as they continue to subsidise and open new fossil fuel

projects and allow emissions to increase while essentially paying lip-service to climate action.'

Rob says the time is now for environmental advances.

'Because of the clear climate policies of the crossbench and the vulnerability of Labor in marginal electorates, we are hopeful that strong pressure can be brought to bear over the coming months, given the dire predictions for the summer and beyond.'

### How to help

Rob says climate action is everybody's cause 'but not everybody is aware of it yet'.

'We need everyone. Building a mass movement as quickly as possible is the only way we can see to bring about the huge and swift societal change that is now needed to address climate disaster.'

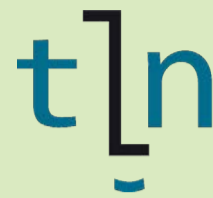
'We need union members to come on board and add their weight to our numbers in very short order. I've been

involved in mass movements in NZ in which a broad range of progressive civil society groups, including unions, mobilised thousands of people up and down the country in sufficient numbers to make their voices heard.'

He says Extinction Rebellion has scientist friends and communicators who would be willing to brief members on climate change and ways we can still mitigate the disasters that threaten us.

**Here's a link to the Extinction Rebellion Australia website where you can find out more: <https://ausrebellion.earth/>**

# Time for reflection



Teacher  
Learning  
Network

In 2023, I've written about the unique bonds teachers form with students and how we build a community for learning.

It's now time to consider the importance of reflecting on those relationships and that learning community.

If you have read previous articles in this series you will know that I have an unusual compass point; much of my thinking about education has been influenced by research into Paul of Tarsus (or Saint Paul) who I describe as the first teacher of the first millennium. He is not the first person that people think of as an educator, but he was a changemaker, and that is a great description for our role as educators.

In his work, Paul consciously chose to engage in a relationship with people and each interaction became an education encounter. By entering into a relationship with people, and communicating with them through his letters, he brought about a change in people's actions. He encouraged people to see their life anew.

The life that Paul lived with them was not a random sequence of actions, but actions chosen with intent and purpose. A key to his success was his constant reflection on his own actions and their impact on others and his willingness to reflect with others about how their actions impacted the lives of others.

## What does that mean for me as a teacher?

As teachers our core purpose is to build a relationship with our students where they see themselves as learning with us. In that process our students learn to see themselves anew; as people who can engage in the world with confidence, because they are numerate, they are literate, they have an appreciation of the arts and music, they have knowledge of history and the natural and built world in which we live. If we are successful, they will see themselves as people who can change the world for the better.

How do we know if we have been successful in helping our students live meaningful lives? The reality is that we won't always know because many students may only flourish several years after our interactions with them. However, we can still reflect on how we interact every day, and our experience can tell us when we have made a positive difference.

## What does that mean in practical terms?

I encourage every teacher to build 5 minutes into their day to reflect on their daily work. At the end of the day before you leave school; on your way home on the bus or train (not the car where you

need to concentrate); after your own children are settled for the evening and/or you have finished your basketball game; certainly before you start your corrections. Ask yourself these type of questions:

1. Who did I connect with today?
2. How did I change their view of themselves?
3. Who did I miss today and how could I connect with them tomorrow?
4. What is one thing I can do to improve how I connect with my students tomorrow?

Apart from seeing new opportunities for your work, it is also great way to affirm the good things you have achieved in your day.

## Can I reflect with others?

Every teacher and educator is a member of a staff group and one or more teams. I encourage every leader to commence their meetings with some reflection questions. There are so many ways it can be done, but the important thing is that it is done publicly, so it generates conversation across the team. Some questions you could adapt for your team include:

- What have we done well since the last time we met?
- Have we moved closer to our goals as a team?
- What can we do differently, or better, to

keep improving as a team?

- How would we feel if we moved closer to achieving our team goals?

If you are in a team where there is strong trust and you want to push the boundaries, you can ask more challenging questions:

- When did we exercise power in our work? What was the impact of exercising that power?
- When have we been vulnerable in our work? Did that allow others to grow and change?

Yes, we must help our students grow their knowledge and skills as required by the curriculum, but the core of our work as teachers lies in asking: 'How are we helping our students to grow as people in their relationships?'

That is powerful idea for us to reflect upon.

## To the IEU Learning Hub

Don't forget, to grow your own knowledge and skills and to reflect on your own professional relationships, go to [www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars](http://www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars). You will find many prompts for reflection.

**Michael Victory**  
TLN Executive Officer  
[mvictory@tln.org.au](mailto:mvictory@tln.org.au)



## MY SIDE GIG: MUSICIAN

### Music, family, teaching: Raymond Blizzard, St Brigid's New Norfolk, Tasmania

First up in this occasional series, we speak to popular muso, teacher, and life-long unionist Raymond about his passion away from school.

Music definitely came first for Raymond Blizzard.

'I've been playing and singing my whole life. Teaching, well that's a relatively recent thing. I went to university at age 35 to become a teacher and this year marks my 20th year in the profession.

'I grew up in a large, boisterous, musical household. My father played guitar and sang. My late eldest sister Pat was heavily involved in the Burnie Musical Society for years and was a regular country and western performer on the coast. My brother Tim is a singer/guitarist and we basically learnt to play guitar together.'

Even 'non-musical' Blizzard siblings are music-lovers and 'grab a tambourine' when the family gets together.

Raymond plays solo every Friday and in groups The LoverBoyz and End of Conversation. He also performs in a duo called Bliss with his niece Koby Blizzard. But 'the absolute best days' of his life are when family band The Blizzards play. That

group consists of Raymond, his brother Tim, nephews Koby and Cale, and Raymond's children, Ben, Callum, and Georgia.

The Blizzards can't play as often as they'd like because Georgia is a successful actress, based in Sydney. She starred in the international TV mini-series *The Singapore Grip* and independent Aussie film *Emu Runner*.

## Balancing music and work

Raymond is grateful to have found ways to express himself artistically while getting the opportunity to work with students.

'I have been fortunate to have found like-minded souls to share my musical passion with, and even luckier still to be surrounded by a family that shares this passion.

'Professionally, teaching gives me an excellent work/life balance. I'm doing something I love to do (work with children, trying to make a difference) but I still have an opportunity to explore my passion.'

## Unionist from the first

Raymond says he joined the IEU as soon as he joined the teaching profession.

'My family have always believed in the union movement, and I understand that unity is our strength. I don't begrudge those that don't join the union movement, everybody has the right to choose, but I also hope they understand that the union works for the betterment of all workers, members or not – and a union is only as strong as its membership base.

'Sadly, without unions there is no way of protecting the rights of working people.

