

## A. Acting Secretary's Overview 2012

Once again the AEU - ACT Branch has been engaged in a number of campaigns at the ACT and national levels. Our members make our Union strong, and they have ably supported the Branch's campaigns through Executive, Council, TAFE Council and the general and TAFE memberships.

The year 2012 has provided numerous examples of what can be achieved collectively through our Union. Early in the year we saw the fruits of our bargaining efforts in 2011. For teachers at CIT and assistants in schools we saw the implementation of Enterprise Agreements which protect the working conditions of members and retain key clauses that had been threatened. Teachers in schools are enjoying the largest salary increases in more than a decade, and are seeing the roll out of measures that improve the working lives of teachers – first year teacher support, better school counsellor provision, and more. Soon we will have Executive Teachers [Professional Practice] in our schools and accelerated incremental progression for teachers not yet at the top of the scale. As the result of the recently completed principal structure review, we hope to see the complexity of schools and the work of principals better recognised. This is long overdue.

To date, our Schools Funding Campaign has been an enormous success. Courtesy of David Gonski's historic report, and thanks in part to AEU members who gave him the evidence he needed, public school champions like the AEU should no longer be required to make the case that our current school funding arrangements are broken, with the outcomes being both unfair and unwise. The national interest is suffering, and the Gonski Report gives us a blueprint for the future. The logic of Gonski's model is impenetrable, and the national government has thrown its weight behind it. Now we need the States and Territories to commit and, as we have before, we will ask every one of our members to do something small to make this happen.

It has been a challenging year for a number of our preschool teachers and assistants with the phasing in of the National Quality Framework. Together, we managed to see off the practice of unwanted "unannounced visits" to classrooms, a phenomenon which no other teacher is expected to encounter. This win is an excellent example of Union members working together to identify a problem and determine a strategy to solve it.

The persistence of members has also been seen in teacher-librarian [TL] members working collectively and strategically to increase understanding of their crucial role in schools. After meeting with AEU Officers to set goals and match them to strategies, we have seen TLs lobbying politicians, speaking to large groups of principals and having an opinion piece in *The Canberra Times*. Appreciation of their role has increased and, as a direct result, ACT Labor went to the recent Territory election with a policy designed to retain TLs in schools. Similar action has also been taken by school counsellors in recent times, and we are seeing other interest groups like English as an Additional Language or Dialect [EALD] teachers and school leaders agitating for positive change.

At the beginning of this year, the future of CIT was looking alarmingly unclear. A merger with UC had thankfully been rejected by the Government's Steering Committee, but the proposal to create a third institution in "UCIT" remained on the table. In the public realm and behind closed doors, the AEU fiercely questioned the idea that the proposed benefits would outweigh the significant risks to CIT. By May, the proposal had been abandoned. Of course, that was not the only threat to the TAFE sector. Across the country, TAFE colleges and campuses are fighting for their very survival under cost-slashing state governments and a Federal Government that appears rather too unmoved by the looming carnage. TAFEs, including the CIT, will need the AEU as much as the AEU needs TAFE. In 2013, we must

work together once again to build our TAFE membership [within permanent and casual ranks], increase our activism and fight hard for the future prosperity of our lighthouse public VET provider.

At the time of writing, only days after the 2012 ACT general election, it is clear that the ACT Greens will determine which major party governs the Territory for the next four years. By the time you read this, the outcome of the negotiations with Greens MLA Shane Rattenbury will be known.

The AEU did not envisage having to spend so much time talking about funding for public and private schools during this election period. The die was cast by the Canberra Liberals who joined their Federal colleagues in defying the national momentum and refusing to back the Gonski plan to fund students based on need. They announced a plan to boost funding for private schools, including those already making multi-million dollar annual profits and having no appetite to reduce student fees, by \$48 million over four years. Their pledges for public education were dwarfed by those of ACT Labor, which made significant announcements regarding capital upgrades, new facilities, specialist teachers and teacher support. For those who prioritise public education when they enter the polling booth, this election presented a clear choice. The AEU was heavily involved in the campaign period, commissioning a telephone poll of 400 ACT residents which received two days of free media and put public education well and truly on the election agenda. We cooperated with *The Canberra Times* in a story which set the Liberals' private school funding pledge alongside massive profits made by some of the schools. And we produced an election advertisement for page 3 of the newspaper only two days before polling day, which made it clear that, of the two major parties, Labor was promising significantly more for public education.

In 2012, the AEU responded to a number of Education and Training Directorate [ETD] initiatives and proposals, and continued to deal with a wide range of issues raised by members, involving both support and assistance for individuals, and advice and support for groups of members.

Despite all of the pressures, the public education system continues to deliver high quality outcomes for students, thanks to the commitment and capacity of its teaching and education support workforce.

### **Enterprise Agreements**

Following in principle agreement across ETD [for teachers and assistants] and CIT in 2011, the Agreements were formally ratified in 2012. All salary increases were backdated to 2011 [1 October for ETD teachers, and 18 August for ETD assistants and CIT teachers].

### **Member Involvement in the Branch**

This year has been another challenging one in terms of maintaining member involvement in the Branch. Most vacancies during the year have been filled without contest, with a number of positions on Branch Council not filled at maximum entitlement and some Sub-Branche entirely unrepresented.

Membership numbers have increased slightly and are now in excess of 3300. A number of administrative initiatives of the membership officers and Executive Officer have enhanced membership and seen more members paying fees at the correct rate. But there is no room for complacency. AEU members need to work with the Office in maintaining the recruitment effort. Every teacher or support staff member new to a workplace should be invited to join the AEU. It is only by maximising our membership numbers that the AEU can continue to have strong and effective representation of members, and truly be "the voice of the profession".

## **AEU Awards**

This year the AEU - ACT Branch enjoyed continued sponsorship arrangements with Teachers Mutual Bank [formerly Teachers Credit Union] and Teachers Health Fund, whilst re-invigorating sponsorship arrangements with ME Bank. Thanks must go also to First State Super and Maurice Blackburn Lawyers for their financial support of the AEU Public Education Awards function.

Teachers Mutual Bank sponsored the AEU Public Education Award, which is recognised with an impressive trophy and a monetary prize for the Award winner to use in support of their professional responsibilities. In 2012, the Public Education Award recipient was Lalangi Abhayapala of Latham Primary School. Lalangi received the praise of fellow AEU members for her efforts in building community networks and showcasing the excellence of public preschool students, particularly through art displays. A certificate of commendation was awarded to Nicole Mengel of Mount Rogers School.

