A. Secretary’s Overview 2011

2011 has been very busy, with the AEU - ACT Branch engaged in a number of campaigns simultaneously. Once again the willingness of our members to participate to the AEU’s campaigns ensures that we continue to be a robust and representative body.

The major campaigns of 2011 have been the negotiation of new Enterprise Agreements for all of our membership [teachers in schools, TAFE teachers, and Education Support Staff in schools], and the ACT Branch contribution to the Schools Funding Review Campaign. The Branch has also been engaged in responding to the proposals around a merger of UCAN and CIT, arising from Professor Denise Bradley’s report for the ACT Government. As usual, the Branch has also contributed submissions to – and appeared before – a range of ACT Legislative Assembly Enquiries, responded to a number of DET activities and proposals throughout the year, 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. All of the Branch’s activities have taken place in an environment where the job of teaching continues to be complex and difficult, with consequent increased pressure on the workforce.

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 workforce.

Enterprise Agreements
Bargaining has been underway this year across all the Enterprise Agreements [EAs] to which the AEU is a signatory: Education & Training Directorate [ETD] Teaching Staff, CIT Teaching Staff, and ETD Education Support Staff. At the time of writing all three are at very different stages, from almost complete to still to achieve in principle agreement. The summary is as follows:

ETD Education Support Staff
In Principle settlement was achieved in August, but it has taken some time to finalise the wording of the Common Core, which must be completed in order for a formal vote. The settlement will provide increases of 3.5% from 18 August 2011, and 3.5% from 1 July 2012.

CIT Teaching Staff
After months of fruitless negotiations, CIT made an offer in mid-October which will form the basis of an in principle agreement. The first pay increase of 3.5% is backdated to 18 August 2011 in line with the pay increase for all other ACT public sector workers, and all outstanding clauses have been negotiated successfully. The offer proposes a further 3.5% from 1 July 2012 in a two-year Agreement.

AEU Officers continue to work with CIT to transform in principle agreement into a written Enterprise Agreement that can be put to the vote.

ETD Teaching Staff
At the time of writing ETD has made 4 offers on behalf of the ACT Government – none have been acceptable. A ballot for Protected Industrial Action received overwhelming endorsement, and to date two stoppages have occurred. The first was a stop work meeting of members, and the second was a rally outside the Legislative
Assembly. Both activities were supported by the majority of members, and provided positive coverage for the campaign.

The October Branch Council meeting determined that further action would be called in early November if an acceptable offer is not received by 26 October. A “fourth and final” offer was received on 26 October and rejected by Special Branch Council on 2 November. A meeting with the Chief Minister and further discussion with ETD indicated that there is room to move and industrial action scheduled for 7 and 8 November was postponed to allow exploration of a settlement. At the time of writing the matter is not yet finalised but looks much more hopeful.

Members should be proud of their demonstrated resolve to achieve a just and reasonable settlement in this bargaining round. Despite an obstructionist Director-General and a Government for whom settlement seems not to be a priority, AEU members’ voices have continued to be loud and proud in their fight for salary justice.

**Member Involvement in the Branch**

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

Membership numbers continue to be in excess of 3100, and it is good that these figures remain consistent. Despite this situation, 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 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 Credit Union and Teachers Health. Teachers Credit Union 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 2011, the Public Education Award recipient was Tom Greenwell of Dickson College. Tom’s support of public education and contribution to it is evident in his work to establish the support group FREE [Funding Real Equity in Education], his active participation in the Branch’s various campaigns in support of public education, and most recently in his election to the Branch Executive.

Teachers Health continued their sponsorship of the AEU Reconciliation Award, recognised with a stunning glass “trophy”. At a function hosted by Birrigai@Tidbinbilla, this year’s AEU reconciliation Award was presented to Patrick Chapman, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer at Melba-Copland Secondary School.

In 2011, the Public Education Awards were a joint function conducted by the AEU and ETD. This year, CIT joined the Awards, so that the event was truly a celebration of all aspects of public education. Held on the last day of Public Education Week, the 2011 Public Education Awards function at Restaurant@CIT was an enjoyable opportunity to recognise the work of colleagues and to relax and socialise a little. It
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.

In addition to the AEU’s Public Education Award and Reconciliation Award, an AEU Certificate of Commendation was presented to Glenys Patulny as part of the ETD Recognition of Service function in recognition of her long-term activism and commitment to the AEU.

Once again it has been a positive experience to have a shared platform while making presentations that recognise the contribution and achievements of so many colleagues, and it has continued to highlight the AEU’s involvement in education as a participating partner and stakeholder.

**Schools Funding Review**
As the Annual Report goes to press, the Schools Funding Review looks back on a year of activities and lobbying in support of a new system of Federal funding for our schools. Chaired by Professor David Gonski, the Schools Funding Review has been in full swing this year, with the AEU taking every opportunity to respond to the Review’s output and to continue to highlight the need for an equitable replacement for the current unfair and flawed model through which Federal education dollars are distributed to government and non-government schools. The Gonski Review represents the best opportunity in many years for public education and its supporters to argue for a fairer, more transparent model of funding. To this end the ACT Branch has encouraged members and other stakeholders in public education to participate in the campaign, assisting our schools to lodge submissions or comment as required.

The Review will continue its work into 2012, so the AEU will continue its efforts throughout the remainder of this year and into 2012 to ensure that the views of the public education community are clearly communicated to the Review, and to the politicians who will determine what will be done once the Review has completed its work.

**Teacher Quality Institute**
The ACT Teacher Quality Institute has now officially come into being. There is a full Board, CEO and staff in place, and the TQI has become visible in recent weeks as it has begun to distribute Registration Cards to those who have successfully completed the ACT TQI Registration process.