'All rights and conditions that have been won over the years are constantly in peril and is only through a strong and powerful union movement that workers can be protected.'

Raymond says the IEU provides 'support and leadership, ensuring our rights and the rights of all those I work with are protected'.

## Getting the (family) band together

All Raymond's children share his passion for music and performing.

'I doubt that I have influenced their choices very much, but I am pretty sure that they have seen the joy that music continues to bring me.'

Georgia is the most recognisable family member, thanks to roles in major films which took her 'across the country and across the world' and watching her journey has given Raymond an 'enormous sense of pride and joy'.

But those Blizzard Family gigs are a bigger pull than stardom!

'As much as she enjoys acting, and she does love it, the most joy for all of us comes when we can all get together and get the family band back together!'

## Getting fired up to stop ‘spot fires’: the IEU makes a Strategic Plan

Educators know all too well how being preoccupied with day-to-day operations can relegate Big Picture thinking to the backburner.

‘Spot fires’ consume staff attention until the cause of all the little fires cause gets forgotten. Which means more day-to-day spot fires...

From listening to members, the union’s staff are well-informed about the perils of failing to stop to take stock of where you are and where you want to be as an organisation.

On 27 October, IEU staff and Committee of Management members turbocharged the construction of a Strategic Plan for the union with a day-long session facilitated by expert union analysts Reveille Group.

‘We want this strategic plan to test what we do; we want it to be ongoing and we want to keep it alive in the organisation. We need to have a commitment to referring to it, to not letting it sit in a drawer. The goal is to implement it thoughtfully and carefully,’ said IEU General Secretary David Brear, when introducing the day’s analyses.

Ten groups of six were hard at work all day responding to questions about

where the union wants to be in three years, its major issues and the best ways for it to fulfill its mission of delivering best for members.

**‘They were testing our commitment to real change, to thinking about our work at all levels.’**

The process will also involve one-on-one and group interviews, and should deliver that guiding document early in 2024.

Deputy General Secretary Kylie Busk said the top priority of the new leadership team is the implementation of a Strategic Plan to guide union policymaking and ensure that our work efficiently and effectively supports IEU members. Reveille was chosen for their ‘vast’ experience working with unions

on planning, campaigning, developing leadership, and transformative change.

David and Kylie were impressed by the fact that when they interviewed Reveille about the role with the IEU, it felt more like ‘they were interviewing us!’

‘They were testing our commitment to real change, to thinking about our work at all levels.’

Union staff found the most important aspect of the day was the ‘immensely valuable’ involvement of members of Committee of Management. Their input ensured that every discussion was informed by the day-to-day experiences and insights of IEU members working in each sector.

Convenors Troy and Kristen asked the IEU to answer the tough questions about their purpose, values, and challenges and asked staff to consider their blind spots and unconscious biases.

Then it was time to discuss the details, including the unique pressures on Reps; the need to ‘normalise’ unionism to a generation unfamiliar with its benefits; how to best access

the voice of members; and the eternal tension between individual representation and collective campaigning.

The day asked:

‘Where are we now?’

‘Where do we want to be?’

‘How do we best deliver positive change for our members?’

The answers will guide where the union strategically places its resources in the future.

As Kylie said, ‘We need to be stretched to our limit – but not to snapping point!’

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**MEMBER COMMENT****So, your students are out of control...**

Garry Warren shares his top classroom management tips for teachers.

**THE IEU'S VIEW:** *The IEU has seen a sharp increase in situations where teachers are unreasonably blamed for student misbehaviour. Conduct and performance allegations are being made and even Reportable Conduct reports lodged in matters which would previously been dealt with as student behavioural issues.*

*We will continue to vigorously defend members in these scenarios, but clearly it is more important than ever for teachers to ensure that their classroom management strategies are consistent and defensible.*

School administrators across the country have been heavily criticised of late for the poor behaviour of students.

School leaders do need to do much more to tackle this crucial issue, and I believe there is much that needs to be addressed by school administrators with respect to this very important issue. However, after reading several pieces in the media lately, I can't help but think that classroom teachers could improve their lot significantly by implementing some very simple strategies.

As an educator with almost 40 years' experience teaching and coaching youths and adults, I feel well placed to share the basic principles that have served me very well over the decades and continue to do so in these very challenging times.

Much of this advice is nothing more

than 'good old common sense', but keeping it simple is often the most effective strategy. My 'Golden Rules' (in no particular order) for classroom survival are:

**1. Punctuality**

Wherever possible, be at your classroom to greet your students as they arrive. This demonstrates to the class that you are prepared, and you take your job seriously. If you cannot be punctual, how can you expect your students do something you are not willing to do yourself.

**2. Set your standards and expectations from Day 1**

From the outset, you need to state what your expectations are, and you need to be uncompromising with respect to maintaining them. Students need to know that once they enter your classroom they are on 'your turf'. You are outnumbered, so the sooner you establish who the 'alpha dog' is in this dynamic, the better.

**3. Don't shift the goalposts**

Boys, in particular, not only need boundaries, they want them. When teachers change expectations or rules without notice, students become confused and lose their reference point.

**4. Deal with troublemakers quickly**

The troublemakers will identify themselves early... often in the first five minutes of their first class with you. How you handle them in this opening skirmish will dictate how this class runs for the rest of the year. Under no circumstances should

you try to ignore them as many would suggest. Confront them with the cold detachment of someone who has dealt successfully with this type of behaviour a thousand times in the past. Ask them to meet with you at lunchtime or recess to discuss their behaviour, and in the future have them sit at the front of the class near you and away from their co-conspirators. While many students are happy to waste your time, it's another matter if you are prepared to waste some of theirs. If you deal successfully with the ringleader, the rest will soon fall into line.

**5. Don't play favourites**

Students have a very strong sense of justice, and they hate it when they sense that other students receive preferential treatment for no reason.

**6. Never make a threat you are not prepared to carry out**

Students will be looking for chinks in your armour. If you fail to deliver on a consequence for poor behaviour that you have implemented, they will lose respect for you. 'Firm but Fair' should be your mantra. Remember, you are not there to be their buddy, you are there to educate them. If you do your job properly, a relationship based on mutual respect is likely to develop anyway.

**7. Never fire your 'big gun' first**

Teachers who consistently scream at students from day one are destined to fail. While it is sometimes difficult not to raise

your voice in a classroom, it should be a last resort, otherwise students will soon become desensitised, and you will have nowhere to go. The 'less is more' approach is best when it comes to how often you raise your voice when addressing students.

