Who is David Gillespie?

EA Negotiations: The State of Play

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Cover photo: Image of David Gillespie courtesy of Lagani Gairo/ Avondale College of Higher Education

Feedback and Contributions
Send feedback or share a story about your school. Please contact Tom Greenwell in the AEU ACT office (6272 7900, Tom.Greenwell@aeuact.org.au). The content deadline for our next edition is March 26.

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Welcome to the first edition of ACT Educator for 2015!

The year ahead is shaping up to be a big one in the life of our union, especially as negotiations for the new ETD Teachers Enterprise Agreement intensify.

Glenn’s article (p.8) and the EA ‘State of Play’ progress report (p.9) gives you the information you need to be part of the discussion. I urge you to play an active part in our campaign for better working and learning conditions, through your AEU Sub-branch.

By Lana Read, AEU ACT President

Being actively involved is a bit of theme this edition. We provide information about kick-starting Sub-branches in Term 1 (p.22) and stepping up into a Sub-branch Executive role and being an ACT Branch Councillor (p.31).

I also invite you to consider nominating to be on ACT Branch Executive. The current two-year term expires at the end of June, so elections for the new Executive will be held this semester.

As a union, we are able to make a difference because the overwhelming majority of ACT educators are AEU members. When you meet new colleagues this year, please ask them if they’ve joined yet. If they haven’t, be sure to tell them about all the benefits of being part of our community. For ideas, read Andy Jennings’ guide to recruitment conversations (p.15).

Glenn and I are honoured to again serve as Secretary and President, respectively, in 2015/16. It is an exciting challenge to lead such a passionate and committed community of educators. //

Lana
Be Part of Close the Gap Day 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are dying 10-17 years younger than other Australians. Think about that — a non-Indigenous child who started school this year may outlive an Indigenous student about to complete Year 12.

National Close the Gap Day is being held on Thursday March 19th, 2015. It’s Australia’s largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health campaign, and a great way for schools to tackle the Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Register now at www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools to receive a free resource pack with Australian Curriculum aligned resources from Oxfam Australia to help your students learn about the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians, and create and participate in events that are all about student-led action and community engagement.

Oxfam’s resources are easy to use and inspire creative ways to generate action and discussion — from sport to art and photography, music and debate. Supporting materials, videos, animations and stories balance the issues of health inequality with solutions.

Health equality is everyone’s business, and as educators we must continue to work together to ensure Indigenous health equality becomes a reality by 2030 — our students’ generation. Your support is vital. Join the 230,000 students and teachers from more than 1000 schools nationally who have participated in this national day over the past four years.

Annalise De Mel, Schools Program Coordinator
Oxfam Australia

Register today at www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools

For more info, please contact: Annalise De Mel, Schools Program Coordinator — Oxfam Australia, annalisedm@oxfam.org.au or (03) 9289 9390.
Glenn and Lana re-elected

In November, the AEC declared that Glenn Fowler (Branch Secretary) and Lana Read (Branch President) had both been elected unopposed to serve in 2015/16. Glenn has been ACT Branch Secretary since 2013. As well as holding the honorary position of ACT Branch President since 2013, Lana is Principal at MacGregor Primary. Congratulations and thank you Glenn and Lana.

Goodbye Angelo!

After seven years leading our union, AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos, is moving on to take up a position with Education International. Announcing his resignation, Angelo said: “It has been a privilege and an honour to have led our union over the last seven years. The dedication of our members has motivated and inspired me during this time. The Gonski campaign has been the highlight. We have made great progress and I know that effort will continue.” Angelo has been an incredibly passionate and persuasive advocate for high quality public education. At its meeting on November 22, ACT Branch Council passed a resolution thanking Angelo for all he has achieved. Angelo’s term concludes on January 31 and his successor will be elected at Federal Conference.

Anne and Julie join ACT Branch Executive

Congratulations to Anne Brown (CIT Bruce) and Julie Sherd (Gold Creek School) who have been elected to fill vacancies on Branch Executive. Julie is the first School Assistant to sit on Branch Executive – a sign of the increasing prominence of school assistants in our union. Branch Executive meets on 14 Tuesday evenings throughout the year and conducts the affairs of the union between meetings of Branch Council. Elections will be held shortly for the next two year Executive term which starts on July 1, 2015.