While the TQI’s commencement of operations has been later than anticipated, it is now fully operational in terms of the registration process, a situation that will be obvious to those seeking employment in the ACT from now on since they will need to achieve registration in the ACT of recognition of existing registration in another jurisdiction before they can apply for employment in ACT schools, whether government or non-government.

**Communications, Relationships and Politics**
The challenge of constructive communication between the AEU and other stakeholders, has remained in 2011. While there has been an increase in scheduled
meetings with the Minister to 1 per term, the continuation of the Government's apparent decision to cease briefing the AEU ahead of policy announcements, and ETD's apparent determination to ignore obligations around consultation and negotiation under the Enterprise Agreement all contribute to a difficult environment in which to conduct a sensible and constructive dialogue.

The difficulty continues to be exacerbated by the fact that the AEU views few of the changes in policy or practice as positive for public education or the students it serves. The AEU makes no apology for its strong advocacy against those measures we believe are not in the best interests of students, the public education system or our members, but this situation certainly makes for testing times in dealing with the bureaucracy and politicians.

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**

There have been significant personnel changes in the AEU Office during 2011. Long-serving Executive Officer Sue Billington left the AEU Office in March to take up a part-time position with another employer. Receptionist/Admin Officer Janet Anderson stepped into the Executive Officer’s role on a 6-month trial, and has recently been confirmed in the position. Adjusting the staffing arrangements in the Office in recognition of the exceptional skill-set Sue developed over her 30 years’ of service has seen some restructuring take place. We now have a full-time Receptionist position to replace the Receptionist/Admin Officer role, and have added a 0.6 Membership Clerk to the office to ensure the full range of Membership work can be managed. We welcome Corinne Ying Zhang and Tracey Govan to these roles. Together with Janet, Michelle Kirby [Membership Clerk] and Joelle Dulac [Finance Officer], Corinne and Tracey form an effective, efficient team who serve the AEU membership well.

There have been no changes to the Officer ranks in 2011. AEU Officers continue their excellent service to the membership, both in terms of dealing directly with members, the employers, Government and other parties, and in representing the AEU on committees and through written submissions on a range of matters.

I take this opportunity to place on record my thanks to the staff and Officers of the AEU, to the Executive and the Council. In particular I would like to acknowledge President Phil Rasmus, and Vice Presidents Roger Amey, Lyndall Read and Tracey Dodimead for their unstinting work and support in another busy year for our Union. Finally, I thank and congratulate the membership in general for your participation in the work of the AEU during the year. Your 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.

**PENNY GILMOUR**

Branch Secretary
B. Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial] Report

New Enterprise Agreements
The primary focus of the Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial] position in 2011 was the negotiation of the new Enterprise Agreements for teaching members in both CIT and for our Education Support staff in ETD. Assistance was also provided to the other Officers for the EA negotiations for teachers in ETD. Our industrial claims were developed in consultation with members and endorsed by Branch Council in November 2010.

These negotiations were conducted [and at the time of writing were continuing] under the Federal industrial legislation: the Fair Work Act 2009. This legislation is very prescriptive in the processes that must be followed in order negotiate an enterprise agreement. It also allows for individual staff members to nominate to be part of the bargaining process.

Education Support Staff
During 2011 the AEU - ACT Branch, continued to recruit new members from the ranks of the Education Support Staff such as SLAs, Preschool Assistants etc.

A key part of the Enterprise Agreement negotiation was attendance at the Single Bargaining Unit [SBU] meetings, which commenced in March 2011 and did not conclude until October. The SBU consists of representatives from all the different unions involved in the ACT public sector and it met regularly to negotiate the agreement with the Government Negotiating Team from CMD. The first task was to finalise an update Common Core Conditions, which contains all the industrial conditions common to all ACT public sector workers. The second part was to negotiate with the ETD conditions specific to our members. [At time of writing these negotiations were continuing with Bill Book, Organiser, taking primary responsibility.]

It is expected that the proposed new Enterprise Agreement will go to vote in November 2011. A summary of its key conditions is as follows:

1. A 3.5% salary increase back-dated to 18 July 2011, a 3.5% salary increase from 1 July 2012 and an expiry date of 30 June 2013.
2. Updating of current clauses to improve their implementation. Despite initial efforts by the government to continue their “harmonisation” agenda, the unions were successful in maintaining all current clauses within the common core.
3. The creation of a new Schools Assistant 4 classification.

Canberra Institute of Technology
The first negotiation meeting took place in December 2010 with meetings then occurring fortnightly from February 2011.

Since that time the AEU and CIT reached agreement on many EA matters but the critical ones remained unresolved. In a letter of 15 September 2011 the CIT again rejected the AEU’s negotiation position of a 7% pay rise over 2 years with no loss of teacher conditions.

CIT continued to demand that teachers agree immediately on the introduction of a new classification structure, despite much of the detail needing to be still negotiated and that this new classification structure was to be funded by reductions to teaching conditions:
1. Reduction of professional development allocations [from 36 to 16 hours pa].
2. Removal of all day light equivalent allocations for teaching after 5:30pm.
3. Increased workload measures, particularly for Education Managers by removing access to paid non-attendance and requiring them to work in excess of 36 hours and 45 mins per week. [If this occurs then they may access a proposed accrued day off system.]

On October 19 a Protected Industrial Action ballot of CIT members was declared where the taking of action was overwhelmingly endorsed.

As a result of the solidarity of AEU members, CIT finally provided an offer that did not include any trade off of conditions. At the time of writing it remained hopeful that a settlement would be achieved based on this substantial change by CIT.

**Committees**
During 2011 the following committees/meetings were attended:
- ETD CEO Consultation [quarterly]
- CIT Director Deputation [quarterly]
- ETD School Autonomy Reference Group [as needed],
- CIT Enterprise Agreement negotiations [fortnightly]
- Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate Common Core Conditions negotiations [fortnightly]
- Single Bargaining Unit (Joint Union) meetings [as needed]
- EDT Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement negotiations [as needed]
- EDT Education Support Staff Enterprise Agreement negotiations [as needed]
- ACT Minister for Education, Opposition Education Spokesperson and Greens Education Spokesperson [quarterly/as needed].