**8. Teachers don't get to 'pick and choose' which rules they enforce.**

Teachers who choose not to enforce basic school behavioural policies relating to phones, headphones, jewellery, or uniform, forfeit the right to complain about the behaviour of the students in their classrooms. As we all know, if any policy relating to student behaviour is to be successful it requires an 'all hands on deck' approach. Staff who refuse to engage in this process are undermining the attempts of colleagues to bring about positive change. Everyone suffers as a result.

**Garry Warren is an experienced educator and writer teaching at a private boy's school in Melbourne.**

**MEMBER COMMENT****Two claims that should be in every EBA**

After a 24-year career in the Victorian government and independent schools, senior teacher *Dean Haydock* knows what workers must insist upon in any Agreement.

I've been involved in countless Enterprise Bargaining Agreements in independent schools, negotiating claims for improved redundancy models, greater parental leave, increased fee remission, reduced co-curricular duties and extras, and decreased face-to-face teacher and class sizes.

Out of all the claims, however, there are two above all others that I believe must be negotiated and placed into every school EBA.

1. Salary that is set and paid through the life of the current EBA, that includes payment during further negotiations of future EBAs
2. Teacher workload – (at secondary level) must be negotiated in periods of minutes rather than time itself.

Why are these two so important?

Well let me share with you my experiences when these two aren't included.

At one school where negotiations were taking place, EBA representatives fought long and hard to have the claim 'that staff will always receive salary 3% above VGS schools' accepted. Unfortunately, COVID hit and an EBA was never signed.

Fast forward to 2022/23 when negotiations for an EBA were in full swing and school staff were now owed nearly two years of back pay as no claim guaranteeing pay increases had been written in. Unfortunately the school then used this as major bargaining tool and refused to genuinely negotiate any real improvements to working conditions. As interest rates began to rise and the cost of living sky rocketed, negotiations stalled, with the school pushing for a vote four weeks before the Christmas period when staff income was severely challenged.

The school's stance was that if staff signed the EBA then a pay rise would ensue and backpay would be paid.

I don't think I need to explain the outcome.

It was a shameful display of so called 'good faith bargaining' where a school was withholding pay already earned by staff to influence an EBA, without negotiating any improvements to working conditions. And the reality is that if no clause is written into an EBA around salary rises throughout negotiations, schools can stall EBAs and always use this as a bargaining technique.

Very few schools will negotiate workload improvements, but they are imperative. In the most recent round of VGS bargaining, there was a reduction in face-to-face teaching to 18 hours in 2024, in an attempt to decrease teacher workload. The aim was to reduce the number of classes a teacher taught, thus decreasing the amount of associated work involved in preparing for a class. However, in some cases this did not eventuate. I have heard stories where VGS schools instead simply 'knocked' two minutes off from each class to achieve a time reduction, but no reduction at all in workload.

Another school I know used the figure of 38.25 hours of face-to-face teaching per fortnight. This roughly equated to 38 periods of 55 minutes duration per fortnight. However, this school however had no transition times between classes: period 1 would finish at 9.55am and period 2 would commence at the same time – 9.55am.

The school introduced a transition period of five minutes between classes which everyone agreed was a great idea, until

teachers found the number of periods now being taught had increased from 38 to 40, increasing workload dramatically. The school's stance was that because teachers were no longer teaching face-to-face for those periods of class transition then that extra 5 mins calculated over a working week equated to an extra period. The staff you can imagine were ropeable.

The moral here is that time can always be manipulated however set periods of minutes cannot.

For your information, EBA representatives at our school are currently negotiating these two claims:

- That all school staff will be paid a salary 4% above VGS school's for the life of the current Agreement and through further negotiations of future Agreements
- That teacher face-to-face teaching will be 36 periods of 55 minutes.

Good Luck.

**IEU Member Dean Haydock is a senior teacher at a Victorian independent school.**



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## LABOUR HISTORY

# The ACTU's historian

It would be remiss of this column not to recognise the sterling work being done by the union movement's official Historian.

'Without our history, how do we know who we are?' asks Dr Liam Byne, who has been the ACTU Historian since 2019.

'Our values and identity have been inherited from the generations of struggle that came before us. Throughout Australia's history workers have come together, created unions, and taken collective action through our unions to make transformative change. This change has made Australia a fairer and more decent country (though we still have a way to go!)

'History acts as our northern star – it can help guide us and orient us as we face the major challenges of our time. It is how we know who we are.'

Such words remind us how important it is for all organisations, but especially schools and unions, to engage with their stories and embrace their history, good and bad.

Liam says we can't return to the past (and we shouldn't try to) but we can learn important lessons from it.

Those lessons include things we got right, but also our mistakes.

'If we ignore our history we will be constantly trying to remake the wheel, ignorant that we have a store of knowledge and experience to build upon.

'One of the most important messages from our history is a simple, but fundamental, one: change is possible. It can inspire us to act today knowing we can make change, as many generations of

unionists before us have done.'

Liam had been a union member and activist for many years, and participated in a range of progressive campaigns, before completing a PhD in labour movement history and working as a casual academic. In 2018, he was appointed the ACTU's National Activist Organiser, which he calls a 'massive privilege'.

'After the 2019 election I was asked if I would be willing to stay on and work as the ACTU Historian. I still pinch myself – it is hard to believe that I actually get to work in such an amazing role.'

His main tasks are to ensure the union movement captures its history and to spread awareness about union accomplishments and values.

'Having been a teacher at university, I am particularly passionate about finding ways to communicate this history with younger people who haven't had extensive engagement with the union movement,' Liam says.

There have been historians of the ACTU before who have been commissioned to write specific histories, and there are other historians who work in the movement such as Neale Towart who works as the Heritage Officer and Librarian at Unions NSW, but Liam is the first ongoing member of ACTU staff to work as a dedicated Historian.

He says history is also important to the union movement because it is a 'record for us to stand on'.

'We have around two centuries worth of examples of workers coming together in their unions and taking collective action to win improvements in their rights and conditions.

'When we are explaining the benefits of unionism to our workmates who haven't joined yet, having such a long and proud record to draw upon can be a great way to enhance our credibility.'

He says if we don't know our history, we can't properly assess what does and doesn't work in a modern campaign.

'We all are learning from past experiences even while adapting and innovating for our own time. So much union campaigning is based on techniques and tactics that have been passed down to us. Knowing what has been tried before, what has worked and what hasn't (and why this is) can be really powerful in determining how to approach campaigning today.'

Liam says unions should be preserving 'everything'.

'I am an historian, so obviously I am going to say that.'

'But personally I think the most important thing to capture is stories. Unionists have taken action and made history. The full scale of the change unionists have made is simply extraordinary: change in workplaces and change in broader society.

