

ThePoint



Safety must always come first

Sometimes, it's not obvious what should be on the cover of *The Point*. Not this time.

The safety and wellbeing of educators had to be the focus of this edition, and it's a topic that needs to be taken much more seriously by everyone involved in education.

The union is hearing too many stories about the health and safety of educators being threatened or taken for granted.

And the antiquated and dangerously deluded attitude that abuse and harassment

from students is 'all part of the job' needs to be extinguished once and for all.

In an era where there are increasingly complex issues arising around student behaviour, schools are expected to triage more of society's most contentious issues, and the internet is used maliciously and with impunity against teachers by some students and parents, it is time for everyone in education to reprioritise

safe workplaces for educators.

It's time for potential dangers in schools to be assessed the same way as they are on a construction site, as urgent Occupational Health and Safety issues.

Dangerous student behaviour is a workplace hazard and must be assessed as such through properly maintained and disseminated behavioural management plans. Schools ignoring this approach need

to be reminded that new psychosocial regulations coming into force to protect the wellbeing of workers require steps to be taken *before* dangerous incidents occur.

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Support the union movement's call for a 5% wage increase

On July 1, the Fair Work Commission announces changes to the National Minimum Wage and awards wages.

Let them know that in a cost of living crisis, Australia's 2.9 million lowest-paid workers – the ones hardest hit by inflation – need a 5% increase.

A 5% increase would have no negative impact on inflation; businesses can afford it; and it would especially benefit women and part-time workers. It is time for fair and reasonable wages for all.

Add your name to the campaign at: rb.gy/3vfkww

Become a school leader of tomorrow – for free!

In collaboration with the University of Melbourne and the Teacher Learning Network, the IEU is excited to offer a new opportunity for members to develop their leadership skills and confidence through the inaugural Middle Leadership Program (MLP).

The MLP runs over 18 months, from June 2024 to November 2025, and culminates in a Professional Certificate of Middle Leadership. Courses are delivered online and in-person, offering 30 hours of professional learning.

The MLP, which incurs no direct costs, will develop the skills of educators and build a generation of sophisticated school leaders. It is informed by advanced educational research and IEU values of consultation, collaboration and ethical decision making.

To register your interest, email training@ieuvictas.org.au

Win free copies of new Sam Wallman book

In *12 Rules for Strife*, activist and comics journalist Sam Wallman (*Our Members Be Unlimited*) teams up with acclaimed writer Jeff Sparrow to produce a stunningly original tour of the struggle for better lives, better working conditions, and a better world.

They say: 'This is a handbook for change. Because we all know ways in which life could be better. And it *can* be better. We can *make* it better'.

To win a free copy, be one of the first three members to send a picture of your self in IEU gear to: thepoint@ieuvictas.org.au

End LGBTQIA+ discrimination in religious schools

The IEU and Equality Australia have fought for over a decade to change laws that allow discrimination in so many of our schools.

LGBTQIA+ staff and students in religious schools can still be fired or expelled because of who they are in many parts of the country. The federal government promised reforms and we need to keep the pressure on to ensure they follow through as anti-equality forces lobby to retain the status quo.

To do that we need your help – and all donations will be matched until June 30.

To donate, go to: rb.gy/2hnox9

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INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Striking NECA teachers make a stand

IEU members at National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) Education and Careers in North Carlton and Dandenong took strike action Thursday 9 May, demanding action on a long overdue wage claim.

They have also implemented bans on overtime, which at this short-staffed organisation has led to the cancellation of many classes.

At the strike rally in North Carlton, Assistant Rep Nelson Dore said NECA Education had lost three trainers this year because of the protracted negotiations. 'They probably wouldn't have been looking if this was sorted a long time ago. The fact that it's dragged out made their eyes wander and ask where they could make a better buck...'

NECA Education teachers at both campuses walked out of work at 11.30am, handing flyers to apprentices laying out the reasons for their industrial action. Some of the third-year apprentices, it should be noted, earn more than their teachers!

NECA Education teachers, 95% of whom are IEU members, were joined by supporters from the union office, other unions and Trades Hall on the wide median at the intersection of Lygon and Pigdon Streets, with IEU flags, union tunes, merchandise and banners attracting toots of solidarity from passing traffic.

Gathering for a photo, the crowd struck up familiar union chants, but NECA Education staff added one of their own: 'Support the teachers that support you!'

Addressing the crowd, IEU General Secretary David Brear said IEU members work in a 'really broad variety of settings', but there are things all members had in common.

'One is a real commitment to quality education. We take it seriously that our members provide quality education, in this case, to the next generation of electricians.

'Another thing that our members have in common is a determination that education is important and that the remuneration and conditions people work under in education need to be fair and reasonable.'

David also pointed out that the face-to-face teaching time worked by NECA Education teachers 'is a fair bit more than what's asked of people in other settings'.

NECA Education Rep Nick Oakes said teachers like Assistant Rep Nelson Dore 'could go out and work in the industry tomorrow and make probably double the amount he does now, but he chooses to do this because he believes in it'.

Nelson spoke of teaching as a 'rewarding' job.

'I love coming to work and empowering young people to get their first steps in what could be a fruitful career for them. It's a big passion that I have along with all the other teachers here. It's something



that I think we all have in us – to help people and pass on our knowledge and help them get to where they need to be.'

Nick Oakes said the growth of green power in the electrical industry was 'huge'.

'All governments want all the electricians they can get but to get these electricians someone needs to train them.'

'Our role is to train these apprentices and make them good; there's only so much you can learn on a job site, and we do a lot of that heavy lifting of educating them here at the trade school.

'We bother to train, we bother to listen, we bother to have patience to make sure that we can turn out these apprentices to be A-grade electricians.'

IEU Organiser James Rankin said NECA Education teachers weren't getting a wage increase that would retain staff.

'We need a salary increase that attracts the best possible people to come to work at NECA. That's in the best interests of our members but also the students they teach and in fact NECA themselves. Because if they can't attract good people, what sort of organisation are they going to have?'

Nick Oakes was hopeful that the strike would have a 'positive effect' on management.

'This dispute has been going on since 2022 when we first put our options on the table, and nothing even got recognised.

We waited a few months and then there was only one way to do it, so we had to search around, and we got under the banner of the IEU.

'And to us it's been almost like salvation because we know that we're totally united.'

Nick said that prior to gaining IEU guidance and support, staff felt there was little they could do to progress negotiations.

'Before there was nothing legally binding that could be done. If we felt like taking some action, there was nothing we could do. Having the IEU we now know that once we go through the processes, we are protected by law to take the actions we take.'

Stop Press!

As we go to print, parties have met again at the Fair Work Commission. There has been some movement in the employer's offer, but not enough to do the deal on the spot. The revised offer will be put to members for consideration. In the meantime, overtime bans will continue!



GENERAL SECRETARY
DAVID BREAR

Retention is as important as attraction

We all know that there is a shortage of teachers across Australia, and that schools, school systems and state and federal governments are talking about new ways to attract quality people to our profession.

Initiatives such as providing payment to pre-service teachers undertaking practicum placements are great.

Schools and school systems need to be wary though. It's one thing to entice people into the profession, but there remains a major problem with retaining the teachers we already have - the reason for which, in many instances, is the unsustainable and sometimes dangerous nature of our work.

We all know that every workplace is supposed to have a trained and elected Health and Safety Rep, but many schools

don't. This means that when an issue like student or parent violence towards staff occurs it is often more difficult for the union to assist than it should be.

As a result, staff are left exposed to risk for prolonged periods which invariably leads to an increased chance of injury, stress and burnout. Of course, it also leads to disillusionment with the job, frustration and ultimately to good staff looking for work in other roles.

It seems trite to say that one of the main reasons teachers are leaving the profession is workload, yet it seems that

many employers are still failing to do anything meaningful to reduce it. This of course is another OHS issue.

Under the terms of the Agreements in place in Catholic schools in Tasmania and Victoria, schools are required to have a Consultative Committee which should be looking for ways to lessen workload. Too often, however, decision makers in schools are not truly leaning into this opportunity to collaborate, with the result that staff are forced to complete sometimes repetitive and onerous tasks that add little to student learning.

So, while it's one thing to make working in education attractive to new entrants, schools and school systems really need to take steps to keep the staff they already have.

School leaders must be really active about this. Our schools must be great places for students, but they must also be great places for staff or the costly cycle of 'burn and churn' will continue.

The IEU can advise about how your school can appoint an elected Health and Safety Rep, and we can offer the very best training to Reps once they are elected. We also offer training for Consultative Committee Reps and IEU Reps,

and we advocate strongly at the school level, system level and with government to protect the interest of our members and our profession.

Take advantage of our expertise to protect your career, improve your workplace, and have the back of your valued colleagues!

The vital importance of IEU Reps



DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY
KYLIE BUSK

The strength of the IEU comes from members in workplaces working together to be united, strong, organised and active about issues that impact them at work.

At the very heart of this and vital to the successful work of the union is the elected IEU workplace Rep, who fulfils a crucial role connecting members, ensuring they have up to date advice and information and working with IEU staff to ensure that concerns and issues are resolved.

The union is only as strong as its Reps and members. It was this strength that enabled us to achieve the wages and conditions we have today.

IEU Reps are workplace leaders, and they also work as part of a team with members and expert staff at the union office to support, advise and assist. A good Rep is gold, but a trained Rep is a diamond-crusted gold superhero.

That's why we fought to ensure paid trade union training is an entitlement for as many Reps as possible. Reps working in Catholic education in Victoria and Tasmania and many independent schools have paid training entitlements as part of their workplace Agreements. In other schools, we negotiate leave where the union covers replacement costs or covers wages so Reps can participate in training. Sadly, there are still other Reps with no access to formal training, who must instead rely on IEU Organisers to coach them through issues on a case-by-case basis.

As many of you would know I am passionate about all things education. This includes 'union education' such as Rep training. As with all effective education, Rep training is transformational. It helps to grow our union by developing skills around recruitment, and it helps to grow our power and influence as a force of good at workgroup, workplace, sector and industry level by connecting members with their voice and power in decisions that impact them.

As part of the Closing Loopholes reforms, new federal legislation has amended the Fair Work Act to provide specific rights and protections for the important work undertaken by elected Reps. Thanks to these amendments, Reps now have legally enforceable rights to access training, to communicate with their colleagues and to be the legitimate voice of their union in the workplace – see our article on page 6 for more details of these hugely important changes. These new measures provide Reps with much needed paid time and access to resources to perform their work supporting members.

What's often overlooked is that robust, cooperative delegate structures which help resolve disputes and facilitate change also benefit employers and workplaces – and, at the end of the day, students.

These improvements to the industrial relations landscape are important because they allow those doing the work to be involved in making the work. In our case that means making the delivery of education in non-government settings the best it can be for students and for workers.

Stronger together!

TASMANIAN CATHOLIC AGREEMENT

Industrial action for Tasmanian Catholic education?

The IEU is considering industrial action, which could include statewide strikes or work bans, after negotiations on a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement covering staff in Tasmanian Catholic schools continue to drag on.

Following recent member campaigning, there had been hope that the employer would take a more reasonable approach to getting the deal done, but at our most recent bargaining meeting there was little progress on key areas of concern to members.

The IEU is now seriously considering our options to enable members to take protected industrial action – as *The Point* goes to print we are holding meetings with Reps from around the state to lay the groundwork for this.

If industrial action is required to get this deal done, we will seek a Protected Action Bargaining Order (PABO) from the Fair Work Commission, after which all IEU members will be balloted to determine whether they wish to have the right to take various forms of industrial action.

If this vote is successful, IEU members will be able to take industrial action, which could range from bans on certain kinds of work to a half or full day work stoppage (or 'strike').

What are the issues?

Catholic employers in Tasmania are still refusing to budge on several key IEU claims and have made another new totally unreasonable claim of their own.

Under the terms of the existing IEU negotiated Agreement, wage increases won in government schools continue to flow on to staff in Catholic schools. However, this applies only to percentage increases to wages and not to other payments and improvements, including the bonus payments that were made to lower paid staff in Tasmanian government schools and changes to the teacher's wage scale which removed barriers to incremental progression for teachers without full TRB registration.

Wages for part-time teachers in Catholic primary schools are also

currently lower than in government schools, because part-time wages are calculated off a one-hour-higher instructional load. This means that the hourly rate being paid to a part-time teacher in a Tasmanian Catholic primary school is around 4.5% lower than in a government school.

CET continue to refuse to make a firm commitment to address these pay issues, and instead seem intent on expecting their staff to put up with inferior wages and inferior conditions, especially around parental leave and workload.

To top it all off, CET has now added yet another new claim, which would exempt them from having to advertise a vacant position if there is a suitable graduate from their own Thomas Aquinas teaching program available to fill it. This would mean that existing staff will not get a look-in on some job opportunities.

This claim is in addition to their other recent problematic claims which would give them the ability to forcibly transfer staff between schools and extend the length of the school year.

The long delays and these additional CET claims are making it clear that we need to up the ante in this campaign for proper conditions for workers in Tasmanian Catholic schools.

Campaigning in schools

Tasmanian Catholic IEU members turned out in droves on 12 April, the student-free final day of Term 1, to demonstrate their frustration with their employer for failing to finalise an Agreement for their schools.

There were group walk-ins, IEU t-shirts were thick on the ground and 2 Years Too Long cookies were munched with gusto.

At Guilford Young College in Glenorchy, over 70 staff from several schools rallied prior to the working day, standing together in protest while making the most of the IEU-provided coffee cart.

Most members wore their union

colours to the event, with Mary-Anne Johnson even knitting a new blue, green and black scarf on the spot! The merch table was popular, and members were keen to be photographed behind banners proclaiming, 'We Will Not Be Moved' and 'Catholic Education Tasmania: Show Us The Respect We Deserve'.

Members also gathered at St Patrick's College, Launceston donning the union colours at a rally, while members in Burnie also gathered on 10 April to publicise their plight.

Every time these campaign events occur, the solidarity and determination of staff grows.

And every day that the Agreement isn't signed makes the Catholic sector a more conspicuous outlier on working conditions for educators.

Two years is too long – and it's now been far longer than that since the expiry of the last IEU-negotiated Agreement.

During the previous IEU surge of visits to Tasmanian Catholic schools, a member spoke for many by saying, 'Are they actually trying to make Catholic schools second-rate workplaces? What would that mean for our students?'

Tasmanian members:

- **Speak to your non-member colleagues about the importance of joining the IEU – only members can take protected industrial action**
- **Ensure your details are up to date: if there is a member ballot for industrial action we need accurate contact details**
- **Stay tuned for updates as we ramp up our campaign.**





TASMANIAN CATHOLIC AGREEMENT

What's too long? The wait for a deal in Tasmanian Catholic education

Negotiations for a new Agreement in Tasmanian Catholic education have dragged on so long it's hard not to be nostalgic and look back.

On 1 September 2021, the year's 35th Wednesday, Peter Gutwein was Tasmanian Premier and Jeremy Rockliff his deputy. Scott Morrison was Australia's Prime Minister.

The top trending story on Twitter and the internet was former Collingwood President Eddie McGuire being refused entry into Western Australia for the upcoming AFL Grand Final, relocated from Melbourne because of COVID restrictions.

Victorian state government leaders were about to announce a modest easing of pandemic restrictions.

Stay by The Kid Laroi and Justin Bieber was the number one song.

And... on 1 September 2021, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement 2018 (the TCESEA) reached its nominal expiry date.

On 20 May, when this edition of *The Point* is printed, 999 days will have passed since the TCESEA nominal expiry date. 2021 feels a long time ago.

That's because it is a long time ago.

Since then, Tasmanian educators in government schools had a new Agreement finalised. There have been changes of leadership at Catholic Education Tasmania.

But still, hardworking staff in Tasmanian Catholic schools wait for their employers to do the right thing, drop ludicrous anti-worker claims, treat them with respect and bring their working conditions up to the industry standard in the Apple Isle.

From the start, employers delayed. In September 2022, we reported that the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO) 'seem determined to do everything they can to stall things'.

'It is nearly a year since the last Agreement expired... and wages and conditions need updating and improving,' we reported.

The TCEO had insisted that the few meetings they agreed to with the IEU were to be held online, once a month, for only 2 hours, and at those meetings they said NO to almost all member claims.

In Term 3, 2022, the IEU was forced to drag the TCEO into the Fair Work Commission to get a reasonable timeline of meetings to get things done – but even then, the TCEO tried to avoid talking about members' issues.

They tried to deny IEU officials entry to schools. They tried to ban Organisers bringing Tim Tams into staff rooms. They were more concerned with frustrating

the union than finalising an overdue deal for dedicated staff.

A member survey taken in 2021 found, for teachers, the main areas of concern in order were:

1. Reducing workloads
2. Getting fair pay increases
3. Access to professional development and training
4. Improved work environment

For support staff, the main areas of concern in order were:

1. Getting fair pay increases
2. Access to professional development and training
3. Improved work environment
4. Improved leave and related provisions

The education issues most important to IEU members in Tasmanian Catholic schools were:

- Getting more support for special needs students
- Getting more personal preparation time
- Having regulation of class sizes in the Agreement.

Those are the priorities of student-focused professionals deserving of respect and assistance to achieve the best outcomes for schools. They are the priorities of reasonable people who love their jobs and their sector.

999 days is so long...

- An Asian elephant (gestation 645 days) could have had a baby, and started on a second
- A lion (108 days gestation) could have raised a pride
- Mars went around the sun (687 days) and we missed a minimum-energy launch window for a Martian expedition (780 days)
- The Tasmanian JackJumpers came into existence AND became National Basketball League champions.

TASMANIAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

IEU slams outrageous letter to Tasmanian families

The Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania has publicly expressed its deep concern about a bizarre letter from Archbishop of Hobart Julian Porteous circulated to families with children enrolled in Tasmanian Catholic education in mid-May.

IEU members have expressed their outrage at the letter, which criticises legal abortion access, transgender rights, voluntary assisted dying, euthanasia and same sex marriage.

Speaking on ABC radio Hobart, IEU Victoria Tasmania General Secretary David Brear said the letter was 'out of step with the broader Catholic community'. He said members had logged complaints about the letter with the Archbishop's office, numerous members in schools had refused to distribute the letter, and there were many others who had said they are 'disappointed, hurt and upset by the views expressed in the letter'.

In an IEU statement, Brear said the letter 'alienates many valued staff and students in Catholic education and undermines the important hard work staff in Catholic schools do every single day to build strong, supportive and respectful school communities'.

'Making statements like these is not the way to build a resilient and diverse Catholic education sector in Tasmania. We are extremely concerned for the wellbeing of staff, students and families who as a result of this letter have been made to feel less welcome in our school communities.'

'The IEU supports legislative change which will make schools and workplaces more inclusive and increase protections for LGBTIQ+ students and staff who have every right to participate in the workplace and in education. There are of course current laws already in place which protect staff and the IEU will defend any members who are unlawfully discriminated against.'

Equality Tasmania wrote to all Tasmanian Catholic schools asking for a right of reply to the Porteous letter.

Equality Tasmania president Rowan Richardson said, 'schools should be affirming and safe places for LGBTIQ+ students, staff and parents'.

'However, the Archbishop's letter has stigmatised LGBTIQ+ people as a threat to religious values, and thereby created unsafe learning and working environments.'

'The Archbishop's letter is also deliberately misleading about proposed law reforms including a state ban on conversion practices and proposed federal discrimination protections.'