**Office Matters**
I assisted the Organisers to provide effective service to our members through day-by-day direct support and supervision.

**PETER MALONE**
Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial]
C. Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] Report

1. Research and Professional Issues

Submissions

The following written submissions were prepared by the AEU - ACT Branch during 2011:

- Submission to the Commonwealth Government Review of School Funding, March 2011
- Review of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre [including Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre], April 2011
- 2012-2013 Budget Submission to the ACT Government, November 2011

Submissions the AEU contributed to in 2011:

- Joint AEU-AMWU-CPSU Submission to the ACT Government Steering Committee on the Bradley Report [regarding a proposed merger between CIT and University of Canberra], September 2011.

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

- Productivity Commission Early Childhood Development Workforce Study, February 2011
- Review of Funding for Schools, March 2011
- AEU and TAFE Directors Australia Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee Inquiry into the National VET Regulator Bills, March 2011
- Submission to the National School Chaplaincy Program Consultation, March 2011
- Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005, April 2011
- Early Childhood Quality Group on the National Quality Framework Regulations Exposure Draft, April 2011
- Response to Skills Australia’s Skills for prosperity: a roadmap for vocational education and training, 2011

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 Australian Early Development Index Committee [Cathy Smith]
- ACT School Sports Council [Nathan Beaver]
- Board of Senior Secondary Studies [Jan Bentley]
- Board of Senior Secondary Studies - VETIS Sub-Committee [Mike Fitzgerald]
- Curriculum Taskforce [Penny Gilmour]
- Disability Access Action Committee [Cathy Smith]
- Disability Education Reference Group [Cathy Smith]
- Equity and Diversity Consultative Committee [Cathy Smith]
- Government Schools Education Council [Wendy Cave, Roger Amey]
- Literacy and Numeracy Reference Group [Cathy Smith]
- Principals Consultative Committee [Penny Gilmour]
- Qualifications Committee [Fiona Arthur]
• Quality Teaching Model Implementation Committee [Cathy Smith]
• Reconciliation Action Plan Committee [Cara Shipp]
• Safe Schools Taskforce [Penny Gilmour & Cathy Smith]
• School Autonomy Reference Group [Penny Gilmour and Peter Malone]
• Teacher Scholarships Committee [Phil Rasmus]
• Teacher Education Committee [Penny Gilmour] and its sub-committee, Preservice Education Committee [Cathy Smith]
• Teacher Quality Institute Interim Board [Penny Gilmour]
• Tertiary Education Taskforce [Penny Gilmour, Mike Fitzgerald – alternate]
• 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 2011 by nominated members and AEU Officers:
• CIT Professional Development Funding Committee [Mike Fitzgerald, Andrew Blanckensee]
• CIT Resources Board [Moir Holmes]
• CIT Qualifications Committee [Andrew Shiells]
• CIT Academic Board [Tony Fuller, Belinda Wallis – alternate]
• CIT AST Selection Panel [Andrew Blanckensee, Moir Holmes]

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 [SFR] commenced this in 2010, continued this year and is expected to conclude in 2012. This review has provided a major opportunity for the AEU, all public schools and parent groups to provide submissions on the current unfair Commonwealth schools funding model.

The AEU Federal Office [www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/Papers/Papers &Submissionindex.html#2001] and the ACT Branch [www.aeuact.asn.au/publications/education-funding] both provided submissions to the review. As the result of the AEU’s Schools Funding Review campaign, over 50% of AEU - ACT Sub-Branches provided submissions to the review about the unmet needs in each school.

The Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] met with AEU Women’s Officers during the year to plan and implement the annual AEU Federal Women’s Conference held in Melbourne in October.

The Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] also attended the Research Officers meeting in March 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, continues to act as a forum for discussion of 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 continues to offer a free Training Program to all AEU members under the categories of Your Workplace, Your Profession and Career, and Your Other Life. The vast majority of training sessions have been offered in the twilight timeslot of 4 – 6pm to avoid the need to book casual relief. Some sessions have been presented as half-day programs.

Most advertised sessions proceeded with good attendance by members. In particular, various financial planning and retirement planning seminars were popular which reflects the aging profile of our membership. A number of Retirement Planning Seminars were presented by Jenn Murray of State Super Financial Services. A Financial Seminar for Women, Making the Most of Your Money and Growing Your Money by Investing were presented by Julie French of Industry Fund Financial Planning. Both these providers offer this training free of charge to AEU members.

AEU Officers and Maurice Blackburn Solicitors provided practical tips in Dealing With Violence in the Workplace. The session provided vital information about workplace rights and responsibilities, particularly focusing on relevant legislation such as privacy, the right to an education and OHS rights.

As part of a national AEU campaign, the Branch ran a number of Schools Funding Review Submission Writing Workshops. Organisers also visited many Sub-Branches to provide similar training to those members who could not attend the central training.

The OHS Forum’s theme this year was Your Personal Well-Being and Safety. Participants explored how to maintain personal health in order to run on all cylinders thanks to presentations from the Heart Foundation and Nutrition Australia.

The sessions on Writing an Application for Transfer or Promotion and Preparing for a Job Interview continue to be popular with members. After presenting these sessions for 5 years, Steve Provins decided to call it a day. The AEU - ACT Branch sincerely thanks Steve for his support of AEU members over such a long period of time. Many members have successfully transferred or been promoted with the help of his supportive training. The Branch was fortunate to find a very able replacement to run both these courses. Bob Ross is now presenting these courses and putting his own experienced stamp on the content.

This year the AEU offered Dealing With Difficult Colleagues and Dealing With Difficult Parents/Carers, run by Cheryl O’Connor, to support members with communication and negotiation skills and managing difficult situations effectively.