'But so many of these stories can be lost. Working people make history, but

this isn't always captured in the history books. If we don't take the time to record and capture these stories we risk losing them. A lot of unions are doing fantastic work with interviews and podcasts and oral histories and other ways of capturing the stories of our movement's elders. The more of this we do the better.'

Liam's current work integrates history and historical narratives into ACTU social media, its education and training programs, and events. He also engages with universities through history courses and develops materials that tell the union story, such as the monthly history newsletter 'Rebel Chorus'.

He's also writing a book on union history which he hopes to finish in 2024 which will explain what unions are, their accomplishments, and their enduring values.

'It is being written for general audience, especially younger workers who don't have as much experience with and knowledge of unions.'

'I also work across ACTU campaigns to continue to contribute to supporting the activism of union members. I think it is so important that our history does not become passive but is actively incorporated into the history making union members are doing right now!'

**Sign up to Dr Liam Byne's Rebel Chorus newsletter by sending an email to: [atui@actu.org.au](mailto:atui@actu.org.au)**



## TRADES HALL

# Saying yes to justice and opportunity

In 2023, the Victorian Trades Hall Council devoted much time, effort, and love to activate the Voice to Parliament Yes vote, coordinating thousands of phone calls, street stalls and other events.

**T**hat advocacy was just one facet of the VTHC's broad-ranging work this year.

### Ending the misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

Trades Hall campaigned strongly for state legislation to ban the use of NDAs to silence victims of sexual harassment.

On Thursday 22 June, VTHC coordinated 65 women to visit Victorian Parliament to share their experiences with state MPs, and call for change, stating: 'Victim-survivors, predominantly women, are disempowered by being forced to stay silent. To end sexual harassment at work, we need to end the silence and hold employers accountable.'

'We need legislation to restrict the use of NDAs. They should only be used when requested by victim-survivors to protect their own confidentiality and victim-survivors should be allowed to decide to speak out later.'

### The health and safety impacts of AI and Intrusive Workplace Surveillance

In October, VTHC ran a webinar examining the effects of ever more sophisticated forms of surveillance, and the use of artificial intelligence and algorithmic management.

'These technologies vary across industries and include call-time logging, eye tracking, or technologies that can track time-on-task. Some technologies even purport to be able to monitor workers personality traits and mannerisms and use these to determine their customers. These technologies pose significant risks to workers health and safety and regulation hasn't caught up.'

Matthew Scherer from the Center for Democracy & Technology discussed the impact of workplace surveillance and AI on workers' health, the current capabilities employers have with regards to surveillance technology and the reforms required to ensure that workers health, safety and privacy is protected.

### Injured Workers Support Network Social Hangout

Trades Hall convened these online get togethers every fortnight, offering a forum for injured workers to discuss their issues and plan for changes to the WorkCover system. The hangout offered 'a place to catch up, make new friends and support each other through the WorkCover experience'.

### Advocates Unleashed: Industrial Advocates Conference

Union Industrial Officers and Legal advocates gathered at the VTHC's major legal event, which brought together experts in Fair Work Commission advocacy, law & organising, industrial relations reform, and professional practice.

Speakers included Iain Ross AO, former President of the Fair Work Commission: 'How to be an effective advocate' and Nicole McPherson, National Assistant Secretary of the Finance Sector Union: 'Law and Organising'. Such events are vital for ideas

sharing, solidarity and the dissemination of best practice strategies.

### Union Summer & Winter

These paid internships are designed specifically to introduce young people to unionism and give them first-hand experience of what unions do. Many prominent unionists, including current IEU staff, have undergone this formative training experience. Union Summer runs for 3 weeks each February, with the winter program running for 2 weeks each July.

**Young IEU members are encouraged to apply at: [www.weareunion.org.au/union\\_summer\\_winter](http://www.weareunion.org.au/union_summer_winter)**

## The '10 Commandments': IEUA priorities with education authorities

The IEU lobbies an array of government and statutory authorities seeking better outcomes for education staff. Since the election of the federal Labor government the union's input has been actively sought, rather than avoided, for the first time in a decade.

The decisions made by nation's regulatory and research organisations help determine what life is like in schools for IEU members, so the union's work attending meetings of these bodies and making submissions to them is crucial.

If teacher feedback doesn't inform such bodies, as happened for a long and challenging period when unions were sidelined under coalition federal governments, there are poor outcomes in schools, particularly on workload intensification.

During that decade of exclusion, teacher workloads spiralled out of control as more and more policies, tasks, and administrative burdens fell on already overworked staff, distracting them from their core job in classrooms.

Under the Labor government, we've gone from famine to feast. Previously excluded from policymaking, unions are now being invited to take part in a lengthy list of initiatives. The IEUA has already participated in 11 major inquiries

or reviews since the election of the Albanese government, and by November this year had issued 17 position papers on topics ranging from AI regulation to anti-discrimination laws.

While the extensive review of so many aspects of education is welcome, the glut of government and statutory activity has also presented unexpected challenges. In some cases, it has been unclear whether state or federal governments or bodies were responsible for particular areas. New departments took over administration of matters educational, meaning stakeholders had to learn entire new processes and meet a new range of bureaucrats, some of whom had no educational background.

The government has at times struggled to keep up with its own ambitious agenda. In such an environment, it is easy for meetings to be less productive than they should be.

Consequently, it became vital for the union to sharpen its focus, and the IEUA compiled a list of 10 key principles which inform and streamline our advocacy. Here

they are (in summarised form):

1. Elimination of duplicative and excessive compliance requirements is critical. Employers must be dissuaded by government from applying additional overlays.
2. All existing and proposed initiatives should be subject to a workload impact assessment, in consultation with teachers - not just initiatives arising from the NSRA.
3. Nationally endorsed curriculum or assessment resources, (or resources approved by employers) must be provided to teachers, giving them the option to adopt as is, subject only to differentiation.
4. Guaranteed support of early career teachers must include structured release time for both early career teachers and their mentors.
5. Shortcuts to solve teacher shortages that weaken the integrity of teacher qualifications or dilute the standing of the profession are not shortcuts.
6. Until Early Childhood Teachers are given the same pay, conditions, and access to registration as teachers in schools, the ECEC sector will continue to struggle.
7. Support Staff are an essential component of successful learning outcomes for students and alleviation of workload burden on teachers. Their work must be valued through appropriate remuneration, training, and secure employment.
8. Transparent delivery of funding to areas of need, providing easier access to allied health services and a commitment to school-based staff and student wellbeing support, is essential.
9. Data collection must be a tool to address disadvantage rather than another workload burden.
10. The profession must maintain control of the application of generative AI in schools.

This hitlist of most relevant topics helps keep the union on point as wide-ranging discussions about education progress.