ME Bank sponsored a new award, the Friend of Public Education Award, which is given to somebody who is not an AEU member but who makes a significant contribution to the cause of public education. The inaugural participant was Save Our Schools convenor Trevor Cobbold, who has argued for better recognition of the needs of public schools on the local and national stages for a number of years. Trevor is committed to evidence-based research and uses it powerfully to inform the debate and keep the pressure on governments to properly invest in public schooling. Trevor was presented with a trophy and monetary prize.

Teachers Health Fund continued their sponsorship of the AEU Reconciliation Award, recognised with a stunning glass trophy. At a function hosted by Melba Copland Secondary School, this year's AEU reconciliation Award was presented to Meredith Regan from Narrabundah Early Childhood School for her approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children, and the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives within all of her teaching.

Unlike the functions of the previous two years, this year's Awards ceremony was conducted without ETD collaboration. This was of ETD's choosing. The CIT was very keen to retain its collaboration with the AEU and presented a number of its own awards on the night. The right balance was struck between formalities and informal socialising. The event also provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the work of CIT as the Territory's major public VET provider, since all of the music, catering, floral decorations and venue management took place in collaboration with the relevant staff and students at CIT.

The ACT Branch continues to achieve significant sponsorship as our contribution to the event, as well as providing support in kind through the work of the AEU Office in ticketing and preparing advertising for the function.

Next year is Canberra's Centenary and initial thought is being given to a "beefed up" event, with ideas such as a dinner in an auspicious venue, along with a high profile keynote speaker, being considered. The challenge will be to entice significant numbers of the general membership to the event.

## **Schools Funding Review**

In February we saw David Gonski and his panel produce the long-awaited report into schools funding. The evidence is now in and it supports the case that has been made by the AEU and others for a number of years. The current funding arrangements are broken, and they are having a negative effect on the national interest. Gonski says that the need for change is "urgent". The report contains a model to better fund schools that is impenetrable in its logic, in that it is designed specifically to address student need. The bulk of Gonski's extra

funding would flow to public schools, where disproportionate levels of need arise. The Federal Government's response to the report was disappointing in its prevarication. A number of forums were held over several months but a vacuum was unnecessarily created which was opportunistically filled by fear and misinformation from those who, due to their own narrow interests, support the status quo and all of the inequity that this represents. More than six months after the report's release, Prime Minister Julia Gillard addressed the National Press Club with her "Education Crusade" speech, which backed Gonski's recommendations but suggested a six-year transition period. She intends to have the funding arrangements with the States ironed out by the first Council of Australian Governments [COAG] meeting of 2013. Gonski left a number of questions unanswered in the report, and one of them involves the ACT, which has a historically high level of government investment but could still better address the complex needs of some students. We watch this space with interest.

### **School Autonomy or "Empowerment"**

A survey conducted in September showed that there is significant concern within our membership, including our Principal and Deputy Principal leadership, regarding the ACT Government's intention to "empower" schools, particularly through the implementation of an average cost budget model at a local level. Members strongly suggested that they believe there are potentially far more negatives than positives in this approach to resourcing schools. Particular concerns include the effects on workload, financial management, staff morale, staff selection, permanency, and equity for staff and students across the system. Members do not believe greater financial autonomy will improve student outcomes, despite the rhetoric, and indeed this is supported by the international and national evidence. There was significant media interest in the AEU's survey results and a six-page feature appeared in the Spring edition of *Public Education Voice*. The AEU has been formally informed by ETD that the intended extension of the Empowerment model from the 23 trial schools to the remainder of the ACT's public schools will not occur as originally planned in 2013. This follows a recognition by ETD that the average cost budget model caused problems in some of the trial schools and has to be rethought. The Branch will monitor this situation very closely and continue to present the evidence, arguments and member concerns to decision-makers.

### **Communications, Relationships and Politics**

Relations with the relatively new ACT Minister for Education and Training, Dr Chris Bourke, have been cordial and productive. There is no problem at all in obtaining access to the Minister and/or his staffers. This has contributed to fruitful outcomes in a number of policy areas, as outlined earlier in this Overview.

Relations with the Greens and the Canberra Liberals have also been productive, and we have appreciated the support of both parties on a number of issues. In the weeks and months following the final decision as to which party will govern the Territory, there will be the need to re-establish a relationship of trust with the Canberra Liberals in particular, who did not seek to involve us in any genuine way in the development of their election platform, and who announced a number of policies which run counter to the aims and priorities of our organisation.

Apart from managing political and professional relationships with politicians and the employers, the AEU has also worked to maintain cordial, effective and constructive relationships with parent groups, colleague unions, and other stakeholder or interest groups engaged in the public education space. We will continue to meet the challenges encountered, believing that in the end there are generally more matters on which we can find some common ground than there are areas of implacable opposition.

## **The AEU Office**

Thankfully, this year has been a relatively settled one with regard to administrative staff arrangements. Executive Officer Janet Anderson, Finance Officer Joelle Dulac, Membership Officers Michelle Kirby and Tracey Govan, and Receptionist/Administrative Officer “Corinne” Ying Zhang have continued in their roles. They have served us capably and loyally.

With regard to Officers, the landscape has been a fluctuating one. I have forgone my usual role of Schools Organiser/Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial] to act in the Branch Secretary role since early March. The role has been an enlightening and rewarding one. Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial] Peter Malone has increased from 0.6 to 0.8 to cater with the extra workload created by my move into the Secretary role. Cathy Smith has continued as Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] though she was on leave to study for most of first semester. Her absence was filled by Sascha Colley, who then reverted to a Schools Organiser role once Cathy returned from leave. When Sascha was acting up, the Schools organiser position was filled for most of the time by Sue Amundsen, who has worked with us on a number of occasions previously. Bill Book consistently filled the other Schools Organiser role. Mike Fitzgerald performed the role of TAFE/VETiS Organiser for three of the four terms, taking leave to travel during Term 3. For that period, Mark Hemmingsen from the CIT Skills Centre filled the void. It was positive to have new recruits such as Sascha and Mark assist us in building capacity.