Eight ACT New Educators attended the NSW Teachers Federation New Educators Conference on Friday 18 – Sunday 20 March in Bundanoon. More than 100 teachers participated in workshops on lesson planning and preparation, Indigenous education, classroom management and national union campaigns were generic enough for our participants to join their interstate counterparts. The NSW-specific sessions were substituted for sessions with an ACT focus, such as Your Rights and Entitlements at Work, Sticky Situations and How to Avoid Them and How Your Union Works. It is safe to say that our teachers will have emerged from the conference as more knowledgeable classroom practitioners and teacher unionists.

Some advertised training sessions had to be cancelled due lack of registrations. Members continue to experience high workloads and many demands on their time, including out-of-teaching hours. The lack of casual relief supply continues to be a significant barrier to being able to offer more AEU training during the day.
Evaluations of AEU training consistently show that members appreciate the training provided by the AEU for the benefit of members 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 a delegation of three members was selected by Executive to attend the AEU Federal Women’s Conference with the Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] Cathy Smith. These members were Kim Edwards [CIT], Jennifer Hurley [CIT] and Ruth Edge [Erindale College]. The theme for this year’s conference, held in October, was Another World is Possible, Another World Is Necessary: The Next 100 Years. This theme was in recognition and celebration of the 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day. Recommendations were passed that focused on the challenges ahead for AEU women across Australia. All ACT delegates provided a written report on highlights of the conference for the November edition of Public Education Voice. Jennifer Hurley participated in the AEU National TAFE Women’s Committee as the ACT Branch representative. Kim Edwards was an observer at the TAFE Women’s Committee and participated in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Caucus.

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.

**Education International Women’s Conference**

Sixteen AEU women, including the Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] Cathy Smith, attended the Education International First World Women’s Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, 19 – 23 January 2011. The Australian delegation was headed by Susan Hopgood, EI President [and our first woman AEU Federal Secretary]. In the centenary year International Women’s Day, 400 women from education unions representing 90 countries attended the conference. Despite the hard-won gains we have made for women and girls over the years, discrimination on the basis of gender still remains a major concern of teacher unions across the world.

**NSW Teachers Federation Women’s Conference**

The ACT Branch sent 4 delegates to this conference in Sydney on 2 & 3 April. The theme was Where to Next? Celebrating the Centenary of International Women’s Day. Delegates were treated to inspiring, challenging speakers and attended practical workshops which focused progressing women’s issues in education. Many thanks to Teachers Credit Union for generously funding all accommodation and meals. The ACT delegates were Lieta Sauliluma-Duggan [North Ainslie School], Mary Murphy [Turner School], Sue Amundsen [AEU Schools Organiser] and Cathy Smith [ACT Branch Women’s Officer].

**Centenary of International Women’s Day**

AEU women members celebrated 100 years of International Women’s Day by attending dinners, community events and holding activities in their own workplaces. International Women’s Day [IWD] is celebrated on 8th March each year. IWD is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women in the past, present and future. It is a day when women are recognised for their achievements, without regards for divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political. In 1911, IWD was officially celebrated for the first
time. More than one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination.

Anna Stewart Program Officer
This year, Branch Executive endorsed a new leadership development opportunity for AEU women. Alison Reid of Torrens Primary School was the 2011 Anna Stewart Program Officer. The program offers a week long, funded program to enable an AEU woman to learn about the daily operations, recruitment, organising and campaigning of the AEU. It also provides a chance for the program officer to do school visits, meet with other union officials and make representations to politicians. Each year, the program can be tailored to specific interests and experience of the program officer. All AEU women are encouraged to apply for the 2012 Anna Stewart Program.

Dealing with Domestic Violence
The AEU 2011 Enterprise Agreement Claim contained provisions to support employees who experience domestic violence [such as leave to attend medical appointments and court hearings]. This follows the success of some unions in winning such conditions for members and coincides with the work of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. This clause was not included in the ACT Common Core conditions this year so it is up to members to lobby the ACT Government and all unions to include such provisions in workers' entitlements in future. Despite this disappointment, governments at the Federal and local level are acting on domestic violence. This year, the Federal Government launched the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022. The Plan is a 12-year strategy endorsed by the Commonwealth and all States and Territories. Also, the ACT Government launched the 2011-2017 Strategy ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children.

Equal Pay
The campaign for pay equity for women, which was launched last year, continued in 2011, including:
- Equal Pay Day, 12 April - symbolises how far into 2011 women had to work to earn what men earned last year. Women are paid, on average, 18% less than men.
- Rallies in each state and territory to promote the Australian Service Union’s Equal Pay case and lobbying state governments to fund the pay increase for social and community sector workers.
- Facebook page – Pay Up: No More Lip Service to Equal Pay is one of the Australian Service Union’s online campaigns.

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 Birrigai Outdoor School [the recipients of the last year’s award]. Rod Little, National Development Coordinator of Dare to Lead, conducted the Welcome to Country. AEU leaders Beth Craddy [ACT Branch ATSI Education Committee representative] and Phil Rasmus [Branch President] presented the awards and commendations. The 2011 recipient of the Reconciliation Award was presented to Patrick Chapman, ETD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer. Certificates of Commendation were awarded to Kate Waite, Alfred Deakin High School; Jodie White, Gilmore Primary School; Vivien Palmer, Richardson Primary School and Giralang Primary School Staff and Students. Guests were treated to performances of dance and stories by Wiradjuri Echoes.
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 and Beth Craddy was the Branch Representative on the AEU’s Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee. The TAFE ATSIEC Representative position was not filled in 2011 but the Branch congratulates Kim Edwards who has been elected as the 2012 representative.

The AEU is represented on the ACT ETD Equity and Diversity Consultative Committee, which includes the implementation of the ETD Equity and Diversity Plan 2010–2013 which focuses on Planning Diversity, Maintaining Diversity and Building Diversity. The plan has a key focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Branch is also represented on many other committees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues are raised regularly in these meetings.