Nancy, Teachers Health member

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## Union movement seeks to ban lethal stone

The ACTU has resolved to take all necessary steps to end the use of engineered stone by the middle of 2024, if government bans are not in place by then.

This will mean union members will not unload engineered stone, which has been described as ‘the asbestos of the 2020s’, from wharves, transport it to workplaces or allow it to be used on building sites across Australia.

The ACTU is also calling for ‘a national health monitoring and silicosis screening for workers exposed to respirable crystalline silica (RCS); and adequate compensation and support for affected workers’.

Liam O’Brien, ACTU Assistant Secretary, said, ‘engineered stone is a fashion product, it’s not an essential building material, and it’s a product that has caused as many as one in four stonemasons who work with it to be diagnosed with a deadly and incurable disease, silicosis’.

‘We need to make sure that workers are no longer exposed to this deadly product and we have to ensure that we eradicate this horrible disease. The trade union

movement is committed to taking the strongest possible action to protect workers.’

More than 600,000 workers in Australia are exposed to RCS at work. Research estimates that if these exposures are not significantly reduced it is likely that over the course of this century as many as 100,000 workers could be diagnosed with silicosis and a further 11,000 diagnosed with cancer.

**Sign the petition to stop the deadly dust at: [australianunions.org.au/campaigns/deadly-dust/](http://australianunions.org.au/campaigns/deadly-dust/)**

## Trades Hall is officially a national treasure

The iconic Victorian Trades Hall building in Carlton has been added to the National Heritage List by the Australian Heritage Council.

The Victorian Trades Hall Council described the recognition as ‘a watershed moment for the recognition of working peoples’ history’.

The National Heritage List is Australia’s list of natural, historic, and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation.

Victorian Trades Hall, the oldest continually-operating trades hall building in the world, could also be submitted for World Heritage recognition later this year.

Extensive renovations have uncovered the true grandeur of the building, which had been masked for decades by ‘temporary’ scaffolding and cladding which obscured historic murals.

Announcing the honour, Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek said Trades Hall is significant because it is ‘a beautiful building, a landmark of Melbourne, a triumph of neoclassical architecture’.

But she also celebrated ‘the countless people who have given life and meaning to this building over the years’.

‘The thousands and thousands of people who have walked up those stairs. Planning, organising, gossiping, falling in love. Making deals. Occasionally breaking deals. But always dreaming big. Always

pushing against injustice.

‘Always agitating for a fairer, more inclusive, more ambitious Australia.’

Plibersek said when the Hall was constructed in the 1850s, working class people in the city were living in crowded slum housing. To those people, Trades Hall was like a palace ‘built for the education, the growth, and the power of ordinary people’.

‘When you stand in this room, when you visit this building, you realise what it means to be part of a movement. A movement that connects us to something bigger than ourselves, over time, across national boundaries, to working people everywhere.’

**Read more about the history of Trades Hall in the Term 3 edition of *The Point*, at [ieuvictas.org.au/member-publications](http://ieuvictas.org.au/member-publications)**

**To take a tour of the ‘People’s Palace’: [www.weareunion.org.au/tours](http://www.weareunion.org.au/tours)**

## CAREER CORNER

# Is it time for you to change workplace, or career?

It’s your life, and you ought to know whether you need a new challenge, or a new environment, right?

The answer, often, is yes.

But life is often more complicated than that: we lose sight of our needs, and either stagnate in a workplace or rush away from it rashly.

And for many overworked educators, just getting through each day, week, and term is enough of a challenge; there’s not time enough left to deal with the constant backlog of current duties let alone consider a different school or future.

That’s why we offer the exercise below for you to complete during your time off. Clear your head, set aside some time where you won’t be interrupted, and answer the simple questions to get a handle on whether you need a change.

### Your binary career change audit

Put a tick in the Yes or No column for each of the 20 statements. If you disagree with a statement, consider what action you need to take to change your answer to a Yes.

Do you agree with this statement?	Yes	No	Action plan
I am happy working at my school.			What’s making you unhappy?
I derive great satisfaction from my role.			What don’t you like?
I like the people I work with.			Who do you prefer working with?
My organisation’s values resonate and align with my own.			What values are out of alignment?
I feel valued in my current role.			What could be done to make you feel more valued?
I am challenged in my current role.			What could change for the better?
This challenge could be met at my current school.			Is there a school where this is not a challenge?
I am well connected within my professional networks.			How can you improve your networking?
It would be great to work closer to home.			What options are out there if you travel a bit further?
I would consider reducing/increasing my time fraction.			What’s the reason for this? Is there a precedent? How to ask?
I would love to be paid more.			What’s the reason for this? Is there a precedent? How to ask?
I would be prepared to sacrifice some work/life balance for a promotion.			What’s the next step in your career? Are you ready?
I am prepared to give up evenings/weekends/holidays for extra-curricular commitments.			What would you be gaining in return?
My LinkedIn profile is up to date.			What needs updating?
My CV is current and meets contemporary standards.			What needs to change? Who can help?
I am open to job offers from another school.			How do I cement my commitment to my current school?
My qualifications are current and sufficient.			What professional development do you need to complete?
I have professional needs that are not being met by my current employer.			Is there anything I haven’t considered that I should know about?
An extended break from school(s) would be beneficial.			How can I get more involved at school to increase my job satisfaction?
I would consider a complete change of scene/new career.			How can I refocus my efforts where I am now?

There’s no magic number on this scoreboard which demands you take action immediately or stay put at all costs. But hopefully, answering these questions helps clarify your needs to yourself and offers practical steps you can take.



## INTERNATIONAL UNION ROUND UP

# Inequality gets the cold shoulder in Iceland

Thousands of women in Iceland, including the Prime Minister, went on strike on 24 October to protest an ongoing gender pay gap and gender-based violence.

While there have been a number of shorter women's strikes in Iceland, this full-day 'Kvennafri' or 'Women's Day Off' strike is the second of its kind, with the previous full-day strike in 1975 work leading to the passage of an equal pay law after 90% of women refused to work.

Over 40 organisations, including the Federation of the Public Workers Union (BSRB), the country's largest public worker union, coordinated the demonstration. Occupations where most workers are women, like healthcare and education, were particularly affected.

According to the Icelandic Teachers' Union, most teachers are women at all levels of the education system, including 94% of kindergarten teachers. Ahead of the demonstration, schools shortened their hours or closed.

Despite being ranked as the top country for gender equality by the World Economic Forum (WEF) for 14 consecutive years, Iceland's Prime Minister, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, is unsatisfied, saying the small nation had not yet reached its goal of full gender equality. She said it was 'unacceptable' that in 2023 Iceland was still

tackling the gender-based wage gap and gender-based violence.