With regard to personnel, the AEU office is likely to look rather different in 12 months time. Peter Malone, Bill Book and Janet Anderson have occupied crucial roles within the Union office for many years, and all are preparing to leave us during 2013. This will create voids, but also opportunities for others to step up and take their roles. Branch Executive has commenced a review of positions in the office and the outcomes of this should be known before the end of 2012. There has been recognition of the unsustainable workloads across the AEU office, as the number of challenges [and opportunities] facing public education increases.

I take this opportunity to place on record my thanks to the staff and officers of the AEU. As a unionist, it is perhaps paradoxical of me to recognise that each of these people go above and beyond their duty statements in dozens of ways on dozens of days – all in the service and defence of our members and the promotion of our cause. I extend my thanks to Branch Councillors for giving of their own time, and to the members of Branch Executive who are always on the end of the mobile phone or email to assist and advise as required. Finally, I thank and congratulate the membership in general for their participation in the work of the AEU during the year. Members’ support, activism and feedback are integral to the work of the AEU and its capacity to be the voice of public education in the ACT.

**GLENN FOWLER**  
**Branch Secretary [Acting]**

## **B. Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial] Report**

### **Implementation of New Enterprise Agreements (EAs)**

A key focus of the Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial] position in 2012 was to oversee the effective implementation of the new Enterprise Agreements for teaching members in both CIT and Education and Training Directorate [ETD].

As part of the ETD Teaching Staff EA, a comprehensive review of the Principals classification structure was conducted. It is expected that the outcomes of this review will be implemented during 2013.

One issue which caused concern for some members was the incorporation of a talk about potential transfer within the annual professional discussions. Unfortunately processes occurred in some schools this year which did not seem to meet the requirements agreed under the current Enterprise Agreement, so much so that it was questionable whether natural justice had been given to members. At the time of writing this report the Union was supporting two members through Fair Work Australia, who were challenging the decision of the Directorate to force them to transfer from their school. Meetings have been scheduled with ETD officers to provide extensive feedback on the processes, based on the experiences of our members.

### **Education Support Staff**

During 2012 the AEU - ACT Branch continued to recruit new members from the ranks of School Assistants. We are entitled to represent the following classifications:

Home Science Assistant, Preschool Assistant, Technology Assistant, Information Communication Technology Assistant, Library Assistant, Defence Transition Mentor, Defence School Transition Aide, Learning Support Assistant, Laboratory Assistant, Vision Support Assistant, Hearing Support Assistant, Bilingual Assistant, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer and Youth Support Workers.

We, of course, highly value the work performed by Building Service Officers, Business Managers, Front Office staff and all other clerical staff within the Directorate but, unfortunately, we are not able to represent these groups of people industrially as they are deemed not to work directly with students.

The current Enterprise Agreement that covers our School Assistants expires on 30 June 2013. As a result the Union is developing a new industrial claim in consultation with our members, which will be finalised by the end of Term 4 2012.

### **Canberra Institute of Technology**

In April 2012 the Commissioner for Work Safety, Mark McCabe issued an Improvement Notice on the CIT, due to its lack of adequate policies and procedures to promote a workplace free from bullying and harassment.

At the same time the Minister for Education gave his own directives to CIT and requested the Commissioner for Public Administration to investigate complaints of bullying. These investigations were ongoing at the time of writing this report.

The AEU has been actively involved in both these processes, with a view to promoting long-term cultural change within CIT.

As part of these processes, the AEU attended fortnightly meetings of the CIT Workplace Improvement Consultation Group. This group advised CIT senior management on how best to change internal policies and procedures to ensure that healthy workplaces are promoted across all CIT campuses.

The EA that covers teachers at CIT is also expiring on 30 June 2013. Members have been invited to provide their views about what they would like to see negotiated as part of the next Agreement. This was done initially through discussions at TAFE Council and Sub-Branch meetings and then followed up with an online survey.

### **Committees**

During 2012 the following committees/meetings were attended:

- ETD Director-General Consultation [quarterly]
- CIT Chief Executive Deputation [quarterly]
- CIT Enterprise Agreement Implementation meetings [monthly/as needed]
- CIT Workplace Improvement Consultation Group [fortnightly]
- ETD Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement Implementation Committee [fortnightly/as needed]
- ACT Minister for Education, Opposition Education Spokesperson and Greens Education Spokesperson [quarterly/as needed].

### **Legal Arrangement**

In September 2012 the Union negotiated a new legal arrangement with the law firm Slater and Gordon.

For many years we had a retainer agreement with our previous lawyers Maurice Blackburn [formally Pamela Coward and Associates] and their service to our members over many years is gratefully acknowledged.

### **Office Matters**

I assisted the Organisers to provide effective service to our members through day-by-day direct support and supervision and I assisted the office staff and the Executive Human Resource Sub-Committee to negotiate changes to the office Enterprise Agreement.

### **Farewell**

As this will be my final Annual Report, I would like to record that it has been a great privilege to support public education over the many years of my involvement with the AEU and it is with great heart that I thank the Union for many wonderful experiences and incredible support throughout my career.

**PETER MALONE**

**Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial]**

## C. Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] Report

During the period March to June 2012 this position was filled by Sascha Colley, whilst Cathy Smith took leave to complete a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

### 1. Research and Professional Issues

#### **Submissions**

The following written submissions were prepared by the AEU - ACT Branch during 2012:

- *Submission on Applications for New Private Schools in the ACT*, May 2012 [regarding proposals for Canberra Christian School, Molonglo; Brindabella Christian College, Charnwood; and At Taqwa Islamic School, Belconnen].

It is anticipated that the AEU-ACT Branch will submit a *2013-2014 Budget Submission to the ACT Government* in late 2012 or early 2013, depending on the ACT Government schedule.

The ACT Branch was involved in the following Federal AEU submissions:

- *Submission to the ACTU Secure Jobs, Better Future Inquiry*, January 2012.
- *Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment Inquiry into Workplace Bullying*, July 2012.
- *Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations References Committee Inquiry into Teaching and Learning*, October 2012.