Alex White elected new Unions ACT Secretary

After 8 years and two terms, Kim Sattler has retired as Unions ACT Secretary. We thank her for her tireless commitment to our movement and wish her well for the next phase of her life. At the Unions ACT AGM in November, Alex White was elected unopposed to replace Kim. Alex most recently ran campaigns for Environment Victoria and has worked for United Voice and the National Tertiary Education Union. We are very excited about the campaigning expertise Alex will bring to the job. Find out more about Alex at his blog: www.alexwhite.org.

What happened to the curriculum review?

Members may be wondering what happened to Kevin Donnelly’s curriculum review. As we go to print, State and Territory Education Ministers are scheduled to discuss his recommendations and the Commonwealth Government’s response. State and Territory agreement is a prerequisite for change. We hope and trust that the most concerning elements of the Spurr-Donnelly agenda will be rejected.

Apologies! A couple of mistakes on the 2015 planner

The AEU ACT Office Team would like to apologise to December the 11th for leaving it out of our 2015 Planner! More seriously, we apologise to members for this mistake. Councillors, please also note the dates for Term 1 meetings have changed since the Planner went to print: the meetings will be held on February 14 (Week 2) and March 21 (Week 7).
Mem Fox is coming to dinner
The 2015 Public Education Dinner on Friday May 29 is going to be bigger and better than ever not least because our keynote speaker will be beloved children’s author, Mem Fox. We can’t wait to hear from Mem. Tickets will go on sale early in Term 1 – keep an eye on your email and the website.

Thank you Kate, Welcome Jacqui!
AEU ACT welcomes Jacqui Agius, who is joining the office team as an Organiser in 2015. Prior to coming to AEU ACT, Jacqui practised and lectured in law. She’s no stranger to the teaching profession, having taught English and Drama in NSW for nearly two decades. Jacqui was a highly active member of NSW Teachers’ Federation and performed a stint as President of the Blue Mountains Unions Council. Kate Reynolds is leaving the AEU ACT office this year to return to the classroom. We wish Kate all the best and thank her for her contribution over the last two years.

Working an average of 50 hours each week
Late last year, the Australian Council for Educational Research released the results of its Staff in Australian Schools survey. The report found that ACT primary school teachers are working 50.2 hours a week on average. This was well above the average for Australian primary teachers of 47.9 hours per week which, in turn, has increased from 45.8 hours in 2010. ACT secondary teachers work 49 hour weeks. Again, this is significantly higher than the Australian average of 47.6, which itself has increased from 46 hours in 2010.

Workload impacting on Principal Health and Wellbeing
The 2011–2014 Principal Health & Wellbeing Report produced by Dr Philip Riley and Teachers Health Fund found that principals and deputy principals are bearing are huge workload burden; they are not adequately resourced or supported; and in some cases this is impacting on health and wellbeing. Half of principals work upwards of 56 hours per week and 13% work upwards of 66 hours per week. The amount of emotional labour expected of principals and deputy principals is 1.7 times that of the population. For principals, Work-Family conflict occurs at approximately double the rate for the population generally.

Early intervention services closed
On December 17, Early Intervention Services offered through the ACT Education & Training Directorate (ETD) closed. The Government’s rationale for ceasing provision of these services is that they want children with disabilities and their families to have choice. Unfortunately, they are taking away people’s ability to choose a public provider. This is despite survey evidence suggesting overwhelming satisfaction with the early intervention services provided. The 27 teachers and 23 school assistants affected were redeployed by way of the normal transfer round.
If the Government believes in PLCs, it needs to resource them

ACT Branch Secretary, Glenn Fowler, provides an update on the state of negotiations for a new School Teachers and Leaders Enterprise Agreement.

Almost a year ago, AEU ACT Branch Council endorsed a log of claims that would serve as the foundation of negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement. That document was the product of extensive consultation, discussion and debate amongst AEU members but at its heart was a very simple idea. The best way of improving our students’ outcomes and confronting excessive workload is to make our profession more collaborative. Thus, our core claim was to reduce face-to-face hours and set aside time for professional learning communities (PLCs). Where PLCs already exist, they are not ‘one more thing’ for teachers to do but a more efficient and effective way of structuring a teacher’s working week, and a way of ensuring that this really important element of our job is afforded the time it deserves.