Freyja Steingrimsdóttir, communications director for BSRB, told the *New York Times* that Iceland is talked about 'like it's an equality paradise'.

'But an equality paradise should not have a 21% wage gap and 40% of women experiencing gender-based or sexual violence in their lifetime.'

Prior to the strike, women and non-binary individuals were encouraged to abstain from both paid and unpaid work, including childcare and household chores.

Men were encouraged to show their support by 'taking on additional responsibilities' at home and at work, to enable their partners and colleagues to join the strike.

### Hit refresh: ILO urges trade unions to target younger workers

The International Labour Organisation's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) has assessed the challenges facing trade unions and concluded that 'unionising young people is the key to any long-term strategy'.

ACTRAV Director Maria Helena Andre

says, 'Trade unions cannot simply continue to view their mandates as organizing and representing workers around traditional issues such as wages or working hours. Technology, climate change, sustainable development, gender issues, equal pay, and violence and harassment at work – among many other issues – are growing in importance and must be included in social dialogue'.

She said it was 'essential' that youth issues are high on trade union agendas, and prominent in social dialogue forums.

'In Australia, youth worker centres, embedded within trade unions, provide a one-stop shop that provides legal assistance to young workers and seeks to organise workers virtually using podcasts and social media platforms such as TikTok.'

'Issues such as gender equality, sexual identity, technological change, and environmental issues are of particular interest to young workers. It is essential that trade unions focus on these issues, and ensure they are front and centre in social dialogue.'

### Japanese teachers campaign on workload

IEU members may be interested to find that teachers all over the world are facing similar workload issues to them.

The Japan Teachers' Union (JTU) has launched a campaign urging the government to 'ensure the wellbeing of teachers and education support personnel, improve their living and working conditions, and invest in educators...'

Like Australia, Japan is facing a nationwide teacher shortage and young people not choosing to become teachers.

The campaign seeks to address the excessive workload of teachers who have increasingly long working hours without overtime payments. Japanese primary school teachers work on average 10 hours and 31 minutes each day, lower secondary teachers 11 hours and 16 minutes, and upper secondary 9 hours and 44 minutes.

The JTU made urgent recommendations regarding matters such as reductions in class sizes; workload reductions; increased recruitment of teachers and education support staff; securing time for class preparation; and prioritising teaching duties for education staff.



## NATIONAL UNION ROUND UP

### Flying kangaroo grounded over worker exploitation

In September, in an historic victory for unionists and workers, the High Court held Qantas responsible for the largest case of illegal sackings in Australia's history.

The airline had sacked 1700 ground crew at the height of the pandemic in 2020.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions said Qantas was typical of big businesses 'exploiting loopholes and actively suppressing the wages and conditions of workers'.

Qantas received over \$2.7 billion in taxpayer-funded subsidies during that period to avoid such an instance, and recently posted an annual profit of \$2.4 billion.

Ultimately the Transport Workers Union won the case by demonstrating that Qantas had sacked workers to avoid the potential of future post-pandemic industrial action – a clear breach of the Fair Work Act.

#### Loopholes legislation

The ACTU says the Qantas debacle shows why the current *Closing Loopholes* legislation before parliament is so important to Australian workers.

The peak union body launched a petition of support for the Bill, saying many workers were struggling because of the cost of living, the housing crises and 10 years of wage stagnation.

'Big companies like Qantas have used loopholes in workplace laws to drive down wages, contract out work, and take

away working conditions.

'The new laws will increase job security, help stop wage theft, make workplaces safer, and help get wages moving again.'

#### Insecure work and labour hire

One of the biggest loopholes in Australian workplace regulation is the use of labour hire by big business.

Labour hire is when a 'host' employer hires a worker from a labour hire agency. Initially, employers did this to fill short-term gaps. But over time, 'host' employers have learnt to game the system.

In 2023, the union movement focused attention on this sector because:

- labour hire workers earn about \$4700 a year less than ordinary workers
- 81% of labour-hire workers work full-time hours yet they do not have full-time jobs – their employment is insecure and unreliable
- 84% of labour hire workers do not have paid leave and most have no guaranteed minimum hours.

#### Win: minimum wage rise

On 2 June, the Fair Work Commission announced that workers on the national minimum wage would receive a pay rise of 8.6 per cent. Workers on Award wages would see an increase of 5.75 per cent.

These overdue improvements, affecting one in four Australian workers, were the largest increase to minimum and Award wages in Australia's history.

The business lobby had argued for a real wage cut during a cost of living crisis.

#### RAFFWU 'Superstrike'

Coles and Woolworths employees represented by the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union (RAFFWU) went on a two hour national strike in early October to secure better wages and working conditions.

Key demands include introducing a base pay rate of \$29 per hour, measures to protect workers from abuse and threats, and job security for casual workers.

RAFFWU says both profit-making behemoths have refused to 'offer anything on any claim' in bargaining.

Bans imposed by RAFFWU members included a ban on cleaning up vomit or bodily fluids, cleaning the manager's toilet or crushing cardboard boxes. Coles said that it would not pay workers who engaged in the bans and has threatened to stand them down, while Woolworths has said that they would continue to pay workers who took part.

You can help support striking RAFFWU workers at: [chuffed.org/project/superstrike](https://chuffed.org/project/superstrike)

#### Win: increase in parental leave

In mid-October, the ACTU welcomed new laws which allow for families to be able to access 26 weeks of paid parental leave by 2026.

Under the changes, the current allotment will increase by two weeks each year from July 2024, until the 26-week rate is reached in 2026.

Once the scheme is fully implemented from July 2026, the 26 weeks can be shared by both parents. It also increases to 4 weeks the number of weeks reserved for each parent.

ACTU President Michele O'Neil said Australia had the second-worst paid parental leave scheme in the developed world\* prior to the reforms, which led to women's lower workforce participation and unequal caring responsibility and causing women's earnings to fall by 55 per cent on average in the first five years of parenthood.

'It's not only a good policy for women, but it's a good economic policy...'

She said more improvements were required, including extending the scheme to 52 weeks, increasing the rate of pay from its low level of the National Minimum Wage, and paying superannuation on parental leave.

\*See our article on paid parental leave in issue 3 of *The Point*, 2023.



## A year on, what is happening with AI?

Artificial Intelligence disrupted education significantly, and we know further change is coming.

Initial concerns about the integrity of student tests were soon superseded by the recognition that tools like ChatGPT could even prove beneficial to teachers.

The IEUA made a submission to the Federal Parliament's Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training's *Inquiry into the use of generative artificial intelligence in the Australian education system*, stating that AI 'must be the servant of teachers and students, not their master'.