#### **Committees and Boards in relation to professional issues affecting AEU members:**

The AEU has been represented on various Education and Training Directorate committees by nominated members and AEU Officers:

- ACT School Sports Council [Nathan Beaver]
- ANU Secondary College Operational Sub-Committee [Phil Rasmus]
- Board of Senior Secondary Studies [Jan Bentley]
- Board of Senior Secondary Studies - VETiS Sub-Committee [Mike Fitzgerald]
- Curriculum Taskforce [Sascha Colley/Cathy Smith]
- Disability Education Reference Group [Cathy Smith]
- Respect, Equity and Diversity Consultative Committee [Cathy Smith]
- Government Schools Education Council [Wendy Cave, Roger Amey]
- Literacy and Numeracy Reference Group [Cathy Smith]
- Qualifications Committee [Cathy Smith, interim until TQI takes over]
- ETD Reconciliation Action Plan Committee [Cara Shipp]
- Safe Schools Taskforce – disbanded September 2012 [Glenn Fowler & Cathy Smith]
- Teacher Scholarships Committee [Phil Rasmus]
- Teacher Education Committee [Roger Amey] and its sub-committee, Preservice Education Committee [Cathy Smith]
- Teacher Quality Institute Interim Board [Penny Gilmour]
- Vocational Learning in Schools Advisory Group [Roger Amey]
- VET in Schools Coordinators' Working Group [Mike Fitzgerald]

The AEU has been represented on various CIT committees during 2012 by nominated members and AEU Officers:

- CIT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee [Kim Edwards]
- CIT Academic Board [Andrew Shiells]
- CIT Advisory Committee [Tracey Dodimead]
- CIT AST Selection Panel [Andrew Blanckensee, Moir Holmes]
- CIT Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group [Stuart Gilmore]
- CIT Resources Board [Moir Holmes]

- CIT OHS Policy Committee (Mike Fitzgerald, Andrew Blanckensee)
- CIT Qualifications Committee (Andrew Shiells)

Mike Fitzgerald, TAFE Organiser, is a representative on the Accreditation and Registration Council as a nominee of UnionsACT.

Our thanks to all those dedicated AEU members listed above who have taken on formal representational roles for the Union on these committees and boards.

### ***National Perspective***

The Federal Government's Schools Funding Review into the current Commonwealth schools funding model concluded in early 2012. This report took into account hundreds of submissions. The AEU Federal Office, the ACT Branch and over 50% of AEU - ACT Sub-Branched provided submissions about the unmet needs in public schools and the need for a fairer, needs-based funding model. This two-year review process culminated in the release of the Gonski Review, which recommended an overhaul of schools funding arrangements and the urgent injection of billions of dollars into those Australian schools whose students need it the most.

The Acting Assistant to the Secretary [Professional], Sascha Colley, met with AEU Women's Officers in April to plan and implement the annual AEU Federal Women's Conference held in Melbourne in October.

The Acting Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] also attended the Research Officers meeting in May to plan research priorities for the AEU for the next 12 months and beyond. She also attended consultation meetings and liaised with Federal AEU Research Officers to assist in the development of Federal AEU submissions.

The ACT Branch journal, *Public Education Voice* provides a forum on local and national professional issues, particularly through its Pedagogy Page as well as the Secretary's and President's columns.

## **2. Training Program**

The AEU - ACT Branch continued to offer a free Training Program to all AEU members, most of which were provided 4-6pm on weekday afternoons. The training falls into three main categories, industrial, professional and financial.

Various financial planning [focusing on budgeting, investment or superannuation] and retirement planning seminars continue to be popular, which reflects the aging profile of our membership. Many thanks to Jenn Murray of State Super Financial Services and Julie French of Industry Fund Financial Planning for providing their expertise for these training sessions free of charge to AEU members.

The OHS Forum's theme this year was *Defining Your Role as the Work Safety Rep in Difficult Situations*. Participants explored how to deal with challenging safety issues such as workplace bullying, violence, workload issues, costly interventions, hazard alerts and risk assessments. Thanks to Mark McCabe, the ACT Work Safety Commissioner.

A particularly popular workshop this year was the *Workload Committee Members' Training*. This session explored the obligations within the Enterprise Agreement for every school to have an active Workload Committee. The purpose of this committee is to effectively monitor and review the workload of staff members with a view to reducing workloads for all.

The sessions on *Writing an Application for Transfer or Promotion* and *Preparing for a Job Interview* remain well-attended. Bob Ross presented these courses for the last 18 months for

the benefit of AEU members. He has decided to wind back his consultancy and training work in order to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle. The AEU thanks Bob for presenting these courses.

The AEU facilitates a number of interest groups to meet on a regular basis [usually once per term]. These include:

- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex support group
- Women's Network
- New Educators
- School Leaders
- Education Support Officers
- Preschool Teachers

### ***NSW Teachers Federation Beginning Teachers Conference***

For the second year, a delegation of ACT New Educators attended the Bundanoon Conference from Friday 2 to Sunday 4 March 2012. Their participation was fully funded through the generous sponsorship of Teachers Mutual Bank, Teachers Health Fund and First State Super. Workshops included those on pedagogy and planning, classroom management, AEU campaigns and activism, and how to avoid "sticky situations" at work. Attendees from the ACT were Gold Creek's Henry Warre and Aaron Kingma, Stromlo High School's Susan Richardson, Red Hill's Ella Hungerford-Sheaves, Richardson Primary's Dannielle Fisher and Lake Tuggeranong College's Steve Barnard.

Some advertised training sessions had to be cancelled due lack of registrations. The lack of casual relief supply and workload issues continue to be significant barriers to members being able to attend training during the day, or indeed, for the twilight sessions.

Evaluations of AEU training consistently show that members appreciate the training provided by the AEU and that the course content and presentation is always of a high standard.

## **3. Women**

### ***AEU Federal Women's Conference & National TAFE Women's Committee Meeting***

This year 4 women members were selected by Executive to attend the AEU Federal Women's Conference with the Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] Cathy Smith and Jennifer Hurley [TAFE Women's Committee rep]. These members were Julia Chere-Masopha [Melba-Copland Secondary School], Fiona McKinnon [School Counsellors Sub-Branch], Emma Hungerford-Sheaves [Red Hill Primary School] and Alison Moore [Turner Preschool]. The theme for this year's Conference, held in October, was *Activism and Leadership: it is our future*. All delegates provided a written report on highlights of the conference for the November edition of *Public Education Voice*.

The Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] and all AEU Officers continue to pursue matters of interest to women members through a wide range of ETD committees including the ETD's Equity and Diversity Committee and the National AEU Women's Officers' meetings.