The Branch journal *Public Education Voice* includes a double page 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 AEU Federal Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex [GLBTI] Working Party was established in 2010 to support the implementation of the AEU Federal GLBTI Policy. Luke Williams is the ACT Branch representative on this working group.

The ACT Branch has established a group for interested members who want to further progress diversity in public schools. 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 [formerly the Special Education Reference Group] this year. This group is made up of advocates for students with disabilities and those who work with these students. The group has been providing advice on the implementation of the Disability Education Strategy and Action Plan.

7. **English as a Second Language**
The Literacy and Numeracy Reference Group has a standing item to discuss English as a Second Language programs and issues. The Assistant to the Secretary [Professional] is the AEU representative on this committee. In addition, the AEU continues to advocate for increased funding and support for ESL students and their families through budget submissions and lobbying the ACT Government, Liberals, Greens and both universities. A joint letter from the AEU, ACT Principals Association and the P&C Council was sent to Minister Barr calling on him to intervene in the ETD decision to cut one of the ESL Executive Officer positions from the Central Office at the end of 2011.

8. **Communication**
The AEU membership database enables communication with members via a number of email groups such as Sub-Branch Representatives [President, Deputy President, Secretary, Councillor/s, Alternate Councillor/s]; Women’s Contact Officers; New Educator Contact Officers; OHS Representatives and Principals. This is a valuable
tool in keeping members up-to-date on relevant professional and industrial issues in a timely manner. It is possible to also email all members when the need arises. E-bulletins, which contain information on union campaigns and activities, are sent out as a web link to members via email. On occasions, the database has distributed multiples of the same email to each recipient. This situation has been highly regrettable and the AEU sincerely apologises for any inconvenience or frustration caused to members. We continue to work with our provider to resolve such problems as quickly as possible.

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 Latest News page. The website also features sections such as Membership; Campaigns; Member Groups; Info Centre [working conditions, Agreements etc.] and AEU Contacts. A new page was added this year, Equity and Diversity, which provides resources for members and the wider community around understanding diverse sexualities; creating a welcoming environment and supporting students, staff and families who identify as gay, lesbian, intersex or transgender.

The branch journal, Public Education Voice, continues to provide valuable information to members about professional and industrial matters. Four editions per year are distributed to sub-branch secretaries who are asked to pass on the journal to financial members.

The 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, Glenn Fowler and Sue Amundsen have managed a diverse range of responsibilities in 2011 on behalf of AEU members. Sue’s role was extended to full-time from the beginning of the year to enable us to expand our services across the membership. Sue’s efforts were especially appreciated around the expiry of the Enterprise Agreement [EA] in Semester 1 when Organisers spent much of their time moving from Sub-Branch to Sub-Branch providing members with updated information in regard to the claim and progress in negotiations.

Organisers have continued to spend the bulk of their time providing AEU services to members – advice, advocacy and support – to assist in improving working conditions for teachers in ACT public schools. Retirement options and resignation procedures continue to be prominent among member enquiries, counter-balanced significantly by recruitment. Concerns associated with the move to 15 hours per week of preschool education by 2013 and the contingent Federal requirement that all preschool teachers possess a 4-year Early Childhood qualification experienced a slight resurgence in 2011 but it appears that preschools are adjusting to the changed landscape. Enquiries regarding the 2009-2011 EA featured heavily among member concerns, as they sought advice and clarification around transfer entitlement, workload, new initiatives and the requirement for consultation, and leave entitlements.

The AEU continued to hear from members about a wide range of issues relating to communication with colleagues, 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 the resolution of an issue. Officers provided support and advocacy, and monitored these processes throughout. Organisers met with the Classroom Teacher Transfer Round panels to advocate for those members who sought special consideration.

Members are sometimes referred onto other services for further support and specialised assistance. These services include:

- Legal advice – Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
- Free, confidential counselling – Davidson Trahaire, provided by ETD’s Employee Assistance Program

Organisers usually attend initial legal appointments and police interviews with the member.

AEU Organisers have been visible in the Sub-Branches, apprising members of the details of the EA claim, and the range of offers made by ETD and the Government. A lot of time was spent clarifying the process required of the AEU to take protected industrial action. At the time of writing the claim has yet to be settled and members are still operating under the terms and conditions set out in the EA 2009-2011 so they will need to remain fully engaged with regard to the AEU’s claim. The greatest advantage to be gained by the employer lies in membership inaction or...
disengagement. Members have also been encouraged to make use of the AEU - ACT website [www.aeuact.asn.au] for the latest information on current campaigns, working conditions [via the EA], 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
More than 200 teachers and staff of the ACT DET were introduced to the AEU at the DET Induction Program at the beginning of 2011. More than 100 were signed up on the day, which is the best result in many years. A smaller but significant number were inducted at the mid-year DET Induction in July 2010 and again at the October DET Induction. 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. This is particularly important as the number of teachers retiring now seems to be increasing and is likely to remain significant in the next few years. At the time of writing, the number of new members for the year is 565, up considerably on previous years. That is a reflection on the recognition by new members of the importance of membership in the context of an EA negotiation year as well as increasing awareness of the excellent value members receive in services and insurance coverage.

The recruitment focus has often been on younger teachers, and it is encouraging to note that there has been an enthusiastic uptake when many New Educators do not appear to regard the decision to join the Union as an automatic one. The Organisers have made special efforts to make multiple visits to schools where young members are in abundance and density is lower. Sue Amundsen addressed University of Canberra pre-service teachers and discussed their opportunity to become Associate members. Glenn Fowler visited final year education students at the Australian Catholic University [Signadou]. The recruitment banner has been raised at the Education and Training Directorate’s [ETD] inductions and other recruitment sessions, as it summarises the myriad benefits of AEU membership and the victories of the teacher-unionist movement over decades. The Organisers have also attended whole staff meetings to advertise the benefits of union membership.