The Government’s first offer to school teachers and school leaders rejected our core claim. ETD acknowledged the evidence that professional collaboration improves student outcomes but was not prepared to seriously resource it. It did not acknowledge the evidence that ACT teachers are working an average of 50 hours a week (Staff in Australian Schools survey, 2014). For too long, workload has been a site-by-site proposition, and this has resulted in us working hours that are unreasonable; that are well above the national average; and that seriously undermine work-life balance.

Many other matters had not been resolved at the table and too few of the issues we raised in our log of claims had received due consideration. Consequently, Branch Council rejected the Government’s offer and negotiations continue. Discussions have been more fruitful since returning to the bargaining table but the proof will be in the pudding.

There has been no more important time to build our union and I can report with pleasure that this is occurring. Our efforts recruiting colleagues have borne fruit, as we approach 3,500 members for the first time. In this edition, Andy Jennings provides a guide to the structured recruitment conversation (p.15). Please ask your new colleagues this year to join the AEU. As our CIT teachers and School Assistant members recently experienced through their negotiations, there is power in numbers and all we achieve, we achieve together.

For the ETD Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement, your union negotiators could possess all the wit, astuteness and powers of persuasion in the world, but that would mean nothing without you behind us. The steady flow of resolutions of support from Sub-branches has been inspiring. I urge you to continue to engage closely with our campaign in 2015 by taking an active part in your Sub-branch.
EA Negotiations: The State of Play

We review the Education & Training Directorate’s progress in response to our log of claims for a new ETD Teacher Enterprise Agreement. Please note this report was current when we went to print. Check www.aeuact.org.au/ea_update for the very latest news.

Reduced face-to-face teaching time

OUR CLAIM
That weekly contact hours for classroom teachers remain 21.5 in primary school and 19 in secondary school but that, of that time, 1.5 hours for primary school teachers and 1 hour per week for secondary school teachers be set aside to support the development of professional learning communities in all schools. This equates to 60 hours per year and 40 hours per year respectively.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS

• While ETD states it believes PLCs are as important as we do, it appears to also believe they’re just another thing teachers can squeeze into the working week. ETD’s October 24 statement was blunt: “The Government’s position is that there will be no reduction in maximum face-to-face teaching hours for teachers and school leaders.”

• The October 24 offer proposed that three of our current compulsory Professional Learning days be distributed across teaching weeks (instead of during stand-down) to allow for PLCs. So, in the face of independent evidence that ACT teachers are averaging 50 hour weeks, the employer is proposing to make our teaching weeks even longer. While the October 24 offer paid lip service to the value of professional collaboration, it lacked a genuine commitment to the investment necessary to make tangible, system-wide improvements.

• Since ACT Branch Council rejected ETD’s offer, constructive conversations are now occurring at the bargaining table about workload issues and reducing the administrivia that takes teachers away from our core duties. Focus group meetings have been facilitated to investigate what aspects of teachers’ workload could be freed up to redirect time to core work.

• ETD points out that our core claim for reduced face-to-face hours entails 177 extra teachers in ACT public schools (p.7). How those teachers are used, if our claim is ultimately successful, will be a decision for principals based on their staffing allocation. It will clearly be imperative that release teachers cover compulsory curriculum content so that we’re not left in the position of having to cover the same content with students in less time.

• In its October 24 Offer, ETD completely agreed with our case that professional learning communities (PLCs) are the best way of improving student outcomes. Almost paraphrasing our log of claims, it stated: “Teaching improves when teachers learn from each other. Research indicates that regular, structured, collaborative professional learning activities in schools have a direct impact on improving teaching and learning in the classroom. These activities often referred to as ‘professional learning communities’, include: team teaching; coaching and mentoring, particularly of new educators; peer observation in the classroom and feedback; faculty or year level teams examining and developing teaching practices to meet student learning needs; school based action research groups.” (p.6)

• ETD went further, stating: “Professional learning communities put teachers in the ‘driving seat’ of their own continuous improvement in teaching practice. This is not about attending courses or conferences but rather teachers regularly coming together to engage in professional conversations and investigations at the workplace.” (p.6)
Salaries

OUR CLAIM
That ACT teacher and school leader salaries be nationally competitive at all levels. This would sensibly mean that ACT salaries appear in the top three jurisdictions. The operative start date of the EA must be 1 October 2014 and any back pay necessary should be made to that date.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• The Government’s October 24 Offer was 8 x 1.5% increases over 4 years or 3% per annum.