### ***NSW Teachers Federation Women's Conference***

Acting Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] Sascha Colley accompanied a delegation of four ACT Branch women members to Sydney to attend the New South Wales Teachers Federation Women's Conference in March. The ACT Branch was represented by Ingrid Bean [Canberra High School], Sarah Nand [Aranda Primary School], Elizabeth Lorenz [Curriculum Support] and Trish McEwan [Canberra High School]. The Conference theme this year was *A Focus on Job Security*. The keynote speaker was Dr Rae Cooper, Senior Lecturer, Business School, University of Sydney, who spoke about her research into women and work, particularly the impact of national regulatory change on low paid women. Participants also heard Emma Maiden, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Women's

Coordinator of UnionsNSW speak about the ACTUs Secure Jobs-Better Future campaign. A number of workshops were attended throughout the day with themes including bullying, complaint procedures, knowing your rights and how to best support Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex [GLBTI] students and staff in our workplaces.

### ***Anna Stewart Program***

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Anna Stewart Program ran for one week in September. The AEU covers the cost of casual relief to enable the successful applicant to participate in this excellent work-shadowing program. The program officer was Olivia Neilson, teacher librarian at Campbell Primary School. Olivia learned about the daily operations, recruitment, organising and campaigning of the AEU - ACT Branch. She also met with a number of officials from other unions [including the CFMEU, ANF, ASU and the body that represents all unions, UnionsACT] and visited worksites. Each year, the program can be tailored to the specific interests and experience of the program officer. In 2013, the Women's Budget will be increased to enable two AEU women [instead of one program per year] the opportunity to participate in the Anna Stewart Program. All AEU women are encouraged to apply for the 2013 Anna Stewart Programs.

### ***Pay Equity Campaign***

The pay equity case, led by the Australian Services Union [and involved AEU Vic members] to secure fairer pay for more than 200,000 women in social and community services [SACS] jobs, was finally won in 2012 after a 2 year campaign. The case was the first to test the new equal pay provisions of the Fair Work Act and a successful outcome helps establish a pay equity standard for other industries. Pay increases for SACS workers will be between 19% and 41%, to be paid over a period of 8 years.

## **4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Reconciliation**

The AEU - ACT Branch Annual Reconciliation Awards were presented at a Reconciliation Week event in May held at Melba Copland Secondary School [the recipients of the last year's award]. The 2012 AEU Reconciliation Award was awarded to Narrabundah Early Childhood School teacher Meredith Regan for her approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children and the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives within all of her teaching. Commendations were also given to Peter Finegan and Vicki Shaw. Peter, a volunteer at Melba Copland Secondary School and Canberra High School, teaches Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art techniques. Vicki works as an Assistant at Melba Copland Secondary School with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in order to improve their literacy skills.

The AEU - ACT Branch is committed to progressing Reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and other Australians. The AEU - ACT Branch began developing a Reconciliation Action Plan [RAP] in 2012, the first Branch or Associated Body of the AEU to do so. President Phil Rasmus signed a Statement of Commitment at Branch Council on Saturday 18 August and was congratulated by Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Dr Chris Bourke. The RAP Working Group represents a cross-section of AEU Officers and members: Trish McEwan [Canberra High School], Narelle Tait [Gilmore Primary School], Theresa Carroll [Caroline Chisholm P – 10 School], Peter Curtis [Namadgi School], Kim Edwards [CIT], Beth Craddy [ETD Schools Office], Daniel Greene [ETD Schools Office], Sascha Colley [AEU Organiser], Cathy Smith [AEU Assistant to the Secretary [Professional]]. It is planned that the draft RAP will be ready for Reconciliation Australia's endorsement by March 2013. Once this important stage is complete the AEU- ACT Branch aims to launch the RAP during Reconciliation Week 2013 [end of May].

The AEU continues to be actively involved in the implementation of the *ACT ETD Reconciliation Action Plan* [RAP] with Cara Shipp as the Branch representative on this committee.

Vicki Lucas represented Indigenous members at Federal Conference, Beth Craddy was the Branch Representative on the AEU's Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee and Kim Edwards was the TAFE ATSIEC Representative in 2012.

The Branch journal *Public Education Voice* includes two pages on Indigenous News in each edition which promotes events, programs in schools, local and national issues and the branch website has an *Indigenous News* page.

## **5. Supporting GLBTI Staff and Students**

The ACT Branch facilitates meetings once a term for interested members who want to further progress diversity in public schools, particularly focusing on supporting students and staff who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex. The group meets once per term to share resources, action plans and discuss ways to ensure all schools are safe for everyone regardless of sexual orientation.

## **6. Disability Education**

The Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] has represented the AEU on the ETD Disability Education Reference Group this year. This group is made up of advocates for students with disabilities and those who work with these students. This group offers an opportunity to discuss issues regarding programs, resources, inclusion support and local and national plans, initiatives and legislation affecting students with disabilities.

## **7. English as Additional Language or Dialect**

The ETD Literacy and Numeracy Reference Group has a standing item to discuss English as an Additional Language or Dialect issues. The Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] is the AEU representative on this committee. Through this group and through other lobbying opportunities such as meetings with the Education Minister and annual budget submission, the AEU continues to advocate for increased funding and support for EALD students and their families.

## **8. Communication with Members**

The AEU membership database enables email communication with members via a number of different groups [eg. Sub-Branch representatives; Principals, Women's Contact Officers, etc]. Along with general emails regarding training and events, union information and advice, *E-bulletins* contain information on union campaigns and activities.

The AEU website [www.aeuact.asn.au] is a major aspect of the Union's communication strategy. It is regularly updated by the Executive Officer, Janet Anderson, particularly the News page. The website includes sections on About Us; News; Membership; Campaigns; Interest Groups; Working Conditions, Training & Events, Publications and AEU Contacts.

The Branch journal, *Public Education Voice*, provides valuable information to members about professional and industrial matters four times per year. Each edition is distributed via Sub-Branch Secretaries who are asked to pass on the journal to all financial members.

The regular Union mail drop provides a range of material for members in hardcopy such as the journal, Executive and Council minutes and recommendations, and flyers to promote union training and campaign activities.

**CATHY SMITH**  
**Assistant to the Secretary [Professional]**

## **D. Schools Organisers' Report**

Bill Book, Sue Amundsen and Sascha Colley have managed a diverse range of responsibilities in 2012 on behalf of AEU members. Sue worked as a School's Organiser throughout Term 2, as did Sascha for a short time in the beginning of Term 1 and then again from July through to December.

Organisers have spent the majority of their time providing advice, advocacy and support for our members across the system. As the Enterprise Agreement took effect in April, Organisers arranged a number of visits to schools to personally talk through the changes within the Agreement and answer questions as necessary.