'AI policy responses and school practices designed to safeguard the integrity of student work and academic assessments must also be evaluated in terms of the potential impact on teacher workload.'

The submission emphasised the need for:

- High-quality, easily accessible, and ongoing AI professional development for teachers
- An urgent review of curriculum content to embed strong ethics education and critical literacy training
- A guarantee of equitable access to AI for all students.

The IEUA made it clear that the voice of the profession was 'paramount' to policymaking on AI for the education sector.

IEUA Deputy Secretary Veronica Yewdall said consultation with unions and teachers was essential, otherwise 'gaps, issues and oversights' would hinder the implementation of AI policies.

She said that in the future AI may help reduce process-driven teacher workload in schools, but currently, it is increasing work demands on education staff.

Earlier this year, a survey found nearly half (42%) of Australian teachers were optimistic about the benefits of AI tools for the classroom.

Little wonder, when boosters like Dan Wang, a sociology professor at Columbia Business School, say it is their 'obligation and responsibility' to immerse students in generative AI tools.

Wang told CBS News he requires his students use AI to complete their coursework because, 'the more students understand what they can and can't use these tools for, the more comfortable they'll be doing so in the workplace.'

### PD webinar: Using AI positively in the classroom

Use your Learning Hub to access the latest advice on AI from educational technology researcher Keith Heggart and a teacher panel. The webinar examines how AI tools have the potential to revolutionise the classroom experience, and explores practical strategies for using AI to improve work efficiency and enhance teacher's work.

**For support with accessing Learning Hub, please contact us at [learninghub@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:learninghub@ieuvictas.org.au) or call the office on 1800 622 889.**

**To book in go to <https://ieulearninghub.topclasslms.com/> and log in.**

### Commons Social Change Library

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Manuals, templates, tools, short courses, podcasts, YouTube videos, books – they've got the lot.

Topics include campaign strategy, community organising, working effectively in groups, justice and diversity, and creative activism.



## NATIONAL IEU ROUND UP

### WA: IEU seeks to break Catholic bargaining 'deadlock'

The Western Australian branch won the first multi-employer bargaining authorisation under the federal government's *Secure Jobs* provisions and is now pursuing an intractable bargaining declaration (IBD) on behalf of Catholic school teachers who have endured two years of unproductive single-interest bargaining.

**W**A branch Secretary Rebecca Collopy said the IEU had spent over 35 hours in Commission-assisted bargaining, but Catholic Education Western Australia had refused to move on 35 claims lodged by IEUWA members covering career progression and allowances.

'Most critically, claims made to address spiralling teacher workloads remain firmly in dispute,' she said.

After making the IBD and at the conclusion of any negotiating period, the Fair Work Commission will make a Workplace Determination where disputed terms and conditions can be arbitrated and determined by the Commission.

Lawyers Herbert Smith Freehills say the prospect of arbitrated outcomes 'will fundamentally change the bargaining paradigm'.

That's why this case, though vital for the employees in WA Catholic schools, is also important for the nation at large. It can help set a new, fairer playing field for such dispute.

### QUEENSLAND: Mentoring Program in rude health

IEU-QNT Research Officer Dr Adele Schmidt says a review has proven that the IEU-QNT's Mentoring Program is 'highly beneficial' to early career teachers, reducing stress and burnout for beginning educators and generating 'overwhelmingly positive feedback'.

Training topics considered valuable by members included Active Listening, Lesson Observation, Reflective Conversations, Conflict Resolution, Giving Feedback, and Boundary Setting.

Feedback from participants help shape future mentorship offerings. Suggestions in this review included expanding the training to cater for early childhood education; instruction on how to identify and overcome various forms of bias; strategies for dealing with difficult situations involving school leadership teams; and documenting the mentoring process as evidence to support Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) applications.

The uptake of video conferencing enabled members from all over Queensland and the Northern Territory to take part in the program.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA: End of year advice

Catholic Enterprise Agreement negotiations are due to be finalised in 2024 and the SA branch is organising in schools with cut-through graphics and numbers to get the attention of members and potential members alike.

Key arguments being discussed are:

- SA Catholic teachers are the lowest-paid Catholic teachers in Australia
- Education Support Officers in SA Catholic schools are some of the lowest paid ESOs in Australia
- Compared to Victorian teachers and SA Department teachers, SA Catholic teachers' student contact time is anywhere from 30 mins to 3 hours more per week. This equates to working between 1 to 5 weeks more per annum.

Organisers are reporting that this information is opening doors to some excellent conversations.

The IEU SA team are also very busy with bargaining in 14 schools and the Lutheran School Sector.

### NSW: Wages breakthrough

Members in Catholic systemic schools achieved significant pay rises this year, reaping the rewards of the hard fought *Hear Our Voice* campaign.

Support staff received not only pay parity with government school support staff, but also the 4% general public sector increase from 1 July. School administrative, classroom and learning support employees received increases of between 10.2% and 27.5%, most of which was backpaid from January. These increases were on top of the 2.54% increase the employers paid in January 2023.

In mid-November, employees in Catholic systemic schools in all dioceses except Broken Bay will be asked to vote in favour of a new enterprise agreement (EA). It is important that all members vote 'yes'. In the unlikely case of a dispute at the Fair Work Commission, the new EA is only enforceable if the majority vote in favour of it.

# 2023 HALL OF SHAME

## The (printable) naughty and nice of another colourful year in independent education.

### Honourable mentions:

**Scrooge School of the Year Award:** is awarded to the Catholic school which sent an email out to Category A Education Support staff saying they had to take 3 days annual leave over the Christmas/shut-down period. In past years, the school has given these staff paid leave for these days without deducting leave. May your chooks turn into emus and kick your dunny down. On Christmas Day.

**Better Never than Late Award:** goes to the long-term principal, who, when resigning after decades of inaction, subjected staff to sweeping reform and wide-ranging performance and conduct processes on the way out the door.

**Dress Code of Misconduct Award 1:** is taken out by the IT manager at an independent school who tried to ban an IEU Rep from wearing IEU t-shirts in the workplace despite allowing a colleague to wear Power Puff Girls attire and failing to provide any guidelines or alternatives. The member can wear that, and they will!

**Dress Code of Misconduct Award 2:** goes to the Tasmanian CEO who sent a complaint to an IEU member who wore a YES 2023 badge, then refused to say where the complaint originated. Coincidentally, the CEO was a staunch NO advocate. The workplace had no official dress code except that a work t-shirt and high-vis safety vest be worn at work sites. The member can wear the badge, and they did!