Organisers acknowledge the ongoing efforts of Sub-Branch Executive members and other long-term members in recruiting new members and encouraging them to become active participants in the Union. These members realise that 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.

2011 was the second year of the New Educator Contact Officer [NECO] network, coordinated by Glenn and that continued to develop throughout the year. Numerous email updates were sent and opportunities advertised for NECOs to develop activism among their peers. 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. In March, Glenn accompanied eight New Educators to the New South Wales Teachers Federation Beginning Teachers Conference at Bundanoon. The new teachers joined their interstate counterparts for training on classroom preparation, Indigenous education, student management and so on. There was time for the ACT delegates to separate for training in the industrial landscape, union campaigns and “Sticky Situations and How To Avoid Them”. The Conference was fantastic for building union activism and interstate networks. In October, Glenn accompanied two delegates to the AEU’s National New Educators Conference in Adelaide. Here they listened to high profile public education advocates and learnt about union campaigns. There was much valuable discussion with delegates from the seven other jurisdictions.

In 2007, the AEU began covering Education Support Officers [ESOs]; that is, LSAs [STAs], 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. The AEU’s profile increased when, for the first time, we negotiated the terms of the ETD Staff Union Enterprise Agreement in 2010, involving our ESO members directly in that process. This year we again negotiated their EA, as well as balloting them through the Australian Electoral Commission [AEC] regarding protected industrial action. Although the ballot did not attract enough votes, it was positive in raising the Union’s profile. 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.

Members Equity Bank, Teachers Health and Teachers Credit Union again sponsored a series of AEU recruitment competitions throughout 2011, mainly on Induction days but also in association with Public Education Day and the Public Education Awards. We acknowledge the sponsorship support of Teachers Health Fund and First State Super, particularly their assistance in funding opportunities for New Educators with regard to interstate conferences.

Branch Council has again seen a number of new representatives participating in the decision-making processes of our Union. While at some sites AEU Sub-Branch Executive roles have been accepted by New Educators because “someone has to do it!”, those individuals have grown into their role and have been invaluable in their enthusiasm. They have been instrumental in driving their Sub-Branches forward during the EA campaign.

Sub-Branch Visits
Organisers attended all Sub-Branches in 2011 at least once, and the majority of 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. Federal matters such as the Schools Funding Review have continued to focus some of the discussion and debate but for the most part the dominating concerns have been tied to the ongoing EA campaign.
National Public Education Day – 26 May 2011

There were numerous public performances, venues [Civic and regional shopping centres] and art displays again this year for the annual celebration of the public education system, thanks to the co-operation and hard work of teachers in various schools. The AEU co-ordinated events to showcase the high quality of public education music programs. These were held at City Walk, outside the entrance to the Canberra Centre, over four consecutive days. Every participating school brought joy and enthusiasm to the venue; some of the schools were performing for their eighth or ninth year and have already “booked” their performance for next year. The event also showcased artwork from across the system. Downstairs in the Civic Library is an excellent venue for the exhibition of students’ artworks and the Library staff members were supportive and appreciative. 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. Woden and Belconnen Libraries also supported displays. Woden Library had all walls covered, a mix of art, craft and writing, and drew considerable attention from the public. The Libraries have been pre-booked for May next year and we look forward to viewing the installations again at that time. 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. 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.

This year AEU Officers again worked with ETD officers on a combined Public Education celebration from 5:00-7:00pm on the Friday evening of Public Education Week. Much work was involved in ensuring that the aims of both parties were met and, after a few teething problems, the night was a big success with increased attendance on last year. 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 2012 which will fall in the fourth week of May and we urge members to ensure your school community isn’t left out of the program – put Thursday 24 May 2012 in your calendar now and start planning your school’s celebrations.

Committee Work

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

Glenn Fowler worked in a number of roles in 2011. He attended a number of committees as Organiser, Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial], [a role he performs two days per week] and as Acting Secretary during six weeks of Term 3. He attended the Teacher Education Committee and a School Autonomy Reference Group [SARG] meeting. He attended ETD deputations, MLA meetings, Legislative Assembly Estimates and an ACT Budget Briefing. He attended fortnightly and then weekly EA negotiation meetings, ran after-hours member Mass Meetings, spent much time doing newspaper, radio and TV interviews during the campaign, and worked with an independent polling company on a 400-person phone poll, the results of which became invaluable in prosecuting the campaign. Glenn met with leaders of the P&C Council on a number of occasions, as well as lobby group Save Our Schools. He was
also engaged with TAFE members through TAFE Council, and he represented the Union at CIT Chief Executive Consultations. Glenn has continued his Federal focus this year by continuing his work as the ACT Branch Campaign Coordinator for the all-important Commonwealth Schools Funding Review. This has seen him working with Officers from the AEU’s various Branches and Associated Bodies to develop campaign strategy and materials, and to achieve the best school submission rate in the country at just over 60% of all ACT public schools. He wrote the ACT Branch submission to the review and produced documents for local MPs showing the need for improved funding for ACT public schools. He organised groups of teachers to meet Federal politicians to lobby for a fairer funding model, and he set up monthly meetings with ALP Member for Canberra Gai Brodtmann, which participating members found highly useful and empowering.

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

• 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.
• 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 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 discussed and debated are wide-ranging including workplace bullying and harassment, lockdown procedures, violent incidents, risk management processes, physical conditions in schools. The latter included some focused discussions concerning asbestos and responses to the management of mould. There were a couple of sites afflicted with mould late last year and while the matter was addressed over the January leave period, it re-emerged late in Term 1 this year.
• 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 [LHMU], CPSU, AEU], ETD and Shared Services. This year a primary focus has been on initiatives to provide an effective training program for Lab Assistants and Learning Support Assistants [LSAs]. The AEU represents the interests and advocates on behalf of our ESO members, brought to the attention of the office by the members. Bill continued to pursue issues such as permanency, access to training and workplace safety through this forum.