The Annual Professional Discussions and further phasing in of Empowered Schools created some angst amongst AEU members and a high level of support was required by many members affected by these new initiatives.

The AEU continued to hear from members about a wide range of issues frequently linked to poor communication with colleagues. Our role as individual advocates seems to have increased with members requiring assistance with work safety issues including allegations of workplace bullying, school leadership/management, probation and contract reports, Pathways to Improvement, part-time working conditions, the desirability for permanent employment, conditions for casual relief teachers, legal assistance and applying for the Teacher Welfare Fund. The Organisers' involvement in member issues ranged from providing advice in one-off telephone conversations through to accompanying the member to a number of meetings with ETD and/or Shared Services officers to assist with resolutions. Officers provided support and advocacy for members, and monitored these processes throughout. Organisers met with ETD Staffing in regard to Special Consideration applications during the Transfer Round process to advocate for those members who sought special consideration.

In 2012 the AEU engaged Slater and Gordon Lawyers to support our membership in legal matters. Slater and Gordon are available to provide legal advice [1/2 hour free consultation], wills and conveyancing services to our members at nil or low costs. Members are sometimes referred onto other services by the AEU for further support and specialised assistance. These services include:

- Legal advice – Slater and Gordon Lawyers
- Free, confidential counselling – Davidson Trahaire, provided by ETD's Employee Assistance Program

Members are also encouraged to make use of the AEU - ACT website [[www.aeuact.asn.au](http://www.aeuact.asn.au)] for the latest information on current campaigns, working conditions [via the Enterprise Agreement], AEU policies, New Educators' page, Work Safety page, AEU Training program and other services. The website is updated at regular intervals.

### **Recruitment of new AEU members**

243 new members joined the AEU in 2012, with approximately 120 joining us at the ACT Education and Training Directorate [ETD] Induction program. The AEU recognises the importance of maintaining a high membership density; current density is sustained through a focus on recruitment as a significant part of our role.

The recruitment banner has been raised at the ETD's inductions and other recruitment sessions, as it summarises the benefits of AEU membership and the victories of the teacher-union movement over the past decades. The Organisers also attend whole staff meetings to

continually advertise the benefits of union membership. The real problem with the banner is that there have been significant wins achieved since the banner was printed; that is the nature of industrial and professional wins and the dynamic of industrial action.

Organisers acknowledge the ongoing efforts of Sub-Branch Executive members and others involved in recruiting new members and encouraging them to become active participants in the Union. Speaking one-to-one with potential members [casual, contract and permanent] about the benefits of AEU membership is the most effective way of bringing new members on board. Research shows that the majority of non-union members across the country have not joined a union because they have not been asked. High union membership in each workplace is an important way to protect and improve working conditions for all staff within each worksite and is important in maintaining the strength of our Union as a whole. Potential members are made aware that only union membership truly gives them a voice in their profession. The provision of journey cover insurance has continued to be a useful recruiting tool, though we would not like this to be the focus of recruiting efforts, preferring instead to concentrate on the industrial, professional and intrinsic benefits of union membership.

During 2012 the New Educator Contact Officer [NECO] network was jointly co-ordinated by Glenn and Sascha. In March Glenn took a small cohort of New Educators to the New South Wales Teachers Federation Beginning Teachers Conference in Bundanoon, and in November Sascha attended the New Educators Federal Conference in Melbourne. One of the main purposes of this network is to encourage NECOs to have conversations with New Educators about the importance of union membership and engagement. There is always work to do in order to raise the profile of this growing subsection of our membership, the main challenge being the workload with which all teachers are currently grappling. The aforementioned conferences were fantastic for building union activism and interstate networks. Participants listened to high profile public education advocates and learnt about union campaigns. There was much valuable discussion with delegates from other jurisdictions. Thanks to First State Super, Teachers Health Fund and Teachers Mutual Bank for their generous sponsorship assistance.

In 2007, the AEU began covering Education Support Officers [ESOs]; that is, LSAs [, Preschool Assistants, Home School Liaison Officers, Youth Workers and any other ETD employees deemed to be working directly with students. Membership numbers in this ESO group have continued to creep up slowly and should continue to increase as awareness of the AEU's coverage and of our various services increases. ESOs are always invited to attend Sub-Branch meetings in schools and this is made clear in all school visits. Whilst the AEU can get the message out to every Sub-Branch in a variety of media, once the information is in the Sub-Branch everyone is responsible for ensuring that the messages are heard and absorbed by the potential members. It is great having the ESOs on board and hearing their slightly different perspective of their workplaces and the system and we certainly anticipate their numbers increasing.

Branch Council has seen a number of new representatives participating in the decision-making processes of our Union but a number of Sub-Branches remain under-represented, thereby failing to take full advantage of the opportunity to have your Sub-Branch issues aired. It is not an onerous task to work toward achieving better outcomes for yourselves and your colleagues and the role may be shared across the Sub-Branch.

### **Sub-Branch Visits**

Organisers attended the majority of Sub-Branches in 2012 at least once, and many sites have been visited on multiple occasions. Organisers dealt with specific site-based issues or provided general information and discussion forums regarding the issues confronting teachers in the public education system.

## **National Public Education Day – 24 May 2012**

The Art Exhibition and Concert Performances co-ordinated by the AEU Organisers in schools and in the city were hugely successful again this year. Both the Mezzanine gallery and downstairs in the Civic Library are excellent venues for the exhibition of students' artworks and the Library staff members were supportive and appreciative as always. The exhibition attracted a great deal of interest from the outset and the month of May saw many hundreds of visitors casting an appreciative eye over the wide range of works. The talent exhibited drew favourable attention and comment from employees and visitors alike. Our thanks go to the co-operation and hard work of teachers in various schools for working with your students to contribute such a wide range of amazing art works to one of the most substantial installations we have co-ordinated. The Libraries have been pre-booked for May next year, Canberra's Centenary year and we look forward to viewing the installations again at that time.