The Porteous letter asserts that:

- A proposed federal law preventing faith-based schools from discriminating against LGBTIQ+ people is 'an existential threat' to those schools, despite such a law existing in Tasmania for 26 years
- Bans on conversion practices 'are gross violations of human rights', despite the absence of any evidence to that effect in states with conversion bans including NSW, Queensland, Victoria and the ACT
- Efforts by the 'radicalised transgender lobby' to 'disconnect gender from

biological sex' are a 'denial of reality' despite no evidence to back up that claim, and despite evidence that such fearmongering fosters prejudice and discrimination against trans and gender diverse Tasmanians.

Mr Richardson called on concerned parents and taxpayers to express their views to Catholic Education Tasmania.

'As funders of Catholic schools, taxpayers and parents have a major stake in ensuring these schools are safe and inclusive learning environments for all students.'

Catholic schools receive extensive government funding, and remain subject to the laws of Australia, regardless of whether they consider themselves 'different' and 'god's own people' as the letter states.

FEDERAL POLICY

Reps' rights – a huge win for unionists

The essential role of union Reps is at last getting the recognition and protection it deserves in law, thanks to the Federal Government's *Closing Loopholes* legislation.

This legislation amended the *Fair Work Act* to codify the rights of elected union Reps to communicate with and represent their colleagues and to access paid leave for training related to their role.

As of July this year, all Awards will be varied to include a clause which further clarifies these rights. While the clause proposed by the Fair Work Commission is still in draft form, it contains important provisions in a number of key areas:

Training

All Reps in organisations with 15 or more employees will have an upfront entitlement to 5 days of paid leave for training, with a further 1 day of paid leave for every subsequent year in the role.

While the IEU has negotiated paid Rep training in both Victorian and Tasmanian Catholic Agreements and some independent school Agreements, for the first time this means that Reps in almost every IEU workplace will be entitled to paid training leave. This is a huge win for members in hundreds of our workplaces, who now have a new entitlement to a Rep who can gain the knowledge and confidence they need to perform their critical role effectively.

Communication

Reps will for the first time have the codified right to reasonable communication with all colleagues (members and potential members), both individually and collectively, about industrial matters and about union membership. This includes the right to communicate using electronic means ordinarily used by the employer.

This will at last put an end to the unfortunate debates in some workplaces about the right of the elected Rep to use the workplace email system, or to communicate with non-members about unionism or industrial issues.

Access to workplace facilities

The draft clause codifies the right of Reps to use facilities including a noticeboard, a private accessible room for discussions, office equipment such as printers and photocopiers, secure storage and email systems.

While all reasonable workplaces already provide most of these facilities to Reps on request, to have this entrenched as a right rather than as a favour (which can be rescinded) makes a real difference to the legitimacy of the work of our Reps.

Industrial representation

The draft clause also entrenches the right of elected union Reps to represent the industrial interests of their colleagues in bargaining, disputes, consultation around change, grievance procedures, disciplinary procedures, or any other process in which there is an employee entitlement to representation.

Rep protections and employer obligations

The changes also introduce a general protection for Reps when carrying out their role at a workplace, and prohibit employers from unreasonably failing or refusing to deal with them, knowingly or recklessly misleading them, or hindering them in their role as delegates.

Every IEU member knows the importance of having an empowered, informed, trained Rep – this is arguably the most important role in the whole union structure. IEU Reps go above and beyond on behalf of their colleagues (in addition to their day job!), often in very trying circumstances.

This long-overdue legal recognition of their critical role and their fundamental rights and entitlements is very welcome, and will significantly boost your union's ability to support and advocate for members right across our diverse sector.

Once the Award clauses are finalised, we will communicate further with IEU Reps and members about these important changes – stay tuned!

12 Rules for Strife: new must-read from comics star Sam Wallman

It seems yesterday that *The Point* was praising the work of activist comic journalist Sam Wallman, for his debut book *Our Members Be Unlimited*, a funny, insightful, heartfelt exploration of union history.

Our Members Be Unlimited sold out when launched in 2022, and at 250 pages of intensive drawing and storytelling, it seemed as much as we could expect from an artist still toiling at a day job.

But less than two years later Sam is launching his second tome, *12 Rules for Strife*, a collaboration with progressive luminary Jeff Sparrow, author of *Radical Melbourne*, *Crimes Against Nature* and many others.

12 Rules for Strife is a 'radical gift book' which explores powerful ideas distilled from the history of struggle for better lives, better working conditions, and a better world.

Sam says the collaboration went from a zine to a small book, before finishing at 128 pages.

'We brainstormed and developed it while regularly riding our bikes along Melbourne's rivers, and I suppose just like the last book, the idea for this one came out of plugging a gap that we perceived out there in the world.'

What was it like working with such an acclaimed writer after doing the lot yourself on the previous tome?

I really enjoyed the collaborative nature of making this book. Jeff is my favourite writer on the planet, I started reading his work as a teenager and it has always been very formative for me. So it has been a huge honour to work with him on this. I think it was a bit of a pivot for him to write for a comic, because you have to be very minimal with the wordcount – too many words on the page make the work look unappealing. But I suspect he may have enjoyed the challenge. Writing in a very tight, punchy way, without being reductive and without over-simplifying things. There's a bit of an art to it.

Our Members Be Unlimited struck a nerve. Was that because you made often dry matters accessible?

I think there was a bit of hunger out there for a broad overview of unionism, one that isn't too dry and dusty. But a large part of the credit should go to the comics medium itself. As teachers reading this will know, comics and graphics can really help make dry subject matter more accessible and engaging. With illustrations, you can make serious stuff seem goofy, which is a great way to slip through some education. Kind of like the way some parents hide vegetables inside a pasta sauce!

What is important about this book?

I think most people are acutely aware of the array of crises we face – the cost of living crisis, climate change, war. We are all pretty good at talking about

what's wrong, but we're less adept at talking about what we might do about it all. We wanted to make a book that celebrates struggle and encourages people to be part of building communities that can challenge the status quo and the powers that be.

Why should IEU members buy (many copies of) your book and who should they be for?

The book is written with union members front of mind. It celebrates people who are involved in building a fairer, more egalitarian kind of world, and I think that is a description of just about every teacher I have ever come across. We also wrote it with younger people in mind, people who might be newer to the fight, people who could be feeling disaffected and alienated. It's the kind of thing we hope people might buy for say, their younger cousin or a fellow union member, doubly so because it's a pretty easy, punchy read. It will also be available in libraries – hopefully school libraries!

What's next? More books or are you playing it by ear?

I am about to start work on a book about the Pink Bans, which was a string of industrial actions carried out by construction workers in support of persecuted queer people, prior to the emergence of the mainstream gay rights movement. It will be historically focussed but will also touch on my experience being gay working in a very blokey environment, in my current day job as a stevedore at the docks. That one will come out next year.

Scribe senior editor David Golding says, 'Each author's individual record of political writing and activism speaks for itself, and together Jeff and Sam are dynamite. This will be the perfect gift for politically engaged family members, friends, and fellow workers.'

- *12 Rules for Strife* was published in time for May Day 2024 in both Australia and the US.
- **Sam Wallman website:** www.samwallman.com
- *12 Rules for Strife* at Scribe publications: rb.gy/wcdqk6



BUILDING THE UNION

The importance of member retention

We all know that to build union power, we must recruit new members; we thrive on collective power and the engagement of many rather than the efforts of a few. But just as important to modern unions is member retention.

The IEU is renewing its commitment to the 'member journey' to help attract more new members and ensure existing members feel connected to each other and engaged in the work of their union. We know that if we keep new unionists in the fold long enough, they often become 'lifers' who get more out of the union and contribute more to it.

This builds on research conducted by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) which estimated that there are almost one million Australian workers who can be characterised as 'union believers', but who have not joined their union.

The ACTU research identified the key drivers and barriers felt by workers in Australia when it comes to joining and staying in their union and found most people join because of the promise of legal protection, including access to information about rights at work.

And the most common barrier to joining a union? Awareness! Too many workers, particularly in younger demographics, have limited understanding of the premise and power of unionism – making membership a much harder 'sell'.

The union movement is using such data-driven insights to inform and shape its growth and engagement strategy.

At the IEU, our Member Journey Project is using this information to streamline and personalise the member experience from when they enter the profession until they retire.

We will also adapt the ACTU models to better identify the unique drivers and barriers in education.

Demographics

The education sector has an ageing workforce and is facing a reduction in new entrants. Early career teachers are less likely to join their union, and more likely to leave the profession within their first five years – two facts which are undeniably related!

The ACTU research identified the key drivers and barriers felt by workers in Australia when it comes to joining and staying in their union and found most people join because of the promise of legal protection, including access to information about rights at work.

The ACTU research labelled that the key barriers to union growth as relevance, value and pathways.

Relevance: many don't see the union as being necessary to reaching their goals or needs. Half of those surveyed believed that individuals are best placed to negotiate for their interests despite also believing they were likely to have an issue with an employer in the future. We know that unions have a key role to play in ensuring fairness at

work, both individually and collectively, through representation and broader campaigns. We must communicate that to potential members!

Value: some potential members don't see the tangible benefits of union membership. They don't know how fees are spent or whether membership is 'worth it.' It is important to clarify for them how unions function and how funds are spent to address such concerns.

Pathways: many say they don't see a clear path to joining or don't see themselves reflected in union imagery. Presenting a model of unionism that is simple to engage with and represents contemporary audiences is key to addressing this barrier.

The Member Journey project seeks to improve your experience as an IEU member – and we need your input!

- What barriers to union membership do you hear from non-member colleagues?
- What do you think would best help us grow the union and retain members?

Send your thoughts to:
thepoint@ieuvictas.org.au

EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF



Tell us about your job

Jobs change over time. To ensure you are being paid at the correct rate, we need to know about the roles and tasks you are performing that are not currently reflected in your Agreements.

If your role has changed significantly in the last five years, we would like to know, as any review of classification structures need to be underpinned by member feedback.

There will be a comprehensive survey coming out, but we also need to hear from you directly because often a job grows until it doesn't bear any resemblance to where it began.

Examples of additional duties include:

- translating and interpreting outside the classroom
- assisting with vision impaired students outside of the classroom
- consulting with physios, occupational therapists, psychologists and speech pathologists/therapists to assist specific students.

If you are a Learning Support Officer or Aide, are you working under consistent supervision or are you expected to work with or supervise students independently?

If you work in administration, are you performing the Daily Organiser role? Are you working as the timetabler? Do you manage staff absences? Does that require you to be on call?

Are you the VASS coordinator in your secondary school?

Are you the Careers counsellor?

If you work in Food Technology, do you manage food allergy protocols? Do you assist students in practical classes?

If you work in the library, the laboratory or IT, how much autonomy do you have in your role?

If you are an SSO, what is your role? Do you have a qualification and/or certificates?

In any roles you perform, are you involved with budgeting?

We want to make sure that ES workloads are measured accurately and that you're paid for the work you actually do, not duties based on an old job description.

To tell us about your role email:
tspiel@ieuvictas.org.au

Creative unionism

At **St Joseph's School Warragul**, ES member Kerry Jenkinson is both compliant and defiant! She's sewn the school's lanyard onto her IEU lanyard, thereby following school requirements to be identifiable as a staff member while showing the world her union colours!



At the Two Years Too Long rally in **Glenorchy**, member Mary-Anne Johnson was productive as well as collegiate, knitting an IEU scarf while joining the rally!



INDEPENDENT BARGAINING ROUND-UP

Members standing strong in independent schools

There is a change in Independent school bargaining, and it is picking up speed and strength.

We are seeing a rise in the strength and solidarity of sub-branches. We're seeing more unsatisfactory draft Agreements voted down, forcing employers back to the bargaining table. We're seeing more Protected Action Ballots applied for and more industrial action planned or taken. Staff are increasingly unwilling to accept an employer's position that genuine recognition of co-curricular expectations is impossible, that support staff salaries should be left behind, or that scheduled class time reductions to match industry standards can only be delivered with a pay cut.

At the bargaining table, teachers and educational support staff maintain their focus on delivering the best educational outcomes for their students, but they are no longer accepting that this must come at a cost to their personal health or their work-life balance. The result of this growing strength is the capacity to achieve greater outcomes in bargaining.

At the table

VICTORIA

A vote of the proposed **Camberwell Girls' Grammar School** Agreement saw a historic 87% 'no' vote on the back of an incredible presentation by our IEU Bargaining Reps who were unsatisfied with the position taken on co-curricular expectations, replacement classes and salary. To its credit, the school delivered negotiated salary increases despite the

vote, and bargaining representatives are preparing to return to the table to continue negotiations.

Negotiations at **Preshil** are continuing with the employer responding to the claims tabled by the IEU bargaining team.

IEU members at **Ilim College** have unanimously endorsed a draft Agreement which has been reviewed and is ready to proceed to vote. All improvements of the Agreement have already been implemented at a school-based level.

Employee bargaining Reps are working with the IEU to finalise the staff Log of Claims at **St Margaret's and Berwick Grammar School**, which will soon be put to members for endorsement.

In-principle agreement has been reached at **Hester Hornbrook Academy** on a two-year deal with annual 2.5% wage increases, new regulation of working hours for all employees, and a reclassification of all Teaching Aides to Level 3. In an historic win, the Agreement will include Gender Affirmation Leave. Our First Nations comrades will have access to cultural and ceremonial leave, and all staff have won a day of paid cultural/religious leave.

At **Lauriston Girl's School**, bargaining has delivered in-principle agreement for a four-year deal, with annual 3% wage increases, increased parental leave and an increased allowance for Howqua staff.

Bargaining continues for the **Seventh Day Adventist Schools** Enterprise Agreement, with negotiations focusing on improved salaries and conditions for staff working across Victorian Adventist Schools.

Agreement has been reached on 10% salary increases over three years, inclusion of performance and conduct management processes, redundancy improvements, improved super contributions, reduction in holiday recall and a \$150 camp allowance. However, negotiations continue over key IEU claims for a reduction in scheduled class time and extras.

Bargaining has commenced at **Plenty Valley Christian College**. The employees' log of claims has been presented and the employer will respond shortly.

Bargaining has recommenced at **Ballarat Christian College**, however the employer has refused most employee claims and is yet to table a salary offer. Key issues include the lack of salary increments for general staff and workload reduction measures for teachers.

Management has improved the pay offer for the **Ballarat Grammar School (Assistants and ELC Staff)** Agreement, with increases varying from 3% up to 19%. Final items are being negotiated, such as coverage of instrumental music teachers.

The **Kardinia International College** draft Agreement is poised to go to the vote, but due to the proposed salary increase of just 3% over the life of a lengthy Agreement the IEU has not endorsed the draft and it appears that there will be a significant 'no' vote.

Bargaining at **Braemar College** has been delayed, but the employee bargaining team is ready to table an endorsed Log of Claims.

An interim salary increase of 4% was provided to staff covered under the

Monash Foundation Year Agreement, while bargaining continues around subsequent salary increases.

Korowa Anglican Girls' School employees have received a revised salary offer, and bargaining continues.

A Log of Claims is being developed for **Yarra Valley Grammar School** General Staff and Teachers Agreements. A key priority is to move the school to one comprehensive Agreement covering all staff.

TASMANIA

The **Hutchins School** General Staff Agreement is ready to return to the vote after bargaining recommenced to include casuals within the Agreement.

Bargaining at **St Michael's Collegiate** has concluded and the draft Agreement is being reviewed. There has been an offer of an initial 4% salary increase (from March) with at least 3% in each subsequent year. A new classification structure has been developed and included with extra increments at all levels, giving experienced staff an extra 2% salary increase. Teaching staff remain concerned that workload reduction measures and face-to-face teaching hours have not been included in the Agreement.

IEU welcomes placement payment plan to help student teachers

The IEU has welcomed the federal government's announcement of a 'Commonwealth Prac Payment' to support selected groups of students, including teachers, doing mandatory work placements.

Those who are studying to be a teacher, nurse, midwife or social worker will be eligible to receive A\$319.50 per week while on placement, benchmarked to the single Austudy per week rate.

The payment, available from 1 July 2025, will be means-tested and will not affect other support payments a student receives.

IEU Victoria Tasmania General Secretary David Brear says it is 'a great initiative' that the IEU had been seeking for a long time.

'It removes a key barrier to entry into our profession for those who cannot afford to undertake months of unpaid work placements. It will help address the alarming rate of student drop out from teacher training courses.'

'More measures addressing workloads and educator safety are needed to make teaching an attractive career for more young people, and to retain them once they start in schools, so this is a vital first step.'

IEUA Federal Secretary Brad Hayes agrees that the plan to provide placement payments are a 'critical step towards improving teacher graduation rates'.

'Student drop-out rates for teachers in

training are among the highest of all professions.

'No one expects to work for free. Our union has long called for paid teacher placements and the government is to be commended for listening to our concerns and taking action.'

Brad says 'widespread reforms' are required to improve teacher recruitment and retention rates.

'The next challenge is to better support graduate teachers struggling with the major workload pressures that await them the moment they enter their new profession.'

'School employers must also play their part by ensuring paid time for new teachers to participate in professional mentoring, along with the provision of reduced teaching loads to ease the spiralling work demands being imposed on teachers the minute they land in their first teaching job.'

The ACTU says the payment will ease cost-of-living pressures for around 68,000 eligible higher education students and over 5,000 VET students each year.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien

said, 'the Commonwealth Prac Payment will ensure that Australians aren't held back from completing their studies because of financial insecurity'.

'The high costs associated with mandatory placements have been a barrier to many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.'

'The Commonwealth Prac Payment is a vital step towards ensuring that students have equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of their financial backgrounds.'

Writing for *The Conversation*, Deanna Grant-Smith, Professor of Management, University of the Sunshine Coast and Paula McDonald, Professor of Work and Organisation, Queensland University of Technology, stated, 'payment for placements and other meaningful financial support is a good place to start'.

'But safeguarding the financial and general wellbeing of students is not just the responsibility of governments. Universities, vocational education and training providers (such as TAFEs) and employers also need to make sure the benefits of unpaid work placements are

not outweighed by the costs.'

The academics called for new regulations to limit how long an unpaid placement can last, and offer alternatives to unpaid placements, such as 'supervised service learning', where qualified professionals supervise students acting in their field.

'Employers also need to ensure they properly train, induct and pay graduates and students undertaking work that benefits their business.'

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Learning from students: young women supporting each other

Considering the many recent negative media stories about gendered violence, toxic masculinity and misogyny in schools, I thought I'd take a different, more positive approach to my regular column.



UNION PRESIDENT
TERRY HUDDY

After having an inspiring conversation with a Year 12 girl at my school, her positive attitude and willingness to help younger girls to become the best versions of themselves really struck me as a breath of fresh air.

I asked her if I could interview her to get a clearer view of how she came to be such a strong, self-confident young woman. I'm pleased to say that the future looks brighter with young women like her in our community!

To protect the students' identity, we will refer to her here as Chris.

Learning from adversity

Chris says her interest in helping others grew out of her own experience when she had 'a bit of a rough time at school' last year.

'I found that during this time I really leant on other people in my life such as my teachers, peers, and mentors. I remember there was this day when I was feeling very stressed. I completely just broke down to one of the girls in my class who was in Year 12 at the time. She saw I wasn't OK. We just went to the bathroom, and we started speaking and I opened up to her about everything.'

'During this conversation she made me realise that it's OK to put yourself first and that you need to learn to say no. You can't be everyone's cup of tea and you just need to understand that when you stand by yourself and your morals and have authentic intentions you will never lose in life.'