Organisers met regularly with Workforce Management’s Staffing and Injury Management teams to discuss individual member cases. They also collaborated with Shared Services/Injury Prevention and other agencies to assist some sites to develop Risk Assessments and Management Plans following incidents. All Organisers have continued to work with Sub-Branches at both primary and
secondary sites to resolve Work Safety issues generated by some students’ extremely challenging behaviours. 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 and are more comfortable initiating the process when they experience the impact of an initial assessment. 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.

Sue Amundsen has attended meetings with Glenn, Bill, and Cathy Smith throughout her time in the office and has filled in as required. Sue attended the meeting for the Preschool Teachers in relation to the introduction of the 15 hours and preschool qualifications and the Quality Teaching Model [QTm] Implementation meeting. Sue has regularly participated in the GLBTI and Women’s Officers network meetings, attended a Disability Reference Group meeting, the AITSL Leading Curriculum Change Stakeholder Forum and the International Women’s Day Forum. Sue also attended the Equity and Diversity Consultative Committee to discuss the Mature Age Strategy and the need for this clause in the EA to be given more consideration in relation to our aging staff as part of their Annual Professional Discussions and transfer entitlements.

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

**Professional Development**

Bill attended the AEU OHS Committee in Melbourne, working with colleagues from the other jurisdictions to develop a stronger OHS position within the AEU as we rush toward harmonisation of Work Safety legislation nationally.

Sue participated in the Organising Foundations Course in Sydney over a five-day period and completed the Right of Entry online course. Sue attended the NSWTF Women’s Conference in Sydney and provided a report to AEU Executive. As an appointed Respect Equity Diversity Contact Officer [REDCO] in her substantive position in ETD, Sue attended the Respect Equity and Diversity Training to train as a RED Coordinator as well as provide the AEU with information regarding the guidelines being provided to schools and as a reference for Organisers. During the year Sue attended the “Stamp Out Homophobia in Schools” Conference, which provided an extensive insight into many of our young people in their struggle to be understood and accepted, as well as the valuable strategies and information that can be provided in the school environment.

Glenn also attended REDCO training. His major Professional Development focus for the year, however, was the completion of his Certificate IV in Occupational Health and Safety [OH&S]. This blended course required him to attend six days of training in Melbourne and complete online tasks also. He is now a fully qualified Authorised Representative and, more than ever before, applies an OHS “lens” to his work.

Comparing the programs and services offered to members interstate is always interesting as the other jurisdictions all have servicing officers and other specialist officers that they are able to afford because of their size. In the ACT, the seven officers carry all the services, advocacy, professional and recruiting responsibilities. It remains important 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 2011.

Important elements of this year’s training program were the well-attended Community Campaign information session and the Workload Forum for Teachers, where teachers were primed with strategies to address the challenging political and industrial landscape of 2011.

While there were a number of training courses organised for members again this year, many of them did not run as members appear to have been overwhelmed by meetings and events at their schools and could not take advantage of the opportunities presented to them. Organisers suspect that this is largely due to the increased workload demands being placed upon our members and their desperate attempts to achieve work-life balance.

Nevertheless, some members [teachers and ESOs] attended the annual Work Safety Forum that focussed on individual health and wellbeing, and through a combination of AEU Officers and external presenters they were provided with valued information about maintaining “internal balance” as a first step toward achieving a work/life balance. Most recently OHS representatives were walked through the changes of the new “harmonised” legislation and the changes required in the ACT Work Safety Bill 2008 and Work Safety Regulations 2009.

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, GLENN FOWLER and SUE AMUNDSEN**
Schools Organisers
E. TAFE/VETiS Organiser’s Report

CIT/TAFE Vice President
The AEU heartily thanks outgoing TAFE Vice President Tracey Dodimead for her guidance and extensive efforts to represent members in many forums. Tracey engaged in the role at a time of industrial upheaval and has demonstrated much strength and commitment to ensuring justice for aggrieved members across the CIT who are in difficult circumstances. Moir Holmes stepped into the acting role as TAFE Vice President for Term 4 of 2011 in Tracey’s absence and lent her considerable energy, wisdom and experience to the task of settling the Enterprise Agreement. Sincere thanks are extended to Moir for her selfless application to the benefit of the membership.

CIT CEO
Adrian Marron was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of CIT in 2010 and has completed more than 12 months in that position. Over and above the usual roles and responsibilities of this position, Adrian has also been required to manage throughout this period a series of events, many of which were inherited from the previous CIT administration:

- The emergence of a significant number of bullying and harassment claims at CIT.
- A scathing Federal Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT] report on CIT’s handling of a bullying and harassment claim.
- Improvement Notices served on CIT in relation to bullying and harassment claims.
- An ACT Work Safety investigation of bullying and harassment at CIT.
- A review of Tertiary education offerings in the ACT.
- The Bradley Report recommending either financial and administrative autonomy for CIT or, alternatively, amalgamation with University of Canberra.
- Protracted negotiation of a new Enterprise Agreement.

Bradley Report
2011 was a monumental year in the 80-year life of the CIT [in its many forms and names throughout the years]. This was a year when Professor Denise Bradley drafted a report recommending that CIT become an autonomous institute or become amalgamated with University of Canberra. The Minister for Education has made it clear that the ACT Government will not accept the continuation of the status quo option for CIT, to remain a quasi-statutory authority. No community benefit or educational benefit rationale have been provided by any source in support of these proposals. The rationale hinges solely on the possible financial benefits that may originate if the Federal Government’s “full contestability of VET funding” agenda is unfurled in the ACT.