Every year there has been an increase in the number of schools participating in the celebrations in a number of ways, with some of their bands performing at multiple venues in the course of the day. The performances that spanned the entire week in City Walk, Civic were wonderful and well rehearsed as usual. The crowds came and went during performances but the experience for the students was positive as it was for the audiences. Some schools have also established relations with their regional shopping centres and they now happily provide a performance venue for choirs and bands giving a community focus to Public Education Day. Let's make the Centenary year a year people will remember for the contribution made to the community by students, teachers and families of Public Education. This year AEU Officers worked on a combined Public Education Awards night with CIT. There were a large number of ETD officers in attendance and it would be highly recommended that more teaching and support staff attended in the future. This is, after all, an event for all public education staff and the awards are presented to staff from all areas.

The AEU looks forward to the events of 2013, which will fall in the week of May 23, Public Education Day, and we urge members to ensure your school community isn't left out of the program.

## **Committee Work**

The Organisers continued to represent AEU members on a number of committees and working parties during the year.

Bill Book represented the AEU and UnionsACT on a number of Health and Safety committees throughout the year:

- The Occupational Health, Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Committee [OHSRAC] is comprised of representatives from each of the Government Departments and some statutory authorities. It reviews policy, discusses incidents and hears reports on the OHS successes and misfortunes that have occurred each quarter. It is a body that identifies the need to develop specific policies to address perceived gaps in the safety net. This committee advises and makes recommendations to the Work Safety Council.
- The ACT Work Safety Council, comprising representatives from the unions, Master Builders' Association, Business Council, Chamber of Commerce, the ACT OHS Commissioner and the Government, is a legislative review body that informs and advises the ACT Government on Work Safety issues ranging from workplace accidents through to discussions of the new Work Safety legislation. It was a busy year for the Council featuring issues of workplace bullying, civil construction safety, harmonisation, asbestos review, and workers compensation policy.

- The ETD Work Safety Policy Committee comprises a representative from the Northside and Southside OHS Networks, the Unions, Shared Services, Facilities, the Principals, and the ETD HR section. The issues raised by the AEU this year included management of students with diabetes and the first aid policy which resulted in the review and updating of both ETD policies. Other issues addressed included workplace bullying and harassment, lockdown procedures, violent incidents, risk management processes, physical conditions in schools.
- The Agency Consultative Committee meets quarterly to discuss concerns and issues affecting ESOs and non-teaching staff. The committee comprises representatives of all relevant unions [United Voice [formerly LHMU], CPSU, AEU], ETD and Shared Services. The Draft Standards document for school science laboratory technicians was released for comment in September this year and should be finalised by the end of the year. The Standards incorporate training and professional learning for the lab technicians as well as the health and safety elements that are so important in the role. The AEU brought this issue to the table in 2011 as a matter of concern and continues to work to ensure the safety of the assistants and their colleagues through training and education.

While the process of undertaking a Risk Assessment is time consuming on the face of it, the results achieved have been generally positive in so far that it provides members with a safer work place and a clear strategy to manage such behaviour. Members have become more familiar with the process of conducting risk assessments and developing risk management plans and are more comfortable initiating the process although they are always time consuming. In fact, a school does not have an option following a violent incident between a student and staff member - they **must** initiate a Risk Assessment to ensure that the workplace is as safe as practicable for all staff and students and the assessment and planning process is essential. The Organisers are available to assist/advise if any Sub-Branch has any qualms or queries about the process.

Organisers have also continued their role as UnionsACT delegates, attending numerous meetings throughout the year.

### **Professional Development**

Bill attended the ACTU Workers' Compensation Conference in Sydney, working with colleagues from the other jurisdictions to develop a stronger Health and Safety position across all jurisdictions. The first day of the Conference featured the second Asbestos Summit run by the ACTU but it was momentous because the Workplace Relations Minister Bill Shorten announced the establishment of the *Office of Asbestos Safety* that will work to develop a National Strategic Plan [NSP] by 1 July 2013. The aim of the NSP will be to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres and thereby eliminate asbestos related diseases from the Australia by 2030. Issues addressed over the following days included bullying, chemical regulation, workers' compensation schemes, treatment of injured workers, and insecure [casual] work. The latter presents issues that feature in every industry including education and it is important that we all monitor and work to minimise the casualisation of employment carefully.

Sascha completed training in Organising Foundations [5 days] and Grievance Handling and Negotiation Skills [3 days] this year delivered by the Australian Council of Trade Unions in Sydney and Adelaide respectively.

Comparing the programs and services offered to members interstate is always interesting as the other jurisdictions all have call centres, servicing officers and other specialist officers all of whom are affordable because of the size of the organisations. In the ACT, the six Officers

carry all the services, advocacy, professional and recruiting responsibilities. It is therefore vital to the AEU - ACT Branch that the Sub-Branch Executive Officers in each Sub-Branch take on a more active role in recruiting and some servicing. The Organisers will work with Sub-Branch Executives to guide them in and develop efficient strategies to fulfil their roles.

### **Member Training**

Organisers were directly involved in a number of the AEU's member training courses in 2012. There were 2 sessions offered to members on Workload Committees of which only the first was able to run. The first session was well attended and the information was clearly appreciated by members. The second session, offered in Week 3, Term 4 was unable to run as members could not fit it into their timetables. For those wanting more guidance in that regard, further training will be offered in Term 1 and Term 2, 2013.

It has been a pleasure working for members and assisting them where possible. The Organisers look forward to the challenges with which members present them in the future.

**BILL BOOK, SASCHA COLLEY and SUE AMUNDSEN**  
**Schools Organisers**

## **E. TAFE/VETiS Organiser's Report**

### **CIT Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement**

The CIT Teachers Enterprise Agreement, 2011-2013, is due to expire in June 2013. The second pay increment of 3.5% was dispersed from 1 July 2012. AEU Officers anticipate filing a log of claims for the next Agreement in December 2012, with negotiations commencing in January 2013.

### **CIT/TAFE Vice President**

The AEU thanks the TAFE Vice President, Janet Harris, for her guidance and extensive efforts to represent members in many local and national forums. Janet has steered the TAFE membership throughout a period of industrial and emotional turmoil and has demonstrated much strength and commitment whilst championing members' rights. Sincere thanks are extended to Janet and the entire TAFE Council for their selfless dedication to the benefit of the membership.

### **Acting TAFE Organiser**

The AEU thanks sincerely Mark Hemmingsen for his service to the membership in the acting TAFE Organiser position for Term 3, 2012. Mark provided wise and effective advice to the membership during this challenging time.