'Hearing this advice really changed my perspective and made me realise that I need to start making decisions for myself and not other people. Because at the end of the day if you're just basing your decisions of what other people want and think about you then you're essentially losing yourself and hurting yourself because you're trying to compromise yourself for someone else's needs.'

Learning through leadership

Chris had 'pretty much indulged herself in every single sport' at her previous school and was disappointed sport 'wasn't really as big' for the girls at her new co-ed campus.

But she encouraged girls she was close with to participate.

'This helped me a lot to continue my passion and develop my sense of self-identity as well. As for other girls, they found that playing sport is good for them physically and mentally. They shouldn't worry about how they play, or how they look in the boys' eyes. They learned it is more about doing it for themselves.'

Chris applied this attitude to other aspects of her school life, taking on leadership opportunities.

'As I became a leader at school, I reflected on my younger year levels, and I remembered how I felt and what I wished the leaders did for me. And I tried to use this to help students in younger year levels the way that I wanted to be helped at their age.'

'I think this strongly built my self-confidence as I got compliments from the younger girls as to what I was doing for them. I could see them grow and essentially handle stuff better than the way I did when I was their age. I saw I was helping someone else in the ways I wished I could have been helped when I was younger.'

Chris found it 'very rewarding' to be an outdoor education leader on the Year 7 camp.

'Most of the new Year 7s were very close friends yet and I remember there was a young girl on this camp who was having some troubles with her friendships, so my peer and I hung out with her one day.'

'I found that as we were being her partner in the activity, more people wanted to join in and help us.'

'This essentially helped her establish friendships with girls who she's still friends with today.'

'So I learned it's not necessarily always

a bad thing if you're not the person who's always first picked because this can lead to a better pathway in the end.'

Learning no matter what

Chris also gained insights by putting herself 'out of her comfort zone' by participating in the school musical.

'I learned that it's important to put yourself out there; not just to develop what you like but to realise what you don't like. Because even though learning is not always positive it helps you establish your boundaries and remember the things that you didn't feel comfortable doing so you don't put yourself in that position again in the future. Learning can always be positive. No matter the circumstances, it has future benefits.'

Learning by standing up to misogyny

Another formative learning experience for Chris was standing up to a problematic male 'who consistently tried to assert dominance' over her and other girls.

'For a good few months he would always make comments... He would say slurs whenever you entered a room, or he would just make you feel really crap about yourself.'

'I had conversations with other girls in my year levels about the things he had been saying. They always claimed that it made them feel crap as well, but no one ever did anything about it. When I confronted him about it, the other students still said nothing because he had grown a reputation where everyone had essentially feared him.'

'I think it's important for girls to realise that if your boyfriend is making comments about other girls that you don't agree with, you shouldn't feel scared of him, and you should call him out.'

'From this experience I learned that you shouldn't let other people define

what you are.'

Chris sees some young women 'dumb themselves down' around boys.

'I think it's important for girls in society to realise that in real life as well as their relationships, it's OK to be smarter than the boys and it's OK if you date someone who's smaller than or who's younger than you.'

'I also think that as a male in society they shouldn't feel threatened if a girl is these things and instead it should be praised and admired. I find that in the long run as males mature they tend to admire smarts in women but at this age it's something that threatens them.'

Learning in the future

Chris is now participating in a future leaders program at school with Year 7s and Year 8s. She's conscious of leaving a legacy for the younger levels of her school.

'This program is about helping girls feel comfortable at school and grow stronger in their own self-worth.'

'I think heading into the real world where there's careers and we're introduced to more people, it's essential to always stand by your ground and your morals and remember your self-worth.'

'I hope I can be someone to them like I experienced last year when I was having a rough Year 11 where that year 12 girl taught me that it's OK to say no, that I needed to put myself first and always stand by my truth.'

'I hope I can teach that to other people and that they can carry this on to other people. There can be a bit of a ripple effect for this behaviour. All women in society should just be themselves.'

Tax cuts and the Federal Budget

After a long campaign by the union movement and other progressive organisations, the Albanese government overhauled the previously legislated Stage 3 tax cuts to ensure that benefits flow to all taxpayers, not just to the wealthiest.

As a result, from 1 July the vast majority of IEU members will see a real increase to their take-home pay. To take three examples of members employed full-time in Victorian Catholic education:

- An Education Support Staff employee at Level 2-8, Category B, will pay about \$1455 less in tax in the next financial year. When combined with the salary

increase payable from 1 July, this employee will be taking home approximately \$83 more in each fortnightly salary payment.

- The tax bill of a first-year graduate teacher will be reduced by approximately \$1630 – combined with the 1 July pay-rise, their fortnightly take-home pay will increase by around \$92.
- A teacher at the top of the pay scale will pay about \$2572 less in tax, and see their salary increase by \$1146 for the second half of this year (before the December bonus and January increase) – that's about \$143 more in the pocket each fortnight.

There were also several important announcements in the 2024 Federal Budget which will directly benefit discrete groups of IEU members.

- Elsewhere in these pages we have reported on the very welcome introduction of superannuation payments on government-paid parental leave (p.18) and practicum payments for teachers in training (p.8).
- The reductions in the indexation of HECS-HELP debts will be a huge relief for IEU members paying off their studies. The backdating of this relief to 1 July 2023 reduces the average HECS-HELP debt of \$26,000 by around \$1200.

- There has been a commitment to funding wage increases for early childhood education and care (ECEC) workers once the Fair Work Commission hands down its finding on that sector. The IEU has been a core player in advocating for increases to minimum salaries for ECEC workers, and we are delighted that this long campaign is nearing a successful conclusion.
- The rollout of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan has been boosted with \$34.6 million of funding over the next four years. The NTWAP aims to cut teacher workloads by developing a Teacher Resource Hub which will streamline

access to quality resources, including dedicated Hubs for digital technologies, maths, literacy, civics and citizenship, and student wellbeing. The NTWAP also seeks to improve the attraction and retention of First Nations teachers, a move the IEU wholeheartedly supports.

- Finally, we support investment into affordable housing for essential workers because many education workers can no longer afford to live and work in their local area. The injection of \$12.3 billion into new housing programs begins the long path back to housing affordability for essential workers.

The IEU welcomes the redesign of the Stage 3 tax cuts, and measures in the federal budget which will improve the lives of our members.

Safety must always come first

(continued from front page)

Things are upside down when educators, who are the victim of threatening behaviour or physical violence, end up on reportable conduct charges; when violence against staff is not met with immediate, firm action and made as important as the rights of children with serious behavioural issues; when staff are improperly informed about what issues their students face because of flawed reporting systems.

The Point heard of a veteran teacher who was ambushed, grabbed, shaken vigorously and yelled at in the face by a student and their school felt the incident was not sufficient for a behavioural management plan (BMP) to be put in place. 'It only happened once,' was the response.

Once is too often. To fail to act is unforgivable. Little wonder the teacher involved left the school.

Another educator was attacked during yard duty by a student with a history of violence. The student's record had not been updated and the staff member had no idea of the dangers they faced.

There are reports of leadership at schools deleting details of poor student behaviour from their records, of BMPs getting lost in transit when dangerous students switch schools, and part-time staff not being notified about children with behavioural issues.

Misogyny, harassment and violence against women

Just after we decided to make safety the focus of this edition of *The Point*, there were rallies across the country demanding action on violence against women after a series of horrific murders. An emergency meeting of Australia's leaders was called to tackle 'immediate, meaningful and practical action to address family violence'.

In 2024, an Australian woman is being violently killed every four days. Twelve days after 1000 people rallied in Ballarat to protest the deaths of three women in two months, there was yet another sickening murder in regional Victoria.

While political leaders debate what measures can make society safer for women, we can immediately make a difference for teachers in classrooms by tackling student conduct in the classroom.

An Australian Senate inquiry and work by the Australian Education Research Organisation back up what members tell us every day: student behaviour has worsened since the pandemic.

In early April, a Monash University study revealed a 'disturbing pattern of sustained sexual harassment, sexism and misogyny perpetrated by boys, signalling a worrying shift in gender dynamics within school environments'.

The Monash research found that male supremacy in classrooms was 'rampant' involving 'overt displays of authority and



dominance by boys towards women teachers...' It's no coincidence that IEU Organisers have been inundated with reports of harassment of female teachers.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The review into the Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) has finally been delivered – nine months late – and it tinkers with a system that requires major changes. The RCS has wrought a terrible toll on educators and the school system and until there is meaningful action, the union will continue to be inundated with nightmare RCS cases.

A student feigns a sex act in class, and the teacher who intervenes (out of concern for other students) finds herself as a result thrown into the RCS grinder. A teacher is reported for grabbing a student about to run across a busy road. A staff member is reported for yelling at a student she finds breaking into her car. All these investigations come at a huge cost to individuals, schools and the education system, and damage the mental health of innocent educators, as frustration, disillusionment, fear and mental trauma drives great employees from the sector.

In a system where the blameless, trying to do their job and protect students, are reported, it's little wonder there is rampant burnout and a teacher shortage.

Our sector's workforce is full of compassionate, giving people, who are up for the challenge of helping kids with issues. They live for it. But there must be every attempt to assist them with structures, systems and common sense approaches that recognise the unique pressures of school life.

All the above is why safety and wellbeing is the focus of this edition.

It's what's happening out there in schools. It's what members are asking Organisers about. And when you think about it, feeling safe and supported in your workplace is a fundamental right, a non-negotiable.

If it is not being delivered, it becomes front page news.

If you or someone you know is affected by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

DIY safety

Try a web search for 'protecting teachers from students'. The top response will be an article about a teacher's responsibility to protect their students from risks of injury.

It is understandable that we have always put the student first in education – and all teachers will continue to do so – but the lack of attention to safeguarding educators is alarming, and it must change.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) produced the *National Strategy to Address the Abuse of Teachers, School Leaders and Other School Staff* in 2020, which was the sixth result when we made our search.

'We need to invest in the wellbeing of the profession and work together to ensure that all teachers, school leaders, and school staff in Australian schools are safe and respected,' that report read. 'We must value the teaching profession and continue our commitment to ensuring that schools are safe places of work and study by utilising national levers to address this national problem. Together, we have a collective responsibility to show the profession that we have their backs and that there are no exceptions when it comes to schools as safe workplaces.'

Those words came just after the first year of the pandemic, when educators pinballed in and out of risky classrooms at a moment's notice to keep schools running and kids' education alive.

Where are we four years later?

Examine a sector's behaviour management plan, and the needs and rights of troubled students are well covered. Even their parents get ample mentions. What is missing is genuine consideration of the wellbeing of staff who must deal with a problematic, violent or unpredictable student.

Of AITSL's five priority areas in their strategy for combatting the abuse of education staff the three which you might expect to see some short-term improvement from were strengthening school communities, wellbeing, and raising the status of the profession (of teaching).

With student behaviour worse now than during the pandemic, and a teacher shortage challenging the educational sector, it's hard to imagine many educators thinking things have improved on any of those fronts.

The noble vision of the AITSL report bears repeating: 'All teachers, school leaders, principals and staff in Australian schools are safe and respected, in their workplaces and as members of the highly valued teaching profession'.

Five actions were listed to address abuse of staff in service of that vision. None appear to have had much impact, especially the intention to 'design and run a national public awareness campaign aimed at improving how the broader community views the teaching profession'.

While changing perceptions about a profession is not an overnight job, parents never got a greater example of the dedication of educators than during the pandemic, when school literally came into the home. Despite all the plaudits for teachers then, parental abuse of education staff is now at unprecedented levels.

The more that society feels the pinch, the more teachers end up copping it.

The effect of AITSL's grand plan, featuring annual forums, public awareness campaigns and data-gathering, was always going to be hard to quantify, but it's clear it has had little practical impact in schools.

Or in government. The Reportable Conduct Scheme and its prolonged review is evidence enough that the welfare of educators is not an urgent priority for our politicians.

That's why it is important that union members share the message that workload intensification is a health hazard; mental health is an occupational health and safety issue; and physical safety is a non-negotiable requiring culture change from staff as well as employers.

AITSL's five-year plan to combat the abuse of education staff soon reaches its first review. We wish them luck refining the big picture national settings to address online abuse, gender-based violence and assault of staff in schools.

In the meantime, unions need to step into the breach and arm members with the knowledge and skills to safeguard staff. That means having strong Consultative Committees to negotiate safer conditions, elected and trained Health and Safety Reps on every campus, and rank and file members who know how to avoid burnout and are empowered to speak up and demand change when the pressure gets too much.

We must take care of each other, in union.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Strengthening safety in schools: the role of the positive duty under the *Sex Discrimination Act*

Recent amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Act* have introduced a 'positive duty' for employers, providing the IEU and its members with a new legal framework to tackle gendered harassment.

At a time when the IEU is receiving more reports from members about violence and harassment in schools, it is important to understand how these legislative changes spell out the responsibility of employers to foster a safe and respectful educational environment.

The concept of positive duty

The 'positive duty' mandated by Section 28B of the *Sex Discrimination Act* requires schools to take proactive measures to prevent sexual harassment, discrimination, and related victimisation. This duty encompasses several forms of unlawful conduct:

- **Sex discrimination:** includes unequal pay for similar work, biased recruitment practices, or differential access to training and promotions based on sex.
- **Sexual harassment:** includes any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature – whether physical, verbal, or digital – that makes a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated, such as inappropriate touching, suggestive comments, and sharing explicit images without consent.
- **Sex-based harassment:** refers to demeaning behaviour related to a person's sex that isn't necessarily sexual, such as sexist remarks, derogatory comments about physical capabilities, or gender-based bullying.
- **Hostile work environment:** occurs when actions or comments related to sex create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment, often perpetuated through sexually explicit materials, sexist jokes, or persistent gender stereotyping.
- **Victimisation:** involves retaliatory actions against an individual who has complained about discrimination or harassment or has participated in an investigation regarding such complaints.

These obligations are aligned with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, which requires employers to manage risks to the health and safety of employees and students, thereby providing a comprehensive framework to address both physical and psychological safety in educational settings.

Compliance with the positive duty

To meet the requirements of the 'positive duty', schools must implement a variety of practical actions:

- **Leadership commitment:** School leaders must visibly and actively work to eliminate unlawful behaviours, modelling respectful behaviour and ensuring consistent application of all policies.
- **Cultural transformation:** Schools must cultivate a culture that actively discourages discrimination and harassment. This involves regular awareness campaigns, inclusive policy formulations, and active

engagement from the entire school community.

- **Knowledge and training:** It is essential to provide training for staff and students on what constitutes unlawful conduct, their rights under the law, and the procedures for reporting and dealing with complaints. This training should be developed in consultation with staff.
- **Risk management:** Schools need to identify and address specific risks associated with unlawful behaviours. This may include conducting regular risk assessments based on past incidents, surveys, or feedback, and developing risk mitigation strategies such as robust policies, training programs, and changes to the physical environment or to school schedules.
- **Support structures:** Schools must establish clear and accessible reporting mechanisms, offer support to victims and deal with complaints promptly and fairly.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** There must be regular reviews of implemented policies and practices to ensure they remain effective and make necessary adjustments.

The amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Act*, coupled with OHS legislation, form a robust framework to address the increasing violence and harassment in schools.

As members of the IEU, your active participation in policy development, risk assessments, training, and transparent reporting is essential. It not only ensures compliance with these legal requirements but also plays a crucial role in building a safer and more inclusive educational setting.

If you believe that your employer is not sufficiently complying with the 'positive duty' or if the consultation and preventive measures are inadequate, you are encouraged to contact your Organiser. The IEU is here to support you in ensuring that all schools not only comply with the new legal standards but also genuinely commit to protecting all staff and students from discrimination and harassment.

FEDERAL POLICY

New workload assessment tool targets teacher burnout

IEU Victoria Tasmania General Secretary David Brear says a new national teacher workload assessment tool is 'an essential part of the overall strategy required to alleviate workload burdens'.

'A process mandating the assessment of the workload implications around the introduction of any new national educational initiative is long overdue. For too long governments at both the state and federal level have been happy to tack on more and more administrative and compliance burden to the day-to-day workload of teachers without involving those same teachers in decision-making around the merit of the initiative or how the work that goes with it is going to get done – the introduction of the NCCD is a case in point.'

He says the main factors driving historically low levels of teacher recruitment and retention are unsustainable workloads and workload intensification in schools.

Brear says the workload assessment tool means any new initiative must 'pass muster' by addressing specific questions about how it will be achieved, what it intends to achieve and how it will affect teacher workload, including its effect on regional, rural and remote schools.

'Teachers will always be open to adapting and refining what they do in order to achieve better outcomes for students but the mounting pressure of doing this without any workload recognition is one of the biggest drivers of teachers abandoning the profession.'

The workload assessment tool was developed in collaboration with the IEU and other education unions and should set an important precedent for the adoption of similar teacher workload protections across all areas of education policy.

The IEU has advocated for the widespread implementation of workload impact assessments to curb burdensome compliance and administrative tasks, many of which unnecessarily duplicate the efforts of teachers and school leaders.

As a result of IEU proposals, the assessment tool will require consideration of existing initiatives before the add-on of any new tasks. Teachers will be directly consulted regarding existing areas of work, including timeframes, professional development, and the practicalities of implementation within schools.

The tool also demands answers to the following questions:

- Is additional release time, administrative support, training or more staff needed to support new policy initiatives?
- Are any proposed changes likely to disrupt the continuity of student learning?
- Do new policy initiatives add to the duplication of existing administrative tasks?

The government's engagement with teachers and their unions in the development of the assessment tool not only addresses administrative tasks, it also helps rebuild respect for the profession.

Federal IEUA Secretary Brad Hayes said, 'Our teachers have commonsense practical solutions to workload pressures; we just need employers and policy makers to listen'.



Reportable Conduct Scheme

Reportable Conduct Scheme information sessions hit the road

The IEU supports the intent behind the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme – we're a union of education workers, after all, our chief concern is the welfare and development of children, and it is vital that there is a viable, workable process to protect them.

We cannot, however, support the current operation of the RCS, which is hurting too many good people, threatening too many careers, and costing education too many dedicated educators during a growing workforce shortage. On an almost daily basis we are being contacted by members who have had a complaint made against them, and we're having to break the bad news to them about the extraordinarily lengthy and punitive process that they are about to be subjected to as a result.

The IEU made a detailed submission to the Victorian government, highlighting the most significant issues for our members and proposing reforms which would uphold its original purpose and eradicate unnecessary persecution of education staff.

General Secretary Dave Brear and Deputy General Secretary Kylie Busk met with Victorian education minister Ben Carroll and the new Chair of the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (and ex-education minister and Deputy Premier) James Merlino to discuss our submission and the progress of the RCS review, and we have offered feedback to schools and employers about how to

avoid unnecessary reports.

We have also lobbied employers, education authorities, the government and the media to ensure the shortcomings of the scheme were well known to decision makers delivering the review of the scheme.

That review was due last July. It was finally tabled in early May, and it appears that many of the most problematic aspects of the current scheme will remain.

We will continue to lobby powerbrokers to get a better RCS. But just as important is getting the message out to every staff member who might be the subject of a report. Many busy school staff still know little about the scheme and don't know what to do if they are the subject of an allegation.

That's why IEU Organisers are now hitting the road, delivering in-school presentations covering the operation of the RCS and outlining key facts that all educators should be aware of, including the rights of anyone who is subject to an allegation. We strongly recommend that you attend a presentation if you have the opportunity to do so – you can make contact with the IEU office to request that one is held in your school.

We are also tweaking these resources to

make them relevant for staff in Tasmanian schools, where a version of the RCS has recently come into operation.