**Karmic Gender Justice Comeuppance of the Year Award:** goes to an infamous Grammar school with a reported "toxic and misogynist" culture in which capable women are routinely passed over for leadership roles. Most employees in education are women, but they remain disgracefully underrepresented in leadership roles, particularly in high-fee independent schools like this one. On this occasion, kismet made an unmistakable comment on this injustice when the male principal returned to his prized undercover car park one day to find his

vehicle covered in effluent, the victim of a plumbing leak from a toilet block above - the female toilet!

### 3 BRONZE

One notable independent school that used the Victorian payroll tax as a justification to keep employee salary increases at a minimum during a period of significant cost of living pressure and high inflation, only to then pass on the cost of said tax in full to their parent body and increase fees above the agreed wage deal. Shame indeed.

### 2 SILVER

Any school that has stood down an employee on allegations relating to Reportable Conduct and permitted the matter to drag on for months. In one case, a teacher from a Catholic primary school was stood down in May 2022 and findings were released to the Catholic Education Office in October 2022. However, the employee never received the report or decision on the matter, and decided to conclude it by resigning in October 2023, 17 months after the allegations were first presented. This is an unacceptable breach of natural justice that denies the employee procedural fairness and the right to clear and transparent Health and Safety processes.

### 1 GOLD

Tasmania has been hogging this title of late, and mainland schools will have to lower their game if they want to wrest back infamy from the proud tyrants of the Apple Isle. How can the mere underpayment or overworking of staff of the most devilish Vics compete with a titleholder who has been prepared to bring the world Tim Tam Gate - where an IEU Organiser was banned from bringing snacks into schools on visits? An employer which claimed to be 'negotiating directly with staff' because it offered them an email address (a glorified suggestion box) to send messages to - while refusing to

meet with union negotiators?

In 2023, the HOS Committee briefly removed Catholic Education Tasmania from the podium, as a change of negotiating personnel and actual meetings involving humans offered hope that yet another year of protracted negotiations could be avoided.

Not so fast!

Donning the black hat and the Dick Dastardly moustache and cackling hysterically, CET reverted to full villain status mid-year by belatedly offering their own claims in the by then cobwebbed bargaining process. And it was obvious they'd really spent some quality Dr Evil milliseconds stroking their white cat to come up with these belated doozies.

**Exhibit A:** CET wanted to able to forcibly transfer staff from one school to another.

That's so anti-worker and anti-family, Shakespeare in response would be reduced to: 'Wow, just wow'.

But wait, there's more!

**Exhibit B:** In an era of rampant workload grief, with exhausted teachers leaving the profession, and employers in every other sector beginning to implement common sense workload measures, what was their main concern?

Increasing the number of days teachers are required to work.

You read it correctly the first time (we triple checked the sub-editing to make sure there was no mistake). Increase.

Not decrease.

We know autocorrect is itself a formidable force of evil in the world, but it was not to blame on this occasion: In 2023, CET really asked for more workdays from education staff, while all the rest of the world examined ways to alleviate educator workload.

Vics, if you don't want this title to go south yet again in 2024, you're going to have to do worse. But instead, how about all employers get serious about staff wellbeing and decent collaborative negotiations and make this award redundant!

## HALL OF FAME

**Tintern:** Completed their first comprehensive Agreement (previously it was an 'add-on' Agreement) in a collaborative and positive manner, leading to great workload and pay outcomes for members!

**Scotch College:** We were saddened to hear of the sudden and premature death of a long-standing member's partner earlier this year. Thankfully, the school provided the member with indefinite compassionate paid leave when the mandatory minimum is three days. Instances like this restore faith in the ability of employers to do the right thing when it really matters. The IEU sends its condolences to the member and their family. The new principal also met with the IEU Organiser and Rep to discuss matters of importance to members, including staff safety, upon which the Rep secured regular one-on-one catch ups with the principal and a commitment to be consulted on the formation and implementation of their new Health and Safety structure. This should lead to greater engagement with members on important safety considerations.

**Killester College:** Leadership at this school embraced the CEMEA, making it a model for the implementation of the 'Workload Agreement'. Most teaching staff dropped an entire class from their load and the school's Consultative Committee vowed to return discussions that don't reach an overwhelming majority to the staff for further discussion. 'The changes at Killester were achieved through good management, good consultation with staff, and a leadership team committed to working constructively with the IEU,' said our Organiser. Rep Emily Maguire said the college had been 'amazing' in its consultation, providing 'multiple opportunities to give feedback to leadership and the Consultative Committee in how we will implement changes at our school.' Killester proved that goodwill and proper consultation deliver improvements in efficiency and morale under CEMEA.

## UNION QUIZ supplied by the good folk of St Bernard's School Coburg.

- What was the slogan for the 1996 campaign for parity with the government sector?  
a. Not fair, just because we care  
b. Parity, not charity c. Same work, same pay d. Parity NOW!
- In what year did the Victorian Independent Education Staff Association, the Victorian Catholic Primary Staff Association, and the Staff Association of Catholic Secondary Schools join forces to become the VIEU?  
a. 1990 b. 1992 c. 1994 d. 1996
- What does TLN stand for?  
a. Teacher Learning Network  
b. Teachers Love News c. Teaching Literate Numeracy d. Tom Loves Nancy
- In what year did many unions come together at the MCG to protest a proposed change in the IR laws?  
a. 2003 b. 2004 c. 2005 d. 2006
- Who is the current Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations?  
a. Tony Burke b. Katy Gallagher  
c. Penny Wong d. Richard Marles
- In 1935, annual leave was first introduced into workers' awards. How long was their leave?  
a. 1 week b. 2 weeks c. 3 weeks  
d. 4 weeks
- At which school did our previous General Secretary, Deb James, begin her teaching career?  
a. Antonine College Coburg b. St Bernard's East Coburg c. St Fidelis Coburg d. St Paul's Coburg
- At which school did our new General Secretary, David Brear, begin his teaching career?  
a. Trinity Regional College, Brunswick b. Mercy College, Coburg c. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Hogsmeade d. St Bernard's Primary School, Coburg
- What Victorian feminist has a statue outside Trades Hall?  
a. Germaine Greer b. Zelda D'Aprano c. Clementine Ford  
d. Vida Goldstein
- In what year was the ACTU's Equal Pay case, for women to receive equal pay to that of men, run in the courts?  
a. 1965 b. 1969 c. 1972 d. 1975

The St Bernard's Quizmeisters nominate Rachel Evans and the IEU members of St Peter's East Keilor to provide the next round of questions!

## PICTURE THIS



This sign warns against:

- Nightclubs frequented by serial killers
- Anything in your job that could cause psychological harm, including bullying and being overworked.
- Aggressive dinner parties
- Slippery floors at the Annual Head-Shrinker's Ball