The AEU combined with the CPSU and AMWU to present a Joint Union submission to the ACT Government appointed steering committee on community consultation in relation to the Bradley Report.

A community group known as FOCIT [Friends of CIT] was established to encourage ACT community discussion of the potential issues stemming from the Bradley Report and the likely loss of low cost public VET provision to the ACT community. A Facebook site was established and has become the repository of informed and considered community discussion of the issues. The AEU is cognisant that this
delicate and largely unpopular move by Government to radically change the accessibility of VET education to the community is occurring in an election year.

### Bullying and Harassment

This year saw an expose in the local media: ABC radio and *The Canberra Times* [CT 17 September 2011] of bullying and harassment claims by a number of CIT teachers. Articulated was the plight of some members who endured the gauntlet of Comcare claims for workplace stress for some 2-3 years. The members claimed that a culture of bullying and harassment existed at CIT. The only case that was heard in the Federal Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT] was scathing of the CIT stating that CIT’s handling of the complaint was “…unreasonable, untoward, misleading and without procedural fairness…”. Following this finding in the AAT Comcare conceded the remaining three Comcare claims from members within that particular CIT Centre.

The AEU has provided support to these members throughout the extended period of their Comcare claims and the preparation of cases for the AAT. The AEU employs the services of Maurice Blackburn Solicitors who 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.

In an unprecedented move the Commissioner for Work Safety, Mark McCabe, served CIT with three Improvement Notices based predominantly on the many complaints to ACT Work Safety from teaching staff at CIT. Significantly, this is the first time such notices have been served on an ACT Government agency. ACT Work Safety is completing an investigation into the allegations of bullying and harassment across various CIT Centres.

The CIT Chief Executive Officer was quoted [CT 17 September 2011] as denying the existence of a culture of bullying and harassment at CIT or that formal complaints had been received by CIT. While CIT has offered Respect, Equity and Diversity training for some staff in bullying and harassment claim “hot spots” at CIT, Management continues to deny that the problem is widespread. Meanwhile, the AEU is aware of many other teaching staff who wish to formalise their outstanding, informal claims of bullying and harassment. Where appropriate, these members are being counselled to lodge their claims directly to ACT Work Safety, to seek independent investigation in the face of CIT’s reluctance to acknowledge the extent of the problem.

The AEU considers that working relationships within the sector are under stress as a consequence of the significant reduction of funding to CIT since 1997. These funding shortfalls have generated unrealistic expectations on teachers and their managers to maintain quality educational outcomes in the face of unreasonable increases in output. If this pressure is to be relieved the ACT and Federal Governments must adequately fund and support affordable public TAFE and VET education in the ACT.

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 within CIT – and 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.
Enterprise Agreement Matters

2009-2011 CIT Teachers’ Enterprise Agreement [EA] expired in June 2011 and negotiations for the next Agreement commenced in December 2010. The AEU submitted a Log of Claims, which focussed on issues to re-establish a healthy, secure workplace and provide for economic stability for families and workers.

The CIT offer included:
• a radical restructure of teaching classifications;
• a significant diminishing of access to Paid Non Attendance;
• loss of Daylight Equivalent and a 20-hour reduction in Professional Development allocation [resulting in a 20-hour increase in teaching and/DOTT workload; and
• pay increases of 3.5% in 2011 and 3.0% in July 2012, with an additional 1.5% conditional on the agreement of the AEU to the entire teacher classification restructure.

The AEU Enterprise Agreement claim was simplified to an insistence on no loss of teaching conditions and the demand for the full 7% pay rise over the life of the Agreement that the ACT Government had provided to CIT for that purpose. CIT refused to discuss the AEU offer and flatly rejected it over some six months of negotiation. The Union initiated two Protected Industrial Action [PIA] ballots of members in support of the AEU claim. The initial PIA ballot fell slightly short of the required 50% response.

One consequence of the devastating attack on teaching conditions initiated by CIT’s bargaining position and behaviour was the slow but determined rise of teacher member anger and engagement in the EA negotiation process.

The second PIA ballot [late September to mid October] sent a strong message to CIT that the members were ready, if necessary, for a protracted industrial dispute in support of their pay and conditions. The AEU negotiators ceased to meet with CIT in late September in the face of CIT’s intransigence. Eventually, CIT revised its offer in mid October 2011 to minimise the loss of teacher conditions and to offer the full, unconditional 3.5% and 3.5% pay rise over two years.

At the time of writing this report the AEU and CIT have been in negotiation for ten months and significant progress in the negotiations was made only in the past week. There remain some matters to be negotiated including, but not limited to, back dating of the initial pay increase to 18 August, in keeping with other ACT Public Sector arrangements, and the links between teaching qualifications and the pay incremental scale for Band 1 teachers.

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 and Peter Malone for their direct efforts to support the CIT and VETiS members and for the continued pursuit of the AEU goals during the period of my extended leave in 2011.

MIKE FITZGERALD
CIT/VETiS Organiser
F. Working with UnionsACT

The AEU - ACT Branch has continued to maintain engagement with UnionsACT during 2010.

The AEU representation for 2011 has been 10 Delegates, and 10 Alternates. All positions have been filled, with Delegates & Alternate Delegates rostered to attend the quarterly meetings to ensure that the AEU presence is consistent. The full ACT Delegation continues to attend the UnionsACT AGM, which is held on the first Wednesday of November. The on-going commitment of the AEU - ACT Branch representatives to attendance at the meetings is commendable.

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.

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.

UnionsACT has continued to its Youth Officer position during 2011; part of this position’s role has been to visit high schools and colleges and speak with young people about their rights at work and the union movement. It continues to be a successful venture and one that the AEU is pleased to support and promote.

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 last year.

In all, the AEU - ACT Branch proudly continues to support, promote and participate in the on-going activities of UnionsACT in its role as the ACT’s peak union body.

PENNY GILMOUR
Branch Secretary