As never before, it is crucial that you are aware of how to avoid situations that may give rise to a Reportable Conduct allegation, and what to do if you are the subject of a complaint.

Top RCS tips for educators

- We strongly advise registered teachers in Victoria NOT to hold a Working With Children Check. Your teacher registration can be used in lieu of WWCC, and holding both forms of registration can cause enormous complications and delays if an allegation is made.
- Be conscious of your limits and your wellbeing. Stress and fatigue lead to mistakes, and it is far better to take leave or seek assistance than put yourself in a high-risk situation.
- Be mindful and vigilant and be aware of how others might perceive your actions.
- Ensure that school leadership is aware of any significant ongoing student behavioural concerns in writing – ignoring these or trying to deal with them yourself puts you at risk.
- Limit your contact with students to official channels (such as school email) and during school hours only.
- Keep records of any problematic incidents and alert school leadership to any concerns.
- If you are made aware of an allegation made against you, seek advice immediately. IEU members have access to expert assistance and representation at no cost – but we can't help non-members once an allegation is made.

Health and Safety Superheroes

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff in all workplaces, including schools.

HSRs are elected by their peers to represent them on health and safety issues and are empowered by legislation to act on behalf of their colleagues.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act) in Victoria and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (Tas) mandate that employers must allow for the election of at least one HSR in a workplace, yet too many IEU members work at schools without an elected HSR and therefore without a powerful advocate working to keep them safe.

HSRs have several legislated powers that enable them to effectively advocate for a safe work environment. One of the key roles of HSRs is to assist workers to report hazards to their employer, who has a duty under law to take steps to eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to workers through exposure to that hazard. This proactive approach helps to prevent incidents and injuries before they occur, creating a safer environment for all.

Additionally, HSRs have the right to be consulted on health and safety matters, including the development of policies and procedures. This ensures that the concerns and perspectives of staff are considered when decisions are being made that may impact their safety. By representing workers in these discussions, HSRs help to ensure that the needs and wellbeing of staff are prioritised.

If a hazard arises, HSRs also have the power to issue a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) if they believe there is a risk to health and safety. This notice requires the employer to take action to address the issue within a specified period. If the employer fails to comply, the HSR can escalate the matter to WorkSafe, the workplace health and safety regulator.

The kinds of hazards which HSRs could assist workers report include:

- a schedule of work commitments which does not allow for sufficient rest and recovery from fatigue
- harassment and verbal abuse by

students or parents

- violence or threatened violence by students
- workspaces with inadequate heating or cooling or mould issues
- walkways with water pooling in areas when it rains
- poorly lit carparks used at after-hours events
- no plan for days with interruptions to water supply
- areas of a school where emergency alarms are not audible.

Employers must allow and pay for HSRs to attend training including the important initial five-day course. The IEU is approved by WorkSafe to deliver this training in Victoria. In Tasmania, the initial training course for HSRs is delivered by Unions Tasmania. This training course covers the relevant safety legislation, HSR powers, employer obligations, risk assessment and control and how HSRs can support the workers they represent.



The HSRs at IEU training in April considered the causes of work-related stress and decided if those causes were individual, organisational or environmental. Nearly all the stickers in the picture above are under the heading 'organisational'. Despite most solutions to work-related stress being sheeted home to individuals, it is systems and organisational structures that need to be addressed to reduce most causes of work-related stress in workplaces.

If you're an HSR, your next opportunity to attend the IEU Initial Training Course is the first week of term 3.

Details: ieu.news/training
To book your place email: ohs@ieuvictas.org.au

Action needed or there could be an 'exodus' of principals

Australian Catholic University's annual *Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey* usually makes for sobering reading, but this year's edition, released in March, was shocking.

There were eye-watering statistics about violence against Principals – nearly half (48%) of Australia's school principals reported being physically attacked in 2023 – a 78% increase on the first survey in 2011. And, once again, like teachers, principals are being exhausted by heavy workloads, lack of time to focus on teaching and learning, and the burden of increasing mental health issues amongst students and staff.

While those numbers have been alarming for a long time, this year, there was more.

Writing for *The Conversation*, the survey authors didn't mince words: 'The challenge from this year's report is stark and immediate: an exodus is potentially on the horizon.'

The survey shows more than half of school principals intend to quit or retire early. Experienced school leaders, with over 15 years of service, most want to leave.

'We cannot assume resilience levels will continue to hold up. The signs are unambiguous. If these school leaders really do quit, they will take years of experience with them and cripple the ability of Australian schools to realise their aspirations.'

Mid-career leaders are also turning their backs on becoming principals, with almost 60 per cent of those with six to 10 years' experience wanting to leave the profession.

'Assuming only half of those who agreed or strongly agreed to quit acted on this response, there would be an exodus of more than 500 school leaders – the data strongly suggests these would be experienced school leaders,' said educational psychologist and co-lead investigator Professor Herb Marsh.

Andy Mison, President / Executive Director of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA), said, 'If we don't act now to better support them, many will follow through on their intention to leave, with devastating consequences for our schools. We must support and retain talented leaders to guide our schools.'

In response to the survey, the Education Minister Jason Clare added principal retention and attraction to the agenda for April's Education Ministers Meeting.

Stress and violence are two of the reasons for the potential principal shortage. The survey revealed that another is cyberbullying. The survey revealed 35 per cent of the 2300 principals and deputy principals participating had been

subjected to cyberbullying, up from 29 per cent in 2020.

And 88.5 per cent of cyberbullying incidents involved parents.

The report's chief investigator, Dr Paul Kidson, from Australian Catholic University, a former school principal, told *EducationHQ* that threats of violence, gossip and slander and cyberbullying are creating 'an unhealthy relationship between families and the school, and manifesting across those (areas).'

Dr Kidson said, 'Car park scufflebutt is all too easily inflamed in the online sphere, and... social media giants are not being held to account for what is unfolding on their platforms.'

'Once the power of social media is enabled, it's hard to control. You can't fight against that in the same way that you can (face to face).'

Solutions

Combatting violence

The report's chief investigator, Dr Paul Kidson, from Australian Catholic University, a former school principal, says Education Departments may need to ban violent or abusive parents from school grounds and prohibit them from contacting principals.

He cites Victoria's Community Safety Orders, enacted in 2021, as an example of a successful measure. It authorises principals to 'stop or limit parents, carers and other adults who behave in harmful, threatening, or abusive ways', including limiting their physical presence on campus.

'The sad reality... is an increasing number of parents, caregivers and their children are not taking their obligations and responsibilities seriously enough,' Dr Kidson told *The Educator*.

'They treat teachers and principals in ways that we do not accept in any other type of work environment, and it just defies imagination that we are still experiencing this problem at the scale we are.'

Since Victoria's Community Safety Orders came into effect in 2021, violence and threats of it have been lower there compared to every other State and Territory.

Dr Kidson called for action, not just words.

'Otherwise, you end up doubling down on the frustration because the principals then say, well, we were consulted about it, and it's making a difference, so why hasn't there been any action?' he said.

'So, there needs to be more than just 'thoughts and prayers', because

we don't want for those principals who are terrific servants of the nation to feel that they're being treated in a platitudinous way and just getting a pat on the head.'

Principal wellbeing and retention

ASPA is proposing a sixth priority area to be added to the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan: 'Retain and Sustain our Principals'. The proposed measures include ongoing monitoring of principals' health and wellbeing; a review of workloads and administrative responsibilities; and an investment in the administrative staff and systems in Australia's schools.

Other key proposals include greater powers for principals to respond to violence and unsafe behaviour; tailored training and development programs; appropriate remuneration frameworks that reflect the complexity of the role; and quarantining funds from other agencies such as Health and Community Services to support school communities.

School wellbeing expert Associate Professor Theresa Dicke called for a national summit which coordinates strategies and resources to focus on issues affecting principals.

'Otherwise, many of them will act on their intention to leave and it will make achieving important policy initiatives very unlikely.'

Key survey recommendations

- Calling on the Education Ministers Meeting and sectoral leaders in all states and territories to prioritise support for school leaders.
- Empowering school leaders with decision-making autonomy and providing dedicated resources for reducing unnecessary tasks, building on concerns highlighted by the Productivity Commission.
- Addressing inappropriate behaviour from parents/caregivers to maintain a safe and conducive learning environment.

Workcover gutted, leaving education workers high and dry

The IEU joins the Victorian union movement in condemning recent changes to the WorkCover scheme which drastically reduce support for those suffering psychological injury at work.

These changes were introduced by the Victorian government to deal with the serious financial strain that the WorkCover scheme was under as a result of an increase in the number and cost of claims combined with a long-term reluctance to increase employer premiums.

While the IEU agrees that action needed to be taken to protect the viability of the scheme, we absolutely oppose the nature of the cuts, which disproportionately affect workers in education where high-intensity, high-stress work combined with heavy workload demands and a focus on interpersonal relationships mean that mental injuries are relatively high compared with physical injuries.

While the changes are complex, the ways in which the bar has been raised for a successful WorkCover mental injury claim include the following:

- Workers who suffer stress or burnout due to **usual** or **typical** workplace events are no longer eligible for WorkCover benefits, unless the events at work were of a **traumatic nature**. These terms are poorly defined in the legislation, so we await interpretation by the courts – but at this stage it appears that ordinary job demands, workload pressures and interpersonal interactions will be considered 'usual or typical'.
- A worker making a claim for a mental injury must now be able to demonstrate that the predominant cause is work-related. Previously, work needed to have contributed **significantly** rather than **predominantly** to a mental injury.
- In order to qualify for WorkCover benefits, a mental injury must now be given a medical diagnosis by a doctor and must be deemed to have caused **significant** behavioural, cognitive, or psychological dysfunction. Previously, mental injuries did not have to cause significant consequences and there was no express requirement for a medical diagnosis.

At a time when a single poor decision by a stressed, frustrated or overworked education worker can lead to a reportable conduct allegation and the extraordinarily punitive process which follows, the gutting of this key safety net is particularly shameful.

Be careful out there!

Now that this key support for injured workers has been removed, though, we must both individually and collectively prioritise mental wellbeing. This is easier said than done, particularly given the tendency of dedicated education workers to go above and beyond, to take on extra work and responsibilities, and to simply accept abusive or harmful behaviour from students (and all-too-often parents) as part of the job.

We need to learn to when to say 'no' to additional work, to call out poor behaviour, to not work through every break or take work home every evening, and to remember that it is absolutely legitimate to use personal leave to manage mental stress.

A delay in getting something done or a staff absence is far better for everyone than an educator whose judgement is impaired as a result of unmanaged workplace stress.

We also need to continue to ensure that school leadership, Consultative Committees, and Health and Safety Committees are monitoring and addressing workload and safety issues, and to emphasise the fundamental responsibility of all employers to minimise risk and provide a healthy and safe working environment for all employees.

The IEU will continue to lobby for the overturning of these regressive changes, and we will continue to fight for any member injured in the course of their employment.

Mental health injury support – what you need to know

Mental health injuries all too often affect modern educators in the course of their employment. The more you know about how to recover, the better.

It's important to seek the help you need quickly – early treatment and support can reduce the impact of poor mental health.

In Victoria, since July 2021, workers with a mental injury can access early treatment and support from WorkSafe while they await the outcome of their claim. Payments for this support are called provisional payments. Where a worker is entitled to provisional payments, WorkSafe can cover the reasonable cost of treatment for 13 weeks.

If your claim is accepted, WorkSafe can continue to cover treatment costs over the longer term. If the claim is rejected, WorkSafe can cover these costs for up to 13 weeks.

What is a psychological injury?

Psychological injury encompasses various cognitive, emotional, and behavioural symptoms that disrupt an individual's life, significantly affecting their feelings, thoughts, actions, and interactions with others. This can manifest as conditions like depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Job stress refers to the physical and emotional symptoms that emerge in reaction to work-related situations. However, it's important to note that job stress itself is not classified as a disorder or a form of psychological injury.

Who can make a psychological injury or mental health claim?

You may be able to make a successful claim if events at work had an impact on your mental health or emotional

wellbeing. You may also be able to make a claim if you have a pre-existing psychological condition that worsened at work.

WorkCover 'reform' a backwards step

As dealt with in more detail on page 13 of this edition, the Victorian government has recently stripped back eligibility for WorkCover for mental health injuries.

In Victoria from 31 March 2024, you can only claim WorkCover for a mental injury if it:

- causes significant behavioural, cognitive or psychological dysfunction
- has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner (General Practitioner or Psychiatrist) in accordance with the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
- is predominantly caused by your employment, and
- is not caused by stress or burnout as a result of events that are considered usual and are reasonably expected to occur in the course of your duties.

A mental injury must satisfy all of these definitions to be eligible for compensation.

Exclusion: a worker may remain eligible for compensation in some situations, including if a worker's mental injury has been predominantly caused by traumatic events. This most often applies to frontline workers such as police officers and paramedics.

An employee can only be compensated for an injury if it arose out of or in the course of employment, and the job has to have been a significant, material,

substantial or the major contributing factor to the injury. Claims for psychological injury are generally not accepted if they are related to reasonable action taken by the employer in relation to dismissal, retrenchment, transfer, performance appraisal, disciplinary action or deployment.

Workers' compensation payments can include:

- medical expenses - doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists or counsellors
- income replacement payments to injured workers
- costs associated with rehabilitation
- costs associated with retraining for other employment or duties, or
- lump sum payment for any permanent injury or disability.

When should you make a psychological injury claim?

It's important that you report your trauma to both your employer and WorkSafe Tasmania or WorkSafe Victoria as soon as possible. It's best to do this within 30 days of the incident or as soon as you've become aware of your psychological injury or illness.

More on provisional payments (Victoria)

Provisional payments aim to:

- remove financial barriers that might prevent the worker or volunteer from getting the mental injury support they need
- reduce the time an injured worker with a mental injury cannot perform

their work duties

- improve return to work outcomes.

Victorian workers who seek compensation for a mental health injury under WorkCover can cover expenses such as GP visits, psychiatrist or psychologist appointments and medication.

Work-related mental injury claims are growing markedly, including in education. The Victorian government expects they'll account for a third of all workers' compensation claims by 2030.

Provisional payments increase the chances of a full recovery and a successful return to work.

Union support

Never forget that your Rep, Organiser and the union office are important resources you can call upon for advice if you need help negotiating mental health issues.



Back to the future on student behaviour

A 'behaviour curriculum' is coming to Australian schools this year as part of a federal Senate Committee response to reports of badly behaved students abusing teachers and disrupting classes.

Students will be taught 'how to line up, keep quiet and be still... in a bid to rid classrooms of the behaviour crisis that sees teachers routinely abused, attacked and children disrupted.'

The interim Senate committee report into worsening student behaviour delivered in late 2023 found Australia ranked 69th out of 76 countries for the world's most disruptive classrooms in 2018.

The report mentioned 'increased physical abuse to teachers, including instances of sexual harassment, death threats, staff being struck, having furniture thrown at them, windows next to their heads punched in and cars keyed. Some cited PTSD from witnessing violent fights.'

The percentage of teachers who felt unsafe increased from 18.9 per cent to 24.5 per cent from 2019 to 2022.

'Student behaviour and violence was cited as one factor among many including parent abuse, negative relationships with staff and school leaders, and concerns

related to COVID-19,' the report found.

'The work is more professionally demanding, yet teachers' status and remuneration has not kept pace.'

The new 'behaviour curriculum' was one of nine steps recommended by the Senate Committee.

Old school: skills on the new behaviour curriculum

- classroom and school routines and transitions, such as entering the classroom quietly and beginning an activity
- effective communication skills, including listening, expressing oneself clearly, and understanding non-verbal cues
- self-advocacy skills, like asking for help
- problem-solving strategies and conflict resolution techniques.

Proponents of the old-fashioned approach to classroom discipline say modern

children must be explicitly taught 'not to call out, talk among themselves and run around the classroom'.

A behaviour curriculum in the UK uses a red and yellow card system of warnings for disruptive children and 'super walking,' where adults lead children single file around school.

Australian Education Research Organisation chief executive Jenny Donovan said students want a 'sense of safety in the classroom so they can learn without distraction'.

Donovan says time spent by principals and teachers on managing behaviour was placing a 'substantial strain' on educators.

Some researchers say teaching kids how to behave using a curriculum model is a backward step and ignores the fact that students are all different.

'Instead of using fear and consequences as motivators, we should focus on fostering connections, empathy, and relationships to guide behaviour,' said Melissa Close from

Queensland University of Technology.

The QUT submission to the senate inquiry noted that disability was a 'common denominator' for repeatedly suspended students, who were not having their needs met and teachers were not provided 'the time, support, or access to specialist colleagues to provide the required level of care for those students'.



Paws for reflection: therapy animals are good for staff and students

Recently, researchers worked out that people 'get high' from their dogs.

Killester College's Darlene Sosnowski and Loreto Cannon with 'school captain' EJ.

They concluded that 'animal interaction activities, such as playing, walking, massaging and grooming dogs... activate relaxation, emotional stability, attention, concentration and creativity.'

Dog-lovers already knew that!

These days, more of us also know that therapy animals are great for young people, including students having a hard time engaging with school. They also help calm staff.

IEU member Loreto Cannon, Killester College's Assistant Principal: Engagement, Operations and Community, says the cat and dog 'captains' of her school are 'the most important members of the community!'

At Korowa Anglican Girl's School, Head of Learning Support and IEU member Shannon Whithouse oversees the work of companion/wellbeing dogs Ivy and Henry. She says it's 'remarkable' just how big an impact the dogs have had on the school community.

Proper therapy dog policies

It's vital that schools have proper policies for employing therapy animals, say ex-teachers Mrs Melanie and Dr Brad Rundle, who run Therapy Animals Australia and are involved with the charity Service Animals Australia (SAA).

Brad says the benefits of well-trained therapy dogs in schools are 'endless'. He's seen children with selective mutism who flourished when assisted a golden retriever. 'Dogs are non-judgemental, so barriers come down... They really get kids to engage and achieve things that they generally wouldn't do.'

He says dogs can help change students' perceptions of school to being 'a place I want to be'.

But not every dog is cut out for school, and Brad says both dog and handler must be properly trained.

'You can't take any dog into a school. Your pet might be perfectly well behaved at home, but in a school environment could be fearful or reactive.'

There are strict guidelines and rules for the use of companion dogs, service dogs and assistance dogs.

In schools, there is something of a regulatory void, which SAA wants filled by its essential standards for the use of therapy dogs in schools.

The SAA standards address the dog's role at school; animal welfare responsibilities; and OHS responsibilities.

Brad says a school must ensure there's a purpose for the dog that's clearly understood. The dog must be properly trained, of course, but so must its handler, who must know the dos and don'ts of

having a therapy dog in a school, like not letting it get mobbed in the yard at recess or lunchtime.

The dog also cannot be left to roam without supervision and when it is working, it must be on a leash.

Brad believes the benefits of therapy dogs will become so obvious that within five or ten years there will be a new full-time job in schools: 'therapy dog handler'.

Korowa Anglican Girl's College: Ivy and Henry

Shannon Whithouse says companion dogs have many benefits for students – and staff.

'They help to regulate emotions for all members of our school community. Dogs are a great conversation starter or support during difficult conversations or counselling sessions with students.'

She says they can assist students with 'school refusal, nerves or perfectionistic traits before exams or tests, separation anxiety or when visiting our wellbeing room to seek regulation support'. And they support learning by being a 'friendly and consistent member of the school community or classroom'.

At Korowa, Ivy primarily works in the wellbeing space and with learning support students from ELC to Year 12. Henry accompanies students on camps and experiential learning opportunities.