### **CIT Structure**

2012 saw the ACT Government Steering Committee reject Professor Bradley's recommendation for a merger of CIT and University of Canberra to the proposed UCIT. The AEU initiated a community group known as FOCIT [Friends of CIT], which fostered ACT community discussion of the potential issues stemming from the Bradley Report. The AEU publicly and privately pushed the case that the creation of this third entity presented significant risks to the viability of CIT for few discernible benefits. The ACT Government finally abandoned the UCIT proposal in May 2102.

Since this time, the ACT Government has remained silent about any potential changes to the modus operandi of the CIT. Members remain alert to national trends in TAFE funding reduction and increased competitive tendering and they remain committed to ensuring the integrity of CIT as the appropriately funded public education provider for VET and further education in the ACT.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

April 11 2012 saw the release of the "Worksafe ACT Investigation into Compliance by the CIT with its Duties Under the Work Safety Act 2008 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 in Response to Allegations of Bullying and Harassment at the CIT". Through this document the Work Safe Commissioner, Mark McCabe, presented a comprehensive report of the failure of CIT to provide a healthy and safe workplace for many CIT teachers by failing to provide appropriate mechanisms to address allegations of bullying and harassment. The Report found, in relation to allegations of bullying and harassment "...The internal 'preliminary information gathering exercises' undertaken by CIT were not investigations, did not meet the required level of independence and did not adequately adhere to the principles of natural justice." The report continues; "... These shortcomings [by CIT] have the real potential to both discourage complaints and/or fail to clearly identify wrongdoing by those complained about." In effect, this made the CIT an unsafe environment for some staff to raise complaints. The AEU released a bulletin to advise members of their rights and providing links to the actual report: [http://www.aeuact.asn.au/uploads/file/CIT%20E-Bulletin\(1\).pdf](http://www.aeuact.asn.au/uploads/file/CIT%20E-Bulletin(1).pdf)

The Commissioner for Work Safety served CIT with an Improvement Notice containing 10 directives to be met within a period of 6 months. Significantly, this is the first time such notices have been served on an ACT Government agency. The Minister for Education invoked powers compelling CIT comply with Ministerial directives and requiring CIT to report weekly to him.

The unhealthy workplace environment at CIT was identified by the Work Safe report as spread across a number of work areas within the Institute. Members' individual and collective allegations have become the subject of extensive investigations by the ACT Commissioner for Public Administration, Andrew Kefford, who investigated CIT management's compliance with the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct and Public Sector Management Standards. At the time of writing, some 57 individual complaints had been forwarded to independent investigators. The Commissioner presented an interim report on the nature of the complaints and allegations and the likely response from the ACT Government in the document "State of the Service" [see Page 104 -111]; [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/353727/stateofservice2012.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/353727/stateofservice2012.pdf)

The Commissioner noted that complainants have raised serious complaints stemming from the mid-1990s to present day. It is probable that the responsible and courageous efforts of AEU members to expose this adverse workplace culture will have beneficial consequences across the entire ACT Public Sector and community. The AEU membership owes a significant debt to these courageous members who have risked much in their effort to seek justice for themselves and their colleagues.

The AEU has provided advice and support to aggrieved members throughout the extended period of their Comcare claims and the preparation of cases for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT]. The AEU has provided members with access to solicitors who have provided sound and wise counsel over the duration of these claims. They offered members a "no win, no fee" service in the successful pursuit of their claims up until they reach the AAT.

CIT has undertaken some measures to meet their compliance requirements cited in the Worksafe ACT directives and has initiated education and training of management and staff at CIT to ensure the establishment and maintenance of a healthy workplace. To this end Respect, Equity and Diversity [RED] training for staff has been implemented and some 95% of staff had completed RED by mid October 2012. The CIT and AEU acknowledge that RED represents a commencement of a process to introduce long term attitudinal and cultural change within CIT.

The AEU has consistently encouraged all members to undertake training in programs aimed at establishing and maintaining respectful workplaces and to raise issues of concern about unreasonable work expectations with the Union. In addition, the Union assists and supports aggrieved members to raise their concerns in a safe manner - either within CIT or outside the Institute - in their efforts to ensure the application of appropriate administrative procedures for themselves and their colleagues. Every member stands to benefit from these efforts.

The AEU considers that working relationships within the sector are under stress as a consequence of the significant real term reduction of funding, by both Federal and Territory Governments, to CIT in excess of 35% since 1997. Ultimately it is governments – Federal and Territory - that are responsible for this funding shortfall which has generated unrealistic expectations on teachers and their managers to maintain quality educational outcomes in the face of unreasonable increases in workload. The AEU continues to lobby the ACT and Federal Governments to adequately fund and support affordable public TAFE and VET education in the ACT.

**Membership Matters**

The AEU wishes to thank those TAFE members who have represented the Union in various forums such as TAFE Council, JSCs, Boards and other bodies. Thanks also to Bill Book, Glenn Fowler, Mark Hemmingsen and Peter Malone for their direct efforts to support the CIT and VETiS members and for the continued pursuit of the AEU goals throughout 2012.

**MIKE FITZGERALD**  
**CIT/VETiS Organiser**

## **F. Working with UnionsACT**

The AEU – ACT Branch has continued to maintain engagement with UnionsACT during 2012.

The AEU representation for 2012 has been 10 Delegates and 10 Alternates. All positions have been filled, with Delegates and Alternate Delegates rostered to attend the quarterly meetings to ensure that the AEU presence is consistent. The full ACT Delegation is asked to attend the UnionsACT AGM, which is held on the first Wednesday of November. The ongoing commitment of AEU – ACT Branch representatives to attendance at the meetings is commendable, though attendance has been patchy at some meetings.

The UnionsACT Executive continues to meet monthly, managing the affairs of UnionsACT between Council meetings. The AEU General Executive member position has been filled this year by Penny Gilmour though, in my capacity as Acting Secretary, I attended as a proxy.

UnionsACT's OH&S training arm – *WorkWatch* – continues to go from strength to strength. Training courses are well subscribed, and demand is growing as *WorkWatch's* reputation for training excellence spreads. One emerging issue is attendees who are not union members. This has meant a recalibration of the message and this should be monitored.

On the financial front UnionsACT continues to be soundly positioned for the future, with a solid asset base and maintenance of use of UnionsACT facilities by other bodies over the year.

In all the AEU – ACT Branch proudly continues to support promote and participate in the ongoing activities of UnionsACT in its role as the ACT's peak union body.

**GLENN FOWLER  
ACTING BRANCH SECRETARY**