Ivy and Henry also attend extra-curricular activities like netball or rowing regattas where nerves or performance anxiety may also arise.

They also help to create 'a relaxed and calm working environment by attending staff meetings and school briefings'.

'What's truly surprising is the diverse spectrum of students benefiting from Ivy and Henry's presence. From those grappling with diagnosed learning difficulties and wellbeing challenges to international students missing their own pets, and an array of students who have the dogs join their mentor sessions or lessons each day.'

Rules and regulations

Korowa crafted a School Dog Policy regulating their companion dog program through collaboration between wellbeing staff, educators, risk management experts and the principal.

'When considering the introduction of a companion dog into a school it is important to understand what needs the students have and what the purpose of the program is. What is the primary role of the dog? If it is to support learning and wellbeing you should consider a dog that is gentle, that students will feel safe and

comfortable interacting with. Another big consideration is having a staff member who is committed to the program and happy to have the dog as their pet and care for them outside school.'

Safeguarding the animal worker

Shannon is mindful that Korowa's companion dogs are working and so, like people, need a break between student sessions.

She's taken for regular short walks and toilet breaks throughout the day and guarded from large crowds.

'It is important that our dogs also have time for playing and just being a dog outside of 'work' hours. Our dogs both live with families with children so are also very much-loved pets when not at work.'

Korowa also ensures that a staff member is always present with students and dogs to ensure safe handling, and to educate students about how to approach and handle animals.

Killester College: Ester Junior (EJ) and Scout

Killester College in Springvale has had a feline member of the community for over 30 years.

Ester was a much loved tabby cat who 'arrived as a stray and stayed,' says IEU member Loreto Cannon, Killester's Assistant Principal: Engagement, Operations and Community

'When she passed away, it was decided that the school could not be without a furry friend, so along came EJ (Ester Junior).'

Year 8 student TM is a fan of EJ.

'EJ truly shows the Killester spirit to help those in need. When EJ came to the school she needed a home and we accepted her in, just like she was one of us. Now she helps others who may need a friend or company or someone to talk to.'

'EJ is truly a treasure to have at school, and here at Killester we love her very, very, much!'

Killester College believes in the 'social, emotional and physiological benefits of positive interaction between people and therapy animals'.

'Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) has been shown to complement therapeutic services offered by counsellors, social workers and other allied health professionals. AAT involves the deliberate incorporation of a trained and assessed therapy animal into pre-existing, evidence-based therapy arrangements.'

Scout joins the team

Last year, therapy dog Scout was added to the Killester community.

Scout, an eight-year-old American Cocker Spaniel, is based in the school's Wellbeing Centre, Brigid's Well, and supports both students and staff.

Loreto says Scout 'helps animals and people bring joy to each other, as the human-animal bond has been shown time and again to improve quality of life'.



Korowa's Shannon Whithouse with Ivy.



Gender-based violence in schools – the facts

Violence against women can take many forms. We must all know how to recognise it in the workplace.

What is work-related gendered violence? (WorkSafe)

Work-related gendered violence is any behaviour, directed at any person, or that affects a person, because of their sex, gender or sexual orientation, or because they do not adhere to socially prescribed gender roles, that creates a risk to health and safety.

It can range in severity from comments and gestures, through to sexual assault and rape.

Types of work-related gendered violence include:

- stalking, intimidation or threats
- verbal abuse
- ostracism or exclusion
- sexually explicit gestures
- offensive language and imagery
- put downs, innuendo, and insinuations
- being undermined in your role or position
- sexual harassment
- sexual assault or rape.

Work-related sexual harassment

Work-related sexual harassment is sexual harassment directed at a person, that can happen at work, work related events, or between people sharing the same workplace.

It can be a one-off incident and can involve unwanted or unwelcome:

- touching
- staring or leering
- suggestive comments or jokes
- sexually explicit pictures or posters
- repeated invitations to go out on dates
- requests for sex
- intrusive questions about a person's private life or body
- unnecessary contact, such as

- deliberately brushing up against a person
- insults or taunts based on sex or gender
- sexually explicit physical contact
- sexually explicit emails, text messages or social media activity.

Employers must consult with health and safety representatives (HSRs) and their employees about health and safety issues that may directly affect them. Consultation about gendered violence must occur when:

- identifying or assessing hazards or risks in the workplace
- making decisions about measures to be taken to prevent and manage gendered violence risks
- making decisions about procedures to resolve health or safety issues
- making decisions about procedures to monitor employee health
- making decisions about information and training on work-related gendered violence
- proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of employees.

Our Watch on the causes of gender-based violence

Our Watch is an independent not-for-profit organisation working to 'embed gender equality and prevent violence where Australians live, learn, work and socialise'.

It says, 'men who use violence generally have two things in common – they don't respect women and do not see them as their equals. These attitudes are prevalent in our society, including in our schools, and they are a key driver of violence against women'.

'Violence against women is the most common form of gender-based violence in Australia... The evidence shows that

violence against women is much more likely to occur when power, opportunities and resources are not shared equally between men and women in society and when women are not valued and respected as much as men.'

Our Watch says the four key drivers of violence against women are:

- condoning of violence against women
- men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life
- rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
- male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control.

In schools, examples of these drivers include:

- parents minimise the aggressive behaviour of boys to girls stating, 'It's just boys being boys'
- the assumptions that male principals and teachers are 'stronger' or 'firmer' than female teachers or have better leadership skills, which creates an implicit preference for male teachers and executive staff
- gendered school uniforms including those that limit the activities that girls choose to participate in at school
- male students 'ranking' female peers online.

Research from the Man Cave found one third of Australian teenage boys admire 'manfluencer' Andrew Tate and almost all knew who he was. Tate advocates for women to serve men and is on charges of human trafficking of women.

Suggestions for schools

Academics writing for *The Conversation* have offered four things schools should do now to prevent gender-based violence.

- make 'pornography literacy' a mandatory part of the curriculum
- keep teaching about sex and relationships in Year 11 and 12 (rather than stopping at Year 10)
- teach all young people how to stand up to bad behaviours
- train teachers to teach sensitive content.

What the experts say teachers need

The Conversation academics – from various Australian universities – said that teaching such sensitive content is difficult and requires specific training.

'But at the moment, there is not enough training in sexuality education for teachers before they start teaching and once they are in classrooms. Teachers from other areas – such as maths or history – often find themselves delivering sex and relationships content.

'This leaves teachers underprepared and under supported to deliver this content.

'So we need to make sure specific units on sexuality and relationships are part of all teaching degrees and there is professional development for existing teachers. This training should be mandated and funded by governments.'

What do you think? What measures work to reduce gender-based violence in schools? Send your ideas and experiences to ThePoint@ieuvictas.org.au

RESOURCES

Dealing with family and domestic violence in the workplace

The Victorian Trades Hall Council's guide *Understanding Family Violence as A Workplace Issue* states 'Family violence does not stay at home, but it comes to work, whether with victim survivors or perpetrators of violence'.

This document is an essential guide to family and domestic violence issues, and contains vital advice on how a victim/survivor can be best assisted, supported and kept safe at work. Below are a few tips; the full guide can be found at the link below.

Developing a workplace safety plan

Start by asking the victim/survivor if they want to develop a plan and what it should contain. Keep your focus on keeping the person safer at the workplace.

Consider the following when developing the plan:

Assess the physical workplace:

- Is the building open to the public, isolated, secure?
- Do workers work together or alone?
- Are the carpark areas or walkways to the workplace safe and visible?
- If there are public zones in the workplace is there a safe room that can be locked from inside that is available and easily accessible? Is there a way of opening this door from the outside in an emergency if it was locked from inside?
- Do workers work outside of the workplace building or in public

spaces (i.e. community outreach, outdoor spaces, building sites in public areas, bus drivers)

Changes to schedule:

- Can the worker be moved to another worksite temporarily or permanently?
- Can the worker have phone calls and emails screened or have their contact details changed?
- Is it possible to alter and vary start and finish times for the worker or arrange for different ways for them to work such as from home if that is the safer option?

Security:

- Do relevant staff know the details of the perpetrator? (e.g. reception staff, security)
- Can the staff identify the perpetrator – are they already known to them, or do they have a photo of the person? Do staff know what action to take if the perpetrator attends the workplace or calls. Is there a safety management plan in place for them as well?
- Do these staff members know what to do if the perpetrator does attend the workplace?
- Is there a court order and has a copy been provided to the workplace?

When the perpetrator and victim survivor work in the same workplace

The victim survivor's safety is paramount in this situation, and it may be that the perpetrator needs to be relocated to another work site. There is a specific section in the guide devoted to addressing the issue of perpetrators at work.

Access the full guide at: weareunion.org.au/fv_workplace_issue

Would reproductive leave advance women's rights and gender equality at work?

Lisa Heap, a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute, examines growing calls for the establishment of new work rights, including additional leave, for employees who experience menstruation and menopause.

These biological processes are experienced by large numbers of workers, especially in education – in 2020, the Australian Bureau of Statistics said 71.7 per cent of Australian teachers were female.

Yet the sometimes debilitating effects of these conditions have been ignored in the framework of workplace rights, which have historically been built around men's experience of life and work.

Unions have begun surveying their members on the issue and a growing number of unions are seeking new rights in collective Agreements, including additional leave for menstruation, menopause, and reproductive health concerns. The Australian Council of Trade Unions is likely to discuss a policy on reproductive leave (including leave for menopause and menstruation) at its Congress in June this year. There is also evidence that organisations are moving to include policies on these issues in their HR handbooks.

However, not everyone agrees that seeking additional leave and other workplace rights because of menstruation or menopause is the right way to go. Leading industrial relations academic Marian Baird, whilst being a strong advocate for new rights, has noted that debate on issues such as menstrual leave 'can be polarising for organisations and for feminists'.

There are concerns that leave and other rights for menstruation and menopause may result in women being targeted as weak or unable to do their job because they are absent from work or that employers will see them as less reliable or more costly to employ, undermining women's position at work. Some scholars argue that focusing on leave, and therefore effectively removing

the problem from the workplace, means that the problem is being hidden.

There are long-standing debates between feminist theorists about the path to gender equality at work. Some argue that it is best served by highlighting the similarities between men and women and treating all workers the same – sometimes referred to as formal equality. Others maintain that there should be accommodation of differences, including acknowledging biological differences and the reproductive role that women play in society and ensuring that work rights reflect this.

The difficulty we have in Australia, like in many western democratic countries, is that the historical standard of the ideal worker is male – so treating everyone the same effectively means treating everyone as men.

It is difficult to ignore that some workers are struggling with the impacts of menstruation and menopause at work. Supports are needed for these workers. Not everyone's experience is the same but for some menstruation involves severe bleeding, extreme pain, and lethargy. Shame and stigma for some workers may lead to hiding period pain and carrying on with the job. This can have both physical and psychological impacts.

Menopause can involve losses of

concentration, difficulty sleeping, headache, fatigue and mood changes.

Work based impacts of menstruation and menopause can include perceptions of poor work performance and a loss of confidence for affected workers, who sometimes use all their personal/carers leave trying to 'manage' the impact of their conditions. Some workers move to part-time work or even consider leaving paid work as a way of managing.

The evidence gathered around the work-based impacts of menstruation and menopause establish the need for further changes in work rights to accommodate the lived experience of women. To ignore this evidence would reinforce male experience of work as the standard around which work rights are framed.

Australian public policy and legal frameworks have developed to accommodate some biological processes experienced by women. For example, there are now universal rights around pregnancy, maternity, and breastfeeding and work. Leave and workplace flexibilities accommodating the effects of menstruation and menopause could be the next step in the evolution of these workplace rights.

Beyond HR policies there are two main ways of establishing work rights – incorporating them in workplace laws or bargaining for their inclusion in union-negotiated Agreements. Incorporating leave and other rights to flexible work arrangements in legislation would provide a universal standard and a whole of society approach.

Bargaining offers the opportunity to craft boutique solutions which consider the needs of organisations and their workforces. The process of bargaining helps workers explore the issue, helping to 'normalise' it in the workplace. However,

bargaining for 'equality rights' of this kind can take time and often requires work-based champions to get and keep the issue on the bargaining agenda.

In Australia many universal workplace rights have been achieved first through unions bargaining for them at the industry or organisational level and then by unions fighting to have these included in legislation. The achievement of paid leave for workers experiencing family violence is a recent high-profile example of this. The progress to gain reproductive leave and other associated rights is likely to involve both bargaining for these rights and lobbying for legislative change.

Leave for menstruation and menopause will advance women's rights and gender equality at work. However, even when these rights exist more action will be needed to make them a reality. Workers will need to be aware of these rights and feel comfortable and confident to use them without fear that they will be treated less favourably for doing so.

Establishing the rights either through legislation or bargaining will set the normative standard. Organisations will then have the obligation to create systems, processes and cultures that would ensure that workers can, and do, access these rights once they exist.

Lisa Heap is a labour lawyer and researcher with a research focus on gender and inequalities at work, work health and safety and the regulation of work. She holds degrees in political science/industrial relations, law and applied human rights.

From *IE*: emotional labour and neurodivergent educators

The next edition of the IEU's national professional journal *IE* examines two topics of crucial concern for educators.

In an article on **emotional labour and trauma-informed training**, former special needs teacher and IEU member Megan Corcoran addresses student trauma and how it affects educators.

Emotional labour is defined as 'managing one's own feelings in order to manage others'. This process is difficult when dealing with students who have undergone trauma, the 'physiological and psychological response to any deeply upsetting or threatening situation'.

Trauma-informed training is about 'enhancing safety, prioritising relationships, working towards healing, and minimising harm', says Megan, who is now a university lecturer and founder of the Wagtail Institute, which

uses 'wellbeing science' to prevent burnout and improve outcomes for students and teachers.

Using a trauma-informed approach, teachers can understand why students may be behaving in certain ways and what they might need.

'This not only supports the student in these moments, but it improves our wellbeing, too,' Corcoran told *IE*.

'We must acknowledge that this is not easy work and normalise that it takes conscious effort to look after ourselves while we are doing it. The first step is to recognise and understand our own stress responses and explore ways we can effectively regulate ourselves.'

The *IE* piece also discusses how we must avoid lumping

teachers with 'disproportionate ownership over their students' emotional lives' and avoid using 'off the shelf' corporate wellbeing advice which lacks understanding of education's unique stresses. Teachers have criticised some of these programs as 'toxic positivity' and 'cruel wellbeing'. (Another *IE* article in this edition addresses that insidious phenomenon.)

The *IE* article on **neurodivergent staff** follows on from the Term 1 edition of *The Point*, where IEU member Natanya Thrift spoke about the challenges of working in schools with and without diagnoses of autism and ADHD.

IE interviewed neurodivergent advocate, trainer and former teacher Kristy Forbes, who says it is imperative that we avoid

'othering' neurodivergent staff.

'Education systems can do better to accommodate neurodivergent staff by treating us as human beings, not as lesser or 'other.' It's important to approach our skills with curiosity and a willingness to explore, recognising that while they may seem out of the box or challenging, they are incredibly valuable,' she said.

Kristy says asking what colleagues could do to assist neurodivergent staff misses the point.

'In my field, I'm a leader in advocacy, sought after for my lived experience, alongside my academic qualifications. I believe I could stand in a classroom and educate my neurotypical colleagues.

'So, the idea that our

neurodivergent staff need assistance to excel from neurotypical colleagues perpetuates an oppressive narrative that we need to be taught the right way to be in the world, which I disagree with. Instead, recognising and valuing the unique contributions of neurodivergent individuals should be the focus.'

Subscription to *IE* is a part of your IEU membership benefits. Your latest edition should land in your letterbox soon. You can also find recent editions online at www.ieuvictas.org.au/ member-publications

STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

The crucial journey from student teacher to full IEU member



WE NEED YOU! Members in every school have an important job as the next wave of student teachers appear in your classrooms and graduate teachers pass you in the corridors.

WE know that these newbies are seeking your professional guidance and support every day, but do they know to ask you about your membership of the IEU?

At a time when more educators leave the profession in their first five years than ever before, and there is a teacher shortage, it's vital that we offer the practical benefits and collegiate support of unionism to new practitioners.

When asked why they have not joined their union, a huge proportion of workers reply that they've never been asked - this is a problem we can and must address collectively!

More members are recruited by other members than by any other method - and we know that educators respect the opinion of their colleagues the most. So share your knowledge, let them know how important union membership is both for individual protection and our collective negotiating strength, and get them on board!

There is no better time than in the first months of their career to demonstrate to a graduate that the union sub-branch in their school offers help and support and is a warm and welcoming club that they want to join.

We're glad to report that we have signed up well over 100 graduate teacher members in the first three months of the school year. Such recruitment comes through the hard work of fellow IEU members, Reps and Organisers in schools; through meeting graduates at VIT seminars and Catholic Education Induction days; and through our school holiday phone blitz to convert recent student members from free membership to our highly discounted first year graduate rate.

The IEU lays the groundwork through our active program of engagement with education students - so far this year we have presented practical work rights advice and the benefits of union membership to over 300 students across nine campuses in both states.

To be a strong union, we need more new teachers joining our experienced ranks. Not only is there power in a union, but there's also more power in a union with more engaged and active members!

As such, we have set ourselves a target of recruiting 200 graduates this year - but to get there we will need your help! We ask all members to talk with newcomers, to hand them a membership form, and to guide them to: www.ieuvictas.org.au/join



Anna Stewart was a former journalist and active Victorian union official from 1974 to 1983, who died tragically aged 35.

Following her death, the Anna Stewart Memorial Project was created to honour her legacy and encourage more women to be active in their unions. The first Anna Stewart Memorial Project was held in 1984 and since then more than 1000 women unionists in Victoria alone have completed the Project. A Women's Rights at Work (WRW) dinner celebrating the Project was held on 14 March, with many former participants in attendance.

Anna's involvement with the union movement began at a time when women workers comprised one third of the paid workforce. The few industries in which women were employed offered jobs that were poorly paid, lacked job security, flexibility, skills recognition and unpaid maternity leave. A prime motivation for Anna was the need to develop strategies to address the issues confronting working women and to facilitate the important contribution that women can make to the trade union movement.

The Project honours her legacy while encouraging more women to be active in their unions through a two-week leadership training and development program.

To get involved in the Anna Stewart Memorial Project head to weareunion.org.au/asmp

WOMEN AND EQUITY

A generation of 'Annas': 40 years of the Anna Stewart Memorial Project

An inspirational figure left a lasting legacy through the scheme which now bears her name.

June Feminist Trades Hall Tour

- 13 June 2024, 3pm - 4:30pm
- Trades Hall, 54 Victoria St, Carlton

For over 150 years, women have been organising in Victoria's Trades Hall and fighting for equality. Follow the footsteps of union giants like Helen Robertson, Zelda D'Aprano and Gwen Goedeck who inspire the women in the movement to this day at this Victorian Trades Hall Council Feminist Tour. **Details: www.weareunion.org.au/femtourtune**

The payment of superannuation on Paid Parental Leave

In the past two years, union women have won the expansion of paid parental leave (PPL) from 20 weeks to 26 weeks by 2026, better pay for aged care workers and, after over a decade of effort, the introduction of 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave into the National Employment Standards.

New pay secrecy laws were introduced, following a long campaign by unions to ensure that all workers can freely discuss wages and are empowered to challenge pay discrimination and wage inequality in their workplaces.

But the announcement that the Federal Government will pay superannuation on Commonwealth Parental Leave Payments from 1 July 2025 might not have received the prominence it deserved.

The ACTU called the policy 'a monumental victory for working women across Australia and a massive union win', because women retire with an average of 47% less super than men.

Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave is the only type of leave upon which workers do not earn superannuation and Australian Tax Office data puts the gender super gap at between 22% and 32%.

Minister for Women Senator Katy Gallagher said that while a number of factors cause the gap, 'including women working in lower paid jobs, part-time work and time out of the workplace to care for children', the lack of super on PPL 'has resulted in women paying another financial penalty that has an ongoing impact on their retirement savings throughout their career'.

ASU Assistant National Secretary Emeline Gaske hailed the work of the union's members and her predecessor, the late Linda White, who campaigned for the change for over a decade.

The ASU's 2017 *Not So Super*, For Women report found that more than 70% of women had estimated balances under \$150,000 and almost a quarter less than \$50,000.

The report also revealed that one in four men had balances over \$500,000, compared with one in 25 women.

Gaske said carers who take PPL are 'overwhelmingly working mothers' and are currently 'punished for this choice by losing out on essential super contributions'.

'The effect is compounded over years and results in a smaller retirement balance and lower quality of life,' she said.

'Paying super contributions during paid parental leave is a vital step in closing the retirement gender pay gap.'

APPLICATIONS FOR VICTORIA AND TASMANIA NOW OPEN!

I'd thoroughly recommend that any woman who's interested applies for the Anna Stewart Memorial Project. The week really opened up my eyes and made me appreciate my union and, most importantly, it's shown me what I'm able to do to make a difference.

KEL SHIELDS
Anna Stewart Participant

ANNA STEWART MEMORIAL PROJECT

CAREER CORNER**Facing allegations?****Don't give up on your career**

As the number of formal investigations into alleged misconduct rises, employees find it harder to make a fresh start or justify a change of employer.

In Victoria, the sheer number of agencies involved in any formal process – the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), and various employer bodies such as Independent Schools Victoria and Catholic employers – can give an individual the impression that everyone's against you and that you'll never work in education again.

Tasmania's Reportable Conduct Scheme commenced operation this year. While on paper it avoids some of the worst pitfalls of Victoria's ill-starred scheme, we are watching carefully to see how it operates in practice.

Whilst many will find a new job after enduring an allegation process, there's no escaping the fact that there are multiple hurdles to jump when seeking new employment after something like a reportable conduct charge, regardless of whether the allegations are substantiated or not.

Once the (internal) school investigation has concluded, your employer may be obliged to refer the matter to VIT, and the process starts all over again.

VIT registration is rarely withdrawn summarily, so except in cases where they are perceived to represent a risk, most teachers retain the right to teach while under investigation. However, despite this skerrick of the assumption of innocence remaining, application and onboarding processes are very strict. It's highly likely that you'll need to reveal any previous performance or conduct issues when seeking a new job.

This is the same when renewing your VIT registration in September each year.

Regardless of your individual circumstance, it is wise to reach out to the union to help you understand your rights and obligations regarding disclosure. There may be instances where the disciplinary process you participated in falls below the threshold of the required disclosure. In such cases, the task is to establish a narrative that explains your departure from your previous employer, which may have been abrupt or happened mid-term, in a way that will be confirmed during the reference checking process.

On this topic, remember that while you might omit your

former principal from your list of referees, it is highly likely that a prospective employer will contact them. A simple 'Would you re-employ this person?' can seal your fate, regardless of the outcome of your investigation. So, by all means cite other senior school leaders on your CV, but it may be worth negotiating with your former Principal for some indication of a positive reference, or an agreement that they will refer reference calls to a Deputy.

Of course, if the school is legally required to disclose your case, you must comply. Your challenge then is how to mitigate the damage caused by the allegations against you and to reiterate your suitability to teach.

To do that:

- be prepared and ready to explain your side of the story, including any important context and concerns around the process you were subjected to
- consider how you can demonstrate that you have reflected on and learned from your experience, however challenging, unfair or unreasonable it may have been
- point out your extensive experience and expertise in the years prior
- draw on your networks, and those of friends and family, to circumvent formal application processes and secure employment through personal channels
- apply for casual and short-term positions to get back into the classroom as soon as possible and create an alternative narrative about your recent employment (remember, recency rules!)
- seek the assistance of a professional recruitment agency to 'sell' you to one of their employer clients.

It can take up to a year of hard work to re-establish your career, as you participate in relevant investigations and maintain the PD points and professional practice required for ongoing registration.

The process can take an emotional and physical toll, including on those around you. It will be particularly difficult if you have a child or children attending the school where you worked. Your kids' peers will ask questions about your 'disappearance', so you'll have to come up with a narrative for your children to use.

While IEU Organisers are good listeners and skilled problem-solvers, it's best to seek out a professional counsellor or psychologist to deal with issues like these. They can help you develop strategies to maintain your wellbeing and safeguard yourself and your family.

As you can see, there are many boxes to tick and bridges to cross along your journey to re-employment. Rest assured that the IEU is doing everything it can to streamline these processes and circumvent them altogether when they are used punitively by malicious employers.

We also provide guidance if you face such allegations and work with employers to ensure you can remain in the profession where possible.

Be strategic and smart throughout and hopefully an employer will see the bigger picture and recognise that you are a victim of a flawed system.

So it's easy being a teacher?

Recently on a visit to a Tasmanian Catholic school, we were handed a workload calculation done by a part-time teacher, working at an 0.8 time fraction.

She estimated that she did nearly 40 hours of work per week during term time. This was made up of the following:

- **Teaching** – 15.85 hrs
- **Preparation time for classes** – 3.15 hrs
- **Planning time** – 6.34 hrs
- **Marking** – 6.25 hrs
- **Meetings** – 1 hr
- **Duties** – 2.5 hrs
- **Supervisions** – 0.75 hrs
- **Co-curricular** – 2 hrs
- **Student queries** – 1 hr
- **Emails** – 1 hr
- Total = 39.84 hrs**

Over 40 weeks of the school year this equals 1593.6 hours per year.

It's hard to quantify the work that teachers do during term breaks and in preparation for the school year, but if we conservatively estimate an average of 10 hours per week for the 6 weeks of non-term time during the school year, this brings our 0.8 teacher to a grand total of 1653.6 hours of work per year.

How does that compare to a worker on set hours for 48 weeks of a year? A 0.8 FTE worker would work 30.4 hours per week, or a total of 1459.2 hours per year. This is 194.4 hours less per year than the teacher we are using in our example.

If anyone is still wondering why there is a teacher shortage, perhaps this is one of the key factors!

PETITION**The fight against NDAs continues**

NDAs protect employers from accountability and release them from their obligations to address systems of work that allow sexual harassment to occur, enabling repeat offenders to continue and preventing workers from talking about their experiences.

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.

To add your voice to the anti-NDA campaign, go to: weareunion.org.au/nda_petition



INTERNATIONAL UNION ROUND UP

Argentina brought to a standstill by massive strikes

Argentina's biggest trade unions staged a 24-hour general strike on Thursday 10 May that left streets and schools empty.

In one of the biggest protests against the austerity and deregulation measures of President Javier Milei's libertarian government, flights were cancelled, public transport ground to a halt and banks, businesses and state agencies closed in protest.

It was the second nationwide union strike since Milei came to power in December 2023.

The country's largest union, CGT, said it was staging the strike alongside other labour organisations 'in defence of democracy, labour rights and a living wage'.

Argentina's powerful unions – backed by Argentina's left-leaning Peronist parties that have dominated national politics for decades – have led the pushback to Milei's policies on the streets and in the courts in recent months.

'We are facing a government that promotes the elimination of labour and social rights,' the unions said, pointing out that Milei's free-market policies that have disproportionately affected the poor and middle classes.

Union leaders said they had no choice but to escalate their actions after Argentina's lower house approved Milei's state overhaul bill and tax packages last week.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has backed Argentinian workers, with ITUC General Secretary Luc Triangle saying: 'Milei's policies have not tackled the decadence of the elites that he decries, instead he has delivered daily misery for millions of working people'.

After Milei devalued the Argentine peso, cut the basic pension and lifted price controls on daily essential goods and services, inflation hit over 70 per cent, making life for many working people unaffordable.

UK: Unions demand Labor upholds rights promises

British union leaders have warned Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer that its members' votes cannot be taken for granted in the upcoming general election.

Matt Wrack, the president of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has told *The Independent* that a meeting has been arranged with Starmer after reports of Labour watering down a workers rights policy document.

Mr Wrack wants Labour to promise to repeal Tory legislation which restricts the ability to strike. He also wants digital voting to be allowed on industrial action –

currently, it is restricted to postal votes.

'This is a great opportunity for the workers to turn back the tide a little bit on 40-odd years of anti-union and anti-worker legislation, which has tipped the balance in the workplace in favour of employers against the worker and is a factor in increasing inequality in workplaces also in wider society,' Wrack said.

Cambodia: Concerns over detainment of union leader

The UN human rights office, OHCHR, is 'very concerned' over the decision of Cambodia's Supreme Court to uphold the conviction of trade union leader Chhim Sithar on charges of 'incitement to felony' and 'disturbing social order'.

In May 2023, she and eight others were sentenced to jail terms of up to two years, after a strike in 2021 over layoffs at the NagaWorld Casino in the capital, Phnom Penh.

In a statement, OHCHR spokesperson Jeremy Laurence and colleagues called for her immediate release.

Laurence said they were convicted for 'simply exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association', which are protected by

both the Cambodian Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Cambodia in 1992.

'The rights to peaceful assembly and association include the right to hold meetings, sit-ins and strikes, and the right of individuals to interact and organise among themselves to collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests,' he said.

'A vibrant, strong and inclusive democracy that nurtures and respects a plurality of voices and opinions, including those that express discontent, is key to social and economic development,' said Mr. Laurence.

OHCHR urged the Cambodian Government to uphold human rights protections recognised under international law.



UNION AID ABROAD-APHEDA

Strengthening the union movement in Timor Leste

The General Workers' Union of Timor Leste (SJT-TL), a Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA partner organisation since 2016, supports workers in the commercial, hospitality, service and construction industries.

Despite relatively strong labour laws, organising workers in Timor-Leste – where 77% of the workforce is employed informally – brings many challenges, and the last few years have been particularly difficult, as the nation recovered from a COVID-19-induced economic slowdown and resulting job losses.

Despite these challenges, SJT-TL continues to organise and service workers, concentrating on increasing their understanding of labour law and social protections, providing union training, and managing disputes. Leading national campaigns for collective bargaining and minimum wage reform, they focus on supporting workers to bargain with employers through collective agreements and trying to recover membership losses brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, political instability, and ongoing inflationary pressures.

SJT-TL is helping its members understand their rights and obligations under the law and building their capacity to support and advocate on behalf of workers. They are negotiating collective bargaining agreements with seven companies – a challenge in a country where workers' rights are still not widely understood.

Campaigning for a living wage and decent conditions

Following a long-term union campaign for minimum wage reform spearheaded by SJT-TL, the National Labour Council has finally agreed to take the proposal of an increase to the minimum wage from USD \$115 to \$150 per month to the Council of Ministers. This is a major step forward and means that the minimum wage is likely to increase in 2024 after more than 12 years of stagnation. The SJT-TL are also calling for an expansion in coverage to include domestic workers, who are currently excluded from

the provisions of the Labour Code, via specific legislation.

SJT-TL also play a key role in the national policy debate about eliminating gender-based violence in the workplace. In December, at the culmination of 16 days of activism, the SJT-TL and the Timor-Leste Trade Union Confederation (KSTL) led a long march through the streets of Dili to hand a petition to parliament. It demanded that Timor-Leste ratify ILO Convention C190 to eliminate gender-based violence in the world of work, increase the minimum wage and enact the specific legislation for domestic workers.

International solidarity

International solidarity is important to strengthen the existence of the Timorese union movement. They have stated: 'We are seeking the solidarity of the trade union movement in Australia, especially with the ACTU and APHEDA, to build and develop

the KSTL and its members into strong unions in Timor-Leste'.

The Timorese unions have won the right to take part in pre-departure briefings for seasonal workers mobilised to Australia and New Zealand for the first time since 2019 – providing an exciting opportunity for SJT-TL to reconnect with their counterparts in Australia and New Zealand.

We invite all IEU members to join Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA and keep supporting the Timorese trade unions' efforts for fairer jobs. Visit: apheda.org.au/join



UNION ROUND UP

Tertiary union fights on two fronts

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) is involved in two high profile industrial campaigns, fighting wage theft and shock job losses at universities.

In late April, the NTEU called for major changes to university governance after Swinburne University admitted \$2.85 million in wage theft from staff.

Swinburne University staff were underpaid \$2.6 million, while employees at the part-privately owned Swinburne College are owed \$250,000.

The underpayments, which the university belatedly reported to the Fair Work Ombudsman, affect about 1800 staff.

On Friday 26 April, a meeting of federal and state education ministers resolved to work with the NTEU to address higher education wage theft, after the tally of owed wages exceeded \$170 million.

NTEU Swinburne Branch President Dr Julie Kimber said: 'The NTEU raised several issues over Swinburne's payroll practices with the Wage Inspectorate in 2022'.

'Despite repeated requests to the University to audit its payroll system, nothing was done.'

'We urge the Fair Work Ombudsman to investigate why the University has only just notified this issue despite being aware of the problems for over two years.'

'Given this wilful inaction, those responsible must be held to account. A voluntary self-report should not be a get-out-of-jail free card.'

NTEU National President Dr

Alison Barnes said: 'Federal and state governments must pull unaccountable vice-chancellors into line for this shocking behaviour that is leaving workers millions of dollars out of pocket'.

'The explosion of insecure work and a broken governance system is fuelling the systemic wage theft plaguing public universities.'

FedUni staff and students protest massive job cuts

NTEU members at FedUni joined protests at the university's three major campuses in early May to oppose the Vice Chancellor's devastating 'Future Fed' cuts proposal.

Staff, students, and community members rallied at midday at the Berwick campus on Tuesday 30 April, at midday at the Churchill campus on Wednesday 1 May, and at midday at the Mt Helen campus on Thursday 2 May. They called on senior management to stop the devastating cuts proposed by the Vice-Chancellor, which will 'destroy valued courses and further undermine already stretched student support services'.

Management refused to tell staff where the cuts would apply, but it was clear they planned on removing 200 Full Time Equivalent positions, nearly 20% of the

FedUni workforce, cuts as devastating as any seen in the sector.

'Our Branch's organising team has been very busy putting up posters, handing out leaflets, and engaging staff and students in conversations to build these important rallies,' said NTEU Branch President Dr Mathew Abbott.

'Our Branch has taken on this rogue management in the past and won and we are aiming to do so again. The stakes are very high as staff members believe our university cannot survive cuts of this scale, as they will make our problems with student enrolment and retention far worse.'

ACTU calls for 9% pay rise in female-dominated industries

The ACTU has told the Fair Work Commission (FWC) that workers in highly feminised industries should receive pay rises of at least 9% in this year's annual wage review to stay in step with Fair Work Act changes to foster gender equity.

The ACTU is arguing for a minimum wage rise of 5% across all Awards. The proposed 9% lift would cover early childhood educators, disability workers and hairdressers, but not aged care workers who in a separate work value case in March won rises of up to 28%.

Resolving gender equality issues for Award-reliant workers is a stated goal of the FWC's minimum wage panel.

While most IEU members are paid significantly higher than minimum rates via union-negotiated Agreements, Award increases flow on directly for some. Casual relief teacher rates paid in Victorian Catholic schools are linked directly to the Teachers Award, so any percentage Award increase immediately affects CRT remuneration.

ACTU secretary Sally McManus said, 'achieving equal pay for women requires systemic change and targeted pay rises in industries traditionally dominated by women and historically very low-paid'.

The ACTU recommended that 'a process be established for quickly providing interim pay rises while the Commission assesses award rates in retail, pharmacy, administrative services, cabin crew, and legal services'.

The Commission's final report on addressing unequal remuneration and gender undervaluation in minimum rates of pay should be published in September.

To support the push for a 5% increase to the minimum wage and a 9% wage rise in underpaid feminised industries, go to: rb.gy/y86sog

IEU ROUND UP

NSW/ACT branch launches pay rise campaign for preschools

IEU NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews says, 'for too long, the work of preschool teachers has been undervalued'.

'It's time for a fair deal for preschools: respect the profession; pay teachers and educators properly; and invest in the future.'

Preschools provide high-quality early childhood education throughout NSW, but they need help to address the workforce crisis that is threatening their sector.

The IEU is accessing the new 'supported bargaining' stream designed to assist employers and employees who haven't been able to bargain successfully at the individual enterprise level to now bargain together as a group.

'We need a 25% increase for beginning teachers and more for experienced teachers working in preschools. Preschool teachers in other states and territories receive pay rates comparable to school teachers,' Matthews said.

'The NSW government has already shown its commitment to teachers in schools by taking real action to address teacher shortages.'

'Now we must focus on the needs of our preschools. We urge the NSW government to step up and address the staff shortages

caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community-based preschools.'

Queensland/Northern Territory

The Qld/NT branch has welcomed the Australian Government's efforts to reduce the financial burden on student teachers by introducing payments during practicums.

Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the move follows long-running advocacy from the IEU.

'Providing financial support for student teachers is crucial to ensure the future of the teaching profession and improving graduation rates. We know that placement poverty is a real issue caused by mandatory university requirements.'

'Placement poverty leads to unfavourable early workplace experiences and contributes to negative perceptions of teaching, which is counterproductive in addressing the longstanding skills shortage within the sector.'

'Moreover, loss of income during a practicum exacerbates concerns about

disfranchising lower-income students from pursuing a career in education,' he said.

Mr Burke said, 'An unpaid practicum is also an equity issue, with the caring professions required to do extensive unpaid placement often being highly feminised industries.'

'The introduction of payment during a practicum in these sectors is a step in the right direction towards addressing gender-based pay issues.'

South Australia

The IEU South Australia has celebrated its 40th birthday. On 7 May 1984, a union known as ATIS was born. Before that, there hadn't been a separate union for teachers in non-government schools in South Australia.

A special event honoured founding members where they were presented with a commemorative Founding Member Lapel Pin.

The 'Defence of Government Schools' (DOGS) campaign, which sought to stop funding to non-government schools, was the catalyst for the formation of the union. Former President Bernice

Donnelly said this campaign was 'very virulent' early in 1984. Non-government staff were disassociated by state school members and told to leave a meeting of the teacher's union.

So they met on the footpath! Former Secretary Sue Middleton said the 'little sidewalk meeting turned into ATIS and then progressed a long, long way from there'.

Western Australia

A meeting of the IEU WA has unanimously voted in favour of rule changes intended to align the rules of the state branch with the federal branch. IEU members in WA are members of both organisations. However, the rules governing the organisations are separate, requiring two sets of elections for each organisation for two separate committees of management. To better align the rules of both organisations – and to eventually be eligible to conduct just one set of elections – the Executive approved the changes, officially notified to members.



MEMBER PROFILE

Bendigo's Michael Chalkley: teacher, unionist, principal

Retiring IEU stalwart Michael Chalkley worked at three schools over four decades, and Bendigo education is all the richer for it.

'Pretty early on we decided we loved Bendigo, we'd just had kids and it was a great place to raise a family, so we stayed put.'

Michael was never consciously seeking leadership roles so he never 'moved around schools', the proven method for ladder-climbers.

Michael 'simply put his hand up' when colleagues encouraged him to take on a deputy principal position at Catholic College Bendigo. He'd been teaching for ten years and held many other leadership positions, including Head of Catholic Identity.

He was also an interim principal of Catholic College Bendigo for a year in 2014 but found the 'massive' role – overseeing two campuses, 2000 students and 278 staff – wasn't 'life-giving'. Overall, his stint at CCB lasted 27 years.

Michael did end up being a principal, spending the final five years of his career sharing the role at St Peters Primary School.

'I've loved the aspect of sharing the role with Jenny Roberts. I've always seen

myself as a team player so the idea of sharing the role was fantastic for me.

'It's a model that we think would work in a lot of other schools. I think there's a lot of people who are reluctant to take on a role on their own, but if they have an experienced mentor help them for a couple of years the transition can be a lot smoother. There are many people who would like to lead but they just need the encouragement of having someone walk alongside them.'

Michael became a union member in his first year in schools, 1987. He maintained his IEU membership once he became a school leader.

'Even as principal, I've always said to people 'you should be part of the union'. In the early days, I saw it as insurance. Later, it was more about 'we're all in this together'. I certainly always enjoyed working with the union.'

He says principals 'can be some of the best advocates' for the IEU.

'The only way to get better conditions is having active union members sticking together; employers need to be pushed

to do the right thing. Unless the union advocates on your side, you don't get improvements.'

Michael believes the biggest challenge for the union movement is to engage and sign up more young people as union members.

His concerns for education are familiar – there are too many forms to fill out, too much documentation keeping teachers from doing their fundamental work in the classroom. The documentation workload also means Principals are 'doing more managing than leading'.

'That's why I got out – I understand we need to do it (compliance), but it's gone too far. Hopefully the pendulum will swing back.'

Compliance demands and 'meetings that are almost out of control' are 'not what brings teachers and leaders joy in their jobs'.

He says workload issues mean 'the current state of schools is not that great'.

But when he started in schools, married women had to resign when they got pregnant and there have been

'amazing advancements' to make schools more family friendly thanks to the work done by the union across many consecutive Agreements.

He says one of the next big challenges is 'changing things to make it easier for part-time workers in schools'.

'It's a great profession but we must continue to attract more people and I'm not sure that work from home is making teaching attractive. Frontline workers like teachers don't have that opportunity to work from home.'

Michael says education is still a great career and being a leader is a privilege.

'You're allowed into people's lives. I got to get to know families and help them at big moments in their lives.'

'Every day at work is so different – no two days are the same.'

Proof of how much Michael loves education, and his team player ethos, comes when he's asked about retirement. While there's a 20-acre property with a few grapes on it to keep him busy, he's also going to work a day or two a week – as a CRT!



LABOUR HISTORY

'Who sailed the ship?' Wendy Lowenstein, Australia's historian of the worker

History is usually not just 'told by the victors', it's usually about the deeds of the great and mighty – the Monarchs, Presidents and Generals, rather than the hoi polloi.

Thankfully, some pioneering outliers have upended that paradigm and championed the stories of everyday working people. In Australia, foremost amongst those revolutionaries was historian, folklorist, author, activist and teacher, Wendy Katherin Lowenstein (1927-2006).

Wendy's ground-breaking interviews and books remind us no-one's life is all that ordinary, everyone has a story to tell and you can learn as much about a society from talking to its poorest and most humble citizens as to the rich and famous.

Inspired by groundbreaking US oral historian, author and broadcaster Studs Terkel, Wendy recorded interviews with over 800 everyday people from around Australia 'about their struggles to obtain better working and living conditions'.

With a personal motto of *Nix Illigitamus Carborundum* (never let the bastards grind you down), it was clear Wendy was not destined for a career as an industrialist!

At 15 she joined her sister Shirley and brother John in Melbourne's New Theatre and the Eureka Youth League where she became deeply involved in radical writing, theatre, art and class politics.

She worked first as a journalist and was for many years a teacher and teacher-librarian. In 1947 she married German-

born Werner Lowenstein. They left the Communist Party after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 but remained committed to socialism and the peace movement.

Lowenstein became interested in folklore after seeing a performance of the play *Reedy River* in the early 1950s. She helped establish the Folklore Society of Victoria and the Victorian Folk Music Club and from 1964 to 1976 edited their newsletter *Gumsuckers Gazette*, later renamed *Australian Tradition*.

In 1969 she and her family spent a year travelling around Australia by caravan on 'The Australian Folklore Expedition' collecting songs and stories.

Wendy's daughter Martie Lowenstein said the Folklore tour was her mother's 'first step into oral history'.

'In the towns we visited, she would look for interesting local characters and good storytellers.'

In that year, Wendy recorded 'fascinating, almost unbelievable' stories of outback life, where interviewees lived without cars, medical assistance or television, and entertainment still consisted of 'home-made music, tall stories, poems, and yarns about life'.

Her first book, *Weevils in the Flour* (1978), is a memorable record of the 1930s Depression and was the inspiration behind son Richard's award-winning film

debut, *Evictions*.

Richard says that while raising her family, Wendy was involved with the New Theatre, the Eureka Youth League, the Victorian Folk Music Society, the Australian Folklore Expedition, the Boree Log Folk Club, the Colonial Bush Dance Society, Melbourne's Pram Factory Flea Market, alternative and community schools and centres, Friends of the Earth, Arts Action For Peace, the Palm Sunday Committee, the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association and the Oral History Association of Australia!

Asked about the 'long and bitter struggle' for worker's rights, she preferred the description 'long and zestful' struggle, insisting it had been 'fun' to put oppressors in their place!

'Working life fascinates me,' Wendy told *Meanjin* in 1987. 'Historians write as if it all happened without workers! Captain Cook discovered the east coast of Australia, but who sailed the ship?'

The *Australian Women's Register* says, 'Wendy contributed to both social justice and aspects of Australian history which had, until she tackled them, been largely ignored'.

The Wendy Lowenstein Collection consists of over 1200 hours of interviews from over 900 contributors, including children's rhymes, miners, bosses, wharfies, outback workers and the nature of work in the 1990s.

Richard said Wendy was 'indomitable, single-minded, opinionated and forthright'.

She was 'driven by her belief in the power and importance of the stories of individuals and their direct experiences'.

'Always an activist, she kept constant watch over the shifting fortunes of the working class. She was passionate about politics, workers' rights and working-class history, and was a fierce campaigner against the capitalist classes, bureaucracies and governments of all persuasions.'

Richard and Martie are now seeking tax deductible donations to turn a 25-minute documentary about Wendy and her close collaborator and friend, dance historian Shirley Andrews into a feature film, *Don't Be Too Polite Girls*.

To find out more, head to:
documentaryaustralia.com.au/project/formidable-women/



MEMBER PROFILE

What IEU membership means to me: retired member Maxine Barry

Retired members form a small but important cohort of the IEU. These union diehards maintain their paid-up membership despite leaving employment in education.

Maxine Berry is one of these cultural touchstones of the IEU, and the union movement. She's been a member since 1989, and is one of over 400 members of the IEU Victoria Tasmania Retired Member Network, whose continued support is a huge boon to the union.

She's also active in the ACTU's Retired Unionist Network, and she wants more of us to consider joining that group once we retire.

Maxine is still 'keenly interested' in education, union and political matters, as you will read.

Education career

My first job in education was in a very tough secondary technical school in Broadmeadows. I was an English and Social Studies teacher, later also working with apprentices who had reading difficulties (back in the day, those tech schools were also TAFEs).

What I learnt there was that an inspired and competent principal can change a school's culture extraordinarily quickly. Alas, in later postings I also learnt that the opposite is true!

It wasn't long before I began working solely with students who struggled with literacy; that was an initiative of the visionary principal. It was the beginning of a career in special education, for which I gained qualifications, first a Graduate Diploma and ultimately a Masters.

The Masters was gained while I was teaching in the special education department of the University of Tasmania's Centre for Education in the 1980s. We had many mature students doing single subjects to bring their qualifications up to four-year equivalence. However, we only taught pre-service Bachelor of Education students who chose

Special Education subjects as an elective. Sadly, many of them chose them thinking the elective would be easy!

Returning to Melbourne, after state education had been 'Jeffed', there were no special education positions in government schools. I then started working in Catholic education, initially at St Joseph's Technical School, Abbotsford. In its wisdom, the Catholic Education Office decided to close the school despite the fact that by then St Joseph's had become the only Catholic Tech school in Victoria and a haven for students who didn't fit in at mainstream Catholic secondary schools. Its loss was deeply lamented by the parents.

My last job was at St Francis Xavier Beaconsfield and Berwick, where I headed up a busy special education centre with seven integration aides catering to students, both funded and not, who had extra learning needs.

A life in union

I had been a unionist in the State system and automatically joined the IEU, as I had always believed in the importance of collegiality and cooperation; we are always stronger together. I've been around long enough to witness conservatives' attacks on workers and working conditions generally, and on unions in particular, reinforcing that belief in solidarity. I was also aware of Catholic social teaching, which reinforced that view. It has been a relief that the current federal government, disappointing as it is in many ways (nuclear submarines, anyone?) has taken steps to reinstate union rights to represent workers' interests and needs.

Retirement on the RUN

I retired to Tasmania where I discovered the Retired Unionists' Network (RUN) Tasmania, which in Hobart has its own part-time organiser and dedicated meeting space at the Trades Hall. It is a very energetic group which often supports pickets by unionists such as the United Workers' Union and the Nurses and Midwives (ANMF).

The ACTU RUN has interesting speakers on topics from a campaign to improve the age pension to a presentation on Australian trade union history.

Attendees report on the many and varied activities of their state branches. I particularly like the Canberra group's name: Vintage Reds!

I am a member because I continue to be deeply interested in union matters and current affairs. I continue as a member of IEU Victoria Tasmania for the same reason: I am still keenly interested in education. Another way to scratch that itch is signing up to volunteer in my granddaughter's primary school, St Theresa's Albion. Good to spot the IEU lanyards on many teachers there!

A call to arms

Disappointingly, I am the only retired IEU member in RUN. I am keenly awaiting former IEU General Secretary Deb James' arrival, once she is sick of the retired life!

Apart from recommending RUN to retired members, what would I recommend to IEU members contemplating retirement? Stay involved. You will greatly miss the camaraderie... if not the yard duties! Get involved in social issues – XR Greypower (Extinction Rebellion) needs you!

Or for a gentler involvement, Australian Parents for Climate Action

welcomes grandparents with open arms, as we are generally less busy than the parents of young children.

**For the younger reader: 'Jeffed' was our word for the savage school and hospital staff cuts inflicted by the Liberal Victorian premier Jeff Kennett.*

Ongoing membership in the IEU supports unionism, education and the rights of workers in the industry you loved. If you want to continue your support in retirement, please contact the IEU office on 9254 1860 or thepoint@ieuvictas.org.au or contact your current organiser.

The Retired Unionists Network

The Retired Unionists Network (RUN), run by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), is a national network of retired union members who want to stay informed and active in the movement.

It connects with retired activist groups right around the country aiming to provide opportunities for retired union members to participate in and contribute to the creation of campaigns in the movement.

Getting involved in RUN is a great way to meet other activists and keep up with the goings on in the union movement.

It provides an opportunity to socialise with like-minded people and link in better to campaigns in your local area about the issues you care about.

To join the ACTU Retired Unionists Network, go to: rb.gy/wuuww



Letter to the editor: Maxine Barry on the militarisation of education

I am now retired, but still keenly interested in education and in union matters. Therefore, I'm beyond shocked to learn of the 'Nuclear-powered Submarine Propulsion Challenge' launched by the Department of Defence last year.

The aim ultimately (according to a DoD press release) is that participating students 'will be our future submariners, engineers and technicians'. This is not the only case in the militarisation of education. Armaments manufacturers are targeting primary school students too, especially those in more disadvantaged communities.

It saddens me to think that the bright shiny toys of warfare are being used to attract students to STEM studies and to continue in them. Binoy Kampmark*, senior lecturer at RMIT, reports that students are being told 'the joys of war will be heroically

greater than the returns of peace... You can even have a lucrative career'.

I recommend that people seek out the excellent analysis by ex-Senator (and ex-submariner) Rex Patrick as to the uselessness of these phenomenally expensive submarines for Australia's defence. They are purely for an aggressive stance against China and to support US foreign policy objectives. That has gone well for us in the past, has it not?

In that article, he states, 'The lengthy tentacles of weapons manufacturers and their spread into education has become inexorable. In its 2021 report, *Minors*

and Missiles, the Medical Association for Prevention of War found that 'major weapons companies seek to build positive brand recognition amongst Australian primary and secondary students, and attract the 'best and brightest' young people into a comprehensive talent pipeline.'

***Binoy's article on this topic, *Kits for Killing: AUKUS goes to school*, was published in *Pearls and Irritations* online at: rb.gy/ibhvsi**

More than ever, IEU members want to have their say, and we receive more letters and articles from members than ever before. To have your say on the topics that matter to you and your colleagues contact us at: thepoint@ieuvictas.org.au

TEACHER LEARNING NETWORK

The growing importance of middle leadership, and a new course for IEU members seeking to develop their skills

The role of middle leaders has emerged as a critical contributor to the successful operation of our schools.

As an individual educator, whether you are interested in gaining experience in higher responsibilities, wanting to contribute positively to school culture and student outcomes at your school, or planning a career progression, the focus on strong middle leaders is a recognition that they are the engine room of the school: the pivot between leadership and teaching staff, driving school improvement while supporting the daily realities of pedagogical transactions within the classroom.

Middle leadership is relational and strategic work, requiring a broad spectrum of administrative skills to facilitate curriculum development, instructional planning, assessment practices, and the evolving needs of students and staff. Middle leaders require advanced interpersonal skills to facilitate the exchange of ideas, the development of best practices, and to promote a culture of trust, learning and growth. This pivotal

function typically involves advocacy for equitable resource allocation, professional learning, and supportive working conditions to enable teachers to thrive in a rewarding school climate, and for students to succeed.

'Middle leaders are instrumental in the effective running of any school,' writes Dr Pauline Thompson, in the TLN Journal. 'The nurturing, support, and development of these leaders should be of paramount concern to leadership at the school and system level, as their work is far reaching and impactful.'

Many questions are raised by the emergence of a class of middle leaders. Who is a middle leader in a school? How are teachers selected to become middle leaders? How can middle leaders be supported in their development?

When discussions began with academics, specialised consultants and those in current middle leadership positions for TLN's upcoming journal, *Middle Leadership*, it quickly became

evident what fosters a sustainable, successful and enjoyable career in middle leadership: effective mentors, opportunities for professional development, clearly defined responsibilities, a focus on wellbeing, a sense of autonomy, and usable time.

Middle Leadership will explore issues, challenges and practical strategies for improving the effectiveness of middle leaders, informed by current research in the field.

The Middle Leadership Program

The IEU's new Middle Leadership Program, an 18-month professional learning opportunity commencing in June, will provide further support, drawing on the research and practical skills of a quality field of practitioners. Participants will undertake 30 hours of coursework and professional readings in topics such as leading a successful team, career pathways, workload,



Teacher Learning Network

wellbeing, and managing challenging conversations. A Professional Certificate in Middle Leadership will be awarded by the IEU to members upon completion of the program.

To register your interest in the Middle Leadership Program, email training@ieuvictas.org.au

About the Teacher Learning Network

The TLN was established by the IEU and the Australian Education Union, and is owned by those two unions. The investment in TLN is one element of the unions' commitment to building the education profession.

This service is provided as a direct benefit of your union membership. We look forward to seeing you at an event soon.

All IEU members have free access to a range of courses in the IEU Learning Hub – find out more via our website!

Make your big tomorrow your best tomorrow

ngs Super

When it comes to your super it pays to invest with a fund that gives you confidence. NGS Super has been helping education professionals make the most of their super savings for over 35 years. Benefit from our personalised service, value for money and award winning products. Talk to us today and let us help you start planning for your tomorrow.

Join us today



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Before acting on this information or making an investment decision, you should consider your personal circumstances and read our PDS and TMD which are available at www.ngssuper.com.au/join. For more information about awards and ratings received by NGS Super, go to www.ngssuper.com.au/about-us/our-team/awards-and-ratings. Issued by NGS Super Pty Limited ABN 46 003 491 487 AFSL 233 154 the trustee of NGS Super ABN 73 549 180 515

The (practical, money-saving) benefits of union membership

Union membership is about being part of a movement championing social justice. It's about safeguarding yourself with expert industrial assistance. It's about solidarity and ensuring the best possible working conditions for you and your colleagues.

But it can also save you money! There are several services available to IEU members which can make a real difference to your bottom line. Most also closely align to union values of fairness, sustainability and returning profits to members.

Union members have recently told *The Point*:

- 'With 4% off my grocery shop and at least 5% off everything from Myer and Target to Kogan and Airbnb, I easily make back my union fees'
- 'I saved approximately \$200 on car hire during a 10-day trip to New Zealand through the Union Shopper Avis discount'
- 'Since I moved my family's health insurance across from [big-name for-profit fund] to Teachers Health, I've saved more each year than the cost of my union membership'
- 'I saved hundreds on a new fridge purchased through Member Advantage'
- 'As a movie buff, it's great to be able to get to the cinema each month for around \$15 a ticket!'

Union Shopper

Union Shopper is a 100% union-owned organisation that utilises the collective bargaining power of Australian unions to provide great benefits and savings to members.

Its major products and services include:

- Electrical & whitegoods
- Motor vehicles & accessories
- Computers, cameras & office equipment
- Insurance & professional services
- Travel & accommodation
- Leisure & entertainment
- Gifts & shopping
- Food & drink
- House & garden
- Personal, health & beauty
- Sports, fitness & hobbies.

Member Advantage

Save big on everyday essentials! Through Member Advantage, your IEU membership provides discounts, offers & deals on:

- Groceries and petrol
- Movie tickets

- Insurance
- Electrical and whitegoods
- Shopping vouchers and gift cards
- Dining and accommodation
- Automotive.

Teachers Health

Teachers Health is a great value, not-for-profit health insurance fund exclusively available to education union members and their families.

Teachers Health gives union members and their immediate families exclusive access to a not-for-profit health fund, with great value health insurance at a low cost with benefit payments well above industry standards.

Teachers Health offers an online comparison service – see how we compare to other insurance providers at teachershealth.com.au/compare

Bank First

Formerly Victoria Teachers Mutual Bank, Bank First is a bank that's owned by its customers, founded on union values,

and maintains close ties with the education community.

All IEU members are welcome to take advantage of the wide range of services available.

To find out more call **1300 654 822** or visit bankfirst.com.au

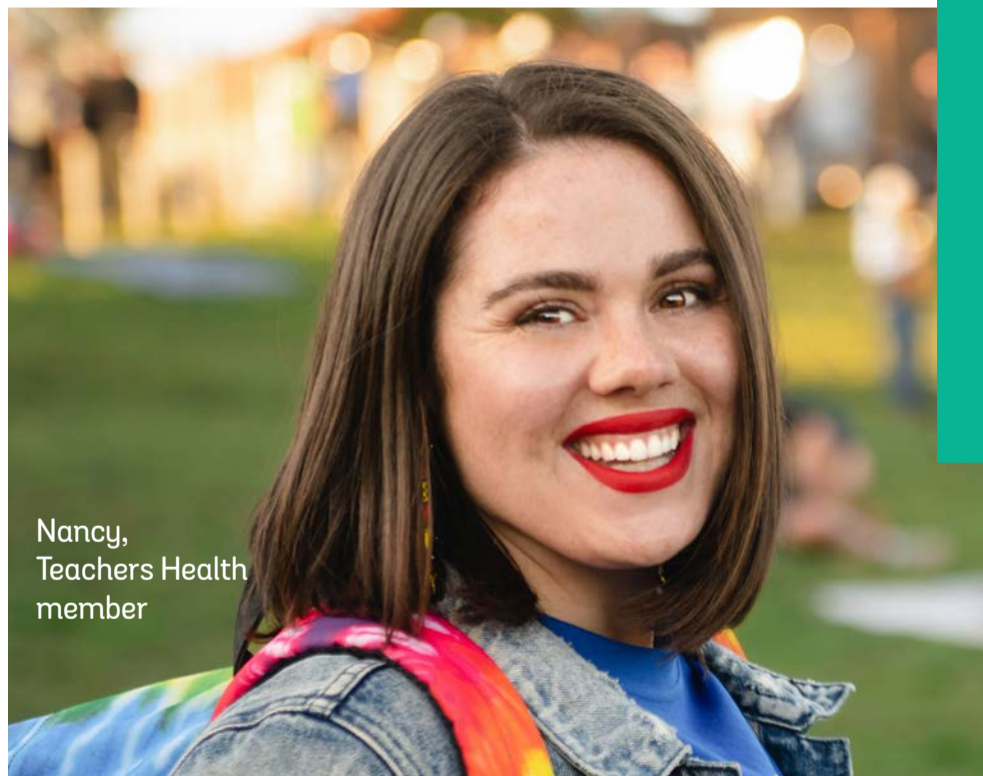
CoPower

Non-profit Cooperative Power is a creation of the union movement, and is a new way for everyone to buy clean, sustainable and affordable energy.

They offer energy at wholesale rates, and have committed to never increasing rates for profit. Even better, profits are returned to community projects and workers – and every customer gets to vote on how they are distributed!

Go to: www.cooperativepower.org.au

Explore the savings and offers at www.ieuvictas.org.au/discounts-and-offers



Nancy,
Teachers Health
member

Great value health cover to support you in and out of the classroom

As the health fund for the education community, we help over **370,000** members and their families navigate life's ups and downs.

So why not see what we can do for you?

TEACHERS HEALTH
For members, for 70 years



To compare our cover
scan the QR code
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IEU training – it's free to learn!

Your union has never offered as many training opportunities in as many different areas.

You can concentrate on classroom skills with online Learning Hub offerings such as how to conduct productive parent teacher interviews or support students with ADHD. There is extensive training for Reps of all levels of experience. Then there's Consultative Committee training, particularly important for staff representatives on Consultative Committees in schools grappling with implementation of the Victorian Catholic Agreements.

We're also rolling out in-school Reportable Conduct Scheme information presentations, with crucial information which every education worker needs to know about how the scheme operates, who it covers and what to do if you are the subject of an allegation – an unfortunately all-too-common experience.

The IEU is busy building Rep capacity with new materials as well as expanded training events, with attendance increasing at all sessions.

The new Middle Leadership Program being run through the Teacher Learning Network launching in May and running until November 2025 has been a major focus. That course offers a Professional Certificate upon completion and represents a concerted bid to fill the leadership gap in schools and help inspire and inform the next generation of school leaders.

Most of the courses and seminars can be engaged online.

- **To book participation in the Middle Leadership program, contact our Training Officer at: training@ieuvictas.org.au or call 9254 1860**
- **For details of all the IEU's many and varied training options – free for IEU members – go to the training and events page of our website: www.ieuvictas.org.au/all-events-training**



VICTORIAN TRADES HALL COUNCIL

What is Trades Hall?

The Australian Council of Trade Unions is familiar to most as the overarching body representing all the country's trade unions. But where does the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) fit in?



The VTHC is the voice of Victorian workers, an organising organisation! It coordinates the campaigns of 41 affiliated unions and over half a million Victorian union members. An executive council of elected representatives from various unions meets monthly. Day-to-day campaigns, policy and events are managed by the Secretary and two Assistant Secretaries who are elected by VTHC delegates.

Trades Hall also coordinates Trades and Labour Councils operating in regional centres around Victoria.

Trades Hall work includes:

- **Lobbying** the state government for legislation that affects the lives of working Victorians, winning changes like the criminalisation of wage theft and the introduction of Industrial Manslaughter laws
- **Coordinating** Victorian campaigns on industrial, political and social issues such as the state campaign for Marriage Equality and the Voice to Parliament
- **Organising** large rallies, marches, protests and other public events that further social justice and worker's rights
- **Providing strategic advice** and workers' support for unions on individual campaigns
- **Communicating** with the public and media about trade union issues through such things as the Worker's Museum and school tours
- **Advocacy** as the voice of Victorian workers.

The iconic Trades Hall building on Lygon Street in Carlton is also a vibrant arts hub and venue for parties, arts and cultural events.

Trades Hall campaigns and projects

The breadth of the campaigning and advocacy work of the Hall is extraordinary – wins have recently been chalked up on pokies reform (reduced opening hours and mandatory pre-commitments) and the pioneering ban on silicosis-causing engineered stone, while current campaigns include a review of outdated workplace surveillance laws, the introduction of a portable Long Service Leave scheme for all Victorian workers, and visa reform to end the abuse of migrant workers.

Ending the misuse of non-disclosure agreements (NDA)

An NDA is a legally binding contract that creates a confidential relationship, originally used by companies trying to protect trade secrets. NDAs are all-too-often imposed on women who lodge sexual harassment cases – these silence victims/survivors, provide cover for perpetrators, sweep institutional failures under the carpet and inhibit collective action.

Trades Hall supports the NDA Activist Network, which is actively campaigning to end the misuse of NDAs, notably by bringing 60 union women to Victoria Parliament to speak to 58 MPs about ending the use of NDAs in harassment cases. As we go to print the next step of this important campaign is being planned. (See page 19.)

Candidate School: training workers for public office

In 2024, the VTHC is building on its long history of putting working-class activists in positions of legislative power by training union members interested in running for public office, with an emphasis on local councils.

Candidate School provides working people with the confidence, skills and resources to run for office,

and provide ongoing support to help get them elected. Participants learn practical skills necessary to run a successful campaign, including doorknocking, writing persuasive emails, developing a 'theory of change', engaging with community groups and fundraising.

Training

Trades Hall delivers training including the acclaimed women's program the Anna Stewart Memorial Project as well as Union Summer/Winter for young unionists, courses which educate members on industrial rights, political economy, effective lobbying, media liaison and activist tactics.

The next step is the revival of the Victorian Labour College, which will make such classes available to a wider audience.

Women Onsite

This is a VTHC project that supports women interested in a career in mainly male industries like construction, manufacturing, automotive and clean energy. Over 100 women have been trained as electrical apprentices through an electrical pre-apprenticeship program with the ETU. This project has a 94% completion rate – almost double the state average.

The Young Workers Centre (YWC)

The Young Workers Centre is an accredited community legal centre, providing free advice and representation to workers under the age of 30 with employment law issues. The YWC runs outreach support to school-aged workers and lobbies for wage justice for young workers. It is currently highlighting youth wages, which allow employers to pay young people a fraction of adult minimum wages. The YWC labels this 'legal discrimination' and is actively lobbying for major reform.

Check out the latest from Trades Hall at: www.weareunion.org.au

What is Unions Tasmania?

It describes itself as 'a people powered movement of 50,000 Tasmanians, working in the public and private sector, across every industry and workplace in Tasmania'.

'As the peak body for our state's trade unions, we campaign and organise alongside our 23 affiliate unions in workplaces and the community to make sure workers get a fair go. We publicly argue for policy and laws that support working people and their families.'

Current Unions Tasmania campaigns and events

Tasmania needs Industrial Manslaughter Laws

Tasmania is now the only jurisdiction in Australia that has not implemented or planned to implement industrial manslaughter laws. Tasmania's work health and safety (WHS) laws need to include an industrial manslaughter offence that means employers are deterred from shirking their

Unions Tasmania is the peak body for Tasmanian unionists, dedicated to fighting for workers.

safety responsibilities and if a worker dies, there are real consequences including jail time and significant fines.

Sadly, over the last decade, there have been 87 work-related fatalities in Tasmania. We believe this number would be even higher if all work-related deaths, including suicide, were included in the official statistics.

Unions Tasmania is calling on the state government to commit

to industrial manslaughter laws in Tasmania. **To sign the petition, go to: rb.gy/ns0y8b**

2024 Women's Conference

- Baha'i Centre of Learning for Tasmania
- 1 Tasman Highway, Hobart
- Friday 16 August 2024
9:30pm - 4:30pm

If you're a woman union member, delegate, or activist we hope you'll come along to the 2024 Unions Tasmania

Women's Conference, organised by the Unions Tasmania Women's Committee. Packed with great speakers and workshops, it's the biggest day of the year to meet up with union women from across the movement to network, learn and organise around women's rights at work. **Go to: www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1210248**



The (art and) science of learning

In February, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) launched *Vision for Instruction*, a position statement 'grounded in rich cognitive science' which it claims, 'identifies the most effective teaching methods supported by evidence of their positive impact on student outcomes'.

Vision for Instruction drew on 'Cognitive Load Theory and the robust evidence base on the science of learning'.

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) is 'the theory of how human brains learn and store knowledge'. The main findings of a 2017 Education NSW report into CLT included, 'The human brain can only process a small amount of new information at once, but it can process very large amounts of stored information'. It insisted that CLT had produced 'a number of instructional techniques that are directly transferable to the classroom'.

MACS based its approach on 'Psychology, Education and Neuroscience (PEN) Principles' developed by the Science of Learning Research Centre (SLRC) which covers everything from how written text and spoken word interact to how multitasking impairs memory and learning.

The SLRC is a Special Research Initiative of the Australian Research Council in which 'researchers in education, neuroscience and cognitive psychology are working together with teachers to understand the learning process'.

But just what is the Science of Learning informing this MACS initiative?

Definitions

Cognitive scientist Pooja K. Agarwal, Ph.D. and educator and author Patrice M. Bain, EdS are the co-authors of *Powerful Teaching: Unleash the Science of Learning*. They say the science of learning is

simply, 'how we learn stories, names, facts, important events, unimportant events'.

They believe educators remain vulnerable to the 'fad of the semester' rather than scientifically-based strategies, because the science of learning is not easily accessible for teachers and it is hard to disentangle from the latest fads featured in newspapers, blogs, and social media.

'Teachers are given the impossible challenge of finding time to seek out good research, make sense of it, and apply it in classrooms,' write Agarwal and Bain.

'Educators often ask, 'Why haven't I heard about this research before? Why didn't I learn about this in my pre-service program or professional development?' There is valuable research on the science of learning out there, but it's sitting behind lock and key.'

When such approaches do emerge, teachers need to be properly resourced to use them.

Theory and classroom reality

IEU member Jack Andrew is enthusiastic about the potential of the science of learning to inform teaching practices, as you can read in his submission to *The Point* below.

He believes 'considering how students learn most effectively' is important to education.

Jack prioritises practical outcomes over theory for theory's sake. He respects the position of prominent science of learning researcher Carl Hendrick who says that while research provides insights into

how learning occurs, this knowledge 'often fails to translate effectively into classroom practice'.

'I always wonder, how do I put this into my classrooms in a real situation away from a vacuum of theory?'

If teaching methods derived from research are distorted or misapplied, there are 'ineffective or counterproductive' outcomes.

And if they are misapplied, there is disdain for the theory.

Jack appreciates Hendrick's efforts to empower teachers to 'integrate evidence-based practices into their teaching methods'.

This helps teachers make informed decisions and 'be happy and confident in adapting to the needs of their students effectively'.

Teaching is an art, not a science: Michael Victory

Jack's requirement for theory to be properly applied to classroom realities would resonate with Teacher Learning Network Executive Officer Michael Victory who says, 'there can be no formula for teaching'.

'What science has done for medicine it cannot do for education,' Michael has written for the IEU's national journal *IE*.

'Certainty, repetition and guaranteed outcomes are tantalising enticements of following the scientific method. However much we may want them, the outcomes of the scientific method, let alone the process itself, are not achievable in education.'

Michael says education occurs 'in social encounters between people who have

been brought into a relationship'. It is 'not certain, it is not guaranteed and it cannot be repeated'.

Whilst respectful of scientific research, Victory insists 'education is about relationships'.

'Teachers can and should learn from science... but in that moment of encounter between teacher and student, the one that occurs thousands of times in a teaching day, science cannot provide the answer about the best way to teach an idea, a concept or a formula to that person at that time.'

'It requires judgement, it requires creativity, it requires a commitment to the 'other'. It is what so many call the art of teaching. The art of teaching is about making a judgement on what I can do in that moment, on that day, with that student, in that classroom, that can make a positive difference.'

'For our profession, science can be a helpful and informative guide, but our work will always call from us the art of building teaching relationships.'

Links:

- **Science of Learning Research Centre:** www.slrc.org.au
- **Vision for Instruction MACS position statement:** rb.gy/ezdiwy
- **Dr Carl Hendrick: How Learning Happens:** rb.gy/25msyt
- **IE magazine:** www.ieuvictas.org.au/member-publications



How the science of learning can benefit Victorian secondary schools

Teacher and IEU member Jack Andrew believes innovative research can benefit everyone involved in education.

For generations, teachers have relied on experience and intuition to guide their instruction. However, the field of education is undergoing a revolution with the increasing importance of the science of learning. This approach uses research on the human brain and cognitive processes to inform teaching practices. In secondary schools, embracing the science of learning holds immense potential to benefit both teachers and students.

Understanding How We Learn: A Teacher's Toolkit

Traditionally, teachers often presented information based on their own learning preferences, rather than considering how students learn most effectively. The science of learning sheds light on this by revealing how the brain processes and retains information. For instance, research

shows the importance of spaced repetition; revisiting concepts at intervals to solidify them in memory. Similarly, active learning, where students engage with the material through discussions, problem-solving, and projects, leads to deeper understanding compared to passive lectures.

Empowering Teachers to Break Down the Walls

One of the biggest challenges teachers face is breaking down complex subjects into manageable parts for students. The science of learning equips them with strategies like chunking, which involves grouping related information into smaller, more digestible units. This allows students to grasp core concepts before moving on to more intricate details. Additionally, the science of learning emphasises the importance of building upon prior

knowledge. By identifying learning gaps and tailoring instruction accordingly, teachers can ensure students have a strong foundation to build upon.

Benefits Beyond Content Delivery

The science of learning extends beyond content delivery. It helps teachers create a positive learning environment that fosters student engagement. Techniques like incorporating formative assessment allow teachers to identify areas where students struggle and adjust their instruction in real-time. Additionally, the science of learning highlights the power of metacognition, teaching students how to learn and monitor their own understanding. This equips them with the tools they need to become independent, lifelong learners.

The Road Ahead for Victorian Schools

Integrating the science of learning into Victorian Secondary Schools requires a collaborative effort. Professional development programs can equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement evidence-based practices. School leadership can play a crucial role in fostering a culture of continuous improvement and providing teachers with the resources they need to thrive.

By embracing the science of learning, our secondary schools can create a brighter future for their students. With a deeper understanding of how students learn, teachers can deliver more effective instruction, fostering a love of learning and propelling students towards academic success.

Jack Andrew is a teacher at a regional Victorian Catholic school.

**Thursday
4 July**

2:00pm to 3:00pm

**Redirecting focus of
distracted students**

Presented by TBC for ES Staff

**Friday
5 July**

10:00am to 12:00pm

**Steps to
Reconciliation**

Presented by Emerson Zerafa-Payne for teachers

**Friday
12 July**

10:00am to 3:00pm

**Differentiation
for students with a
learning disability**

Presented by Belinda Webb for teachers

Coming up at the IEU

Thursday 30 May

- **PD Webinar** - Supporting students with Dyscalculia
- Victorian Council

Tuesday 4 June

- Consultative Committee Training CEMEA - Online

Friday 7 June

- HSR Refresher OHS Training Course - Work-related Violence

Thursday 13 June

- **PD Webinar** - Keeping it right - maintaining the learning environment

Thursday 4 July

- **PD Webinar** - Behaviour management out of the classroom
- **PD Webinar** - Redirecting focus of distracted students

Friday 5 July

- **PD Webinar** - Steps to Reconciliation

Friday 12 July

- **PD Webinar** - Differentiation for students with a learning disability

Wednesday 17 July

- HSR Initial OHS Training Course (Day 1/5) Also 18, 19, 30 and 31 July

Monday 29 July

- Consultative Committee Training CEMEA - Online

Thursday 1 August

- **PD Webinar** - Supporting students who have experienced trauma

Friday 2 August

- Level 1 Rep Training

Thursday 8 August

- **PD Webinar** - Inclusive practices in the classroom
- **PD Webinar** - Supporting Sensory needs of students

Friday 9 August

- **PD Webinar** - Indigenous Pedagogies

Monday 12 August

- Consultative Committee Training - Engaging Sub branch/Staff, PoL Structures & TIL
- Tasmania: Anna Stewart Memorial Program (Daily until 16 August)

Events and training updated regularly. To find out more and register head to

www.ieuvictas.org.au/all-events-training

UNION QUIZ supplied by IEU members at St Martin de Porres Primary School, Avondale Heights

- What does VTHC stand for?
 - Victorian Trades Hall Corporation
 - Victorian Trades Hall Commission
 - Victorian Trades Hall Council
 - Victorian Trades Hall City
- Approximately how many members form the IEU Victoria Tasmania?
 - 10,000
 - 5000
 - 20,000
 - 3500
- The 2022 Teacher Supply and Demand Report forecast to 2028 predicts which of the following?
 - A surplus of 5036 teachers
 - A shortfall of 5036 teachers
 - Parity of supply and demand
 - More teachers than you could poke a stick at
- Which was the first Australian colony to offer free, secular, compulsory education?
 - Victoria
 - New South Wales
 - Western Australia
 - South Australia
- Which politician was responsible for making Victoria 'the education state' on vehicle number plates?
 - Daniel Andrews
 - Ben Carroll
 - Gayle Tierney
 - Jason Dean Clare
- What is the oldest school in Victoria?
 - Porepunkah Primary School
 - Glen Iris Primary School
 - Bacchus Marsh Primary School
 - Mansfield Primary School
- Which of the following can an elected OH&S Rep NOT do?
 - Attend an approved training course at the employer's expense
 - Issue a Provisional Improvement Notice citing a suspected breach of safety law
 - Accompany a WorkSafe inspector on a school visit
 - Prosecute employer in court for safety breaches
- What does LSL stand for?
 - Listening and Spoken Language
 - Life Sciences Laboratory
 - Learning Support Leader
 - Long Service Leave
- Which one of the following does the IEU not have an affiliate link with?
 - Australian Council of Trade Unions
 - Australian Workers Union
 - First Nations Workers Alliance
 - Union Aid Abroad
- How often is the Australian Curriculum changed?
 - Every 3 years
 - Every 5 years
 - Every 6 years
 - Every 10 years

PAY IT FORWARD TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

St Martin de Porres School, Avondale Heights has chosen St Therese's School, Essendon to provide the curly ones for the next quiz and then to pay it forward to another school!

PICTURE THIS

Which of the following statements are true?

YOUTH IS THE GIFT OF NATURE BUT AGE IS A WORK OF ART

- In 2022, 5% of people aged 20-24 were trade union members.
- On average, union members aged 15-24 earn 62% more per week than non-union members the same age.
- On average, union members aged over 65 earn 49% more per week than non-union members the same age.
- The IEU Vic Tas has 396 members aged 70 or older.
- The IEU Vic Tas has 28 members aged 80-89 and two members aged under 20.
- All of the above.