• The Government’s October 24 offer almost certainly would see the majority of us slip into the bottom half of the states and territories salary table by the end of the agreement. Being 5th in the country behind Northern Territory, Western Australia, Victoria and NSW would be far from “nationally competitive”.

• Salary justice for ACT teachers was achieved off the back of a strong and sustained member campaign in 2011-2012, when we climbed from last to 3rd in the country. We must retain our place, clearly in the top three jurisdictions.

• In the recent Agreement with Canberra’s nurses, the increase in the first year was $2550. A 3% increase for us in the first year would significantly short-change New Educators (eg, first year teachers would only get $1825). All educators under the penultimate salary step would get less than $2550.

• The value of the salary offer depends on what comes with it. In addition to rejecting our core claim, ETD’s October 24 offer simply didn’t address many of our other claims (see below). We can make a more comprehensive assessment of the salaries offer when we know how ETD intends to respond to our full log in of claims. We should not allow ETD to pressure us into assessing or accepting one item in our log isolation from the others.

Analysis of Potential Workload Impacts

OUR CLAIM
That all new employer initiatives that may have an effect on the workload of staff not proceed until consultation with the AEU Branch (for system initiatives) or Sub-branch (for school initiatives) has been accompanied by the submission of ETD’s Analysis of Potential Workload Impacts tool. The design of the tool should be revisited by ETD and the AEU during this EA negotiation.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• The October 24 ETD Offer contained the startling admission that our time is being taken up with tasks unrelated to student learning. ETD confessed: “... some aspects of teachers’ work in schools may have purposes not directly related to improving student learning.” (p.7). While it is deeply concerning that ETD, by its own account, has created this state of affairs, we welcome its desire to address it.

• In a similar vein, it is pleasing that ETD has discovered a newfound enthusiasm for Workload Committees. ETD stated: “Under clause Q2-School monitoring of workload and practice in the current agreement, the school workload committee has a key role to monitor, review and address workloads with the opportunity to shed out-dated programs and reassess practice and procedure to ensure the most efficient use of teacher time beyond the classroom.” We look forward to working with ETD in the first weeks of the school year to ensure every workplace has an effective Workload Committee up and operating.

• To its credit, ETD noted the results of our August member workload survey and in particular the overwhelming view that excessive administrative tasks are impacting on student learning, and have expressed an openness to removing or reassigning these tasks (p.8.).

• Via focus groups with AEU and ETD nominated teachers, the bargaining parties have sought to identify how we can reduce workload by cutting out tasks that either don’t need to be done at all or shouldn’t be done by teachers.

Check www.aeuact.org.au/ea_update for the very latest news
“While ETD states it believes in PLCs, it appears to think they’re just another thing teachers can squeeze into the working week.”

Acceptable temperature for workplaces

OUR CLAIM
That ETD guarantees an indoor temperature between 17° and 30° in all workplaces at all times. That ETD agrees to discuss minimum and maximum temperatures for outdoor work.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This is a key example of a fundamental element of our log of claims that simply wasn’t mentioned in ETD’s October 24 Offer. It wasn’t accepted. It just wasn’t mentioned.
• Discussions have now occurred on this urgent issue and ETD have indicated a preparedness to work with us to achieve a solution.

ICT in schools

OUR CLAIM
That additional resources be allocated to ICT in ACT public schools to ensure a stable working network is available at least 98% of the time. (Stable network to be defined as: Teachers and Students are able to use ICTs in classrooms - and beyond - when and as required.)

That a minimum of one Information Technology Officer (ITO) is guaranteed for each ACT public school to ensure that a teacher’s engagement with ICT is only ever educational in focus and not technical. That in larger schools this number be increased and that the resources to fund this extra provision be funded from outside individual school budgets.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This claim was not addressed in ETD’s October 24 Offer. Conversations are occurring on the issue of network reliability.

Professional Learning Requirements

OUR CLAIM
That the current requirement for teaching staff to attend five (5) days of approved professional learning each year be reconsidered in light of TQI professional learning requirements, and the new Enterprise Agreement synthesise ETD’s professional learning requirements and those of the TQI.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• ETD has offered to remove three of the required five days of Professional Learning currently performed in stand-down or after hours. It has proposed that it will encourage and support schools to make all their professional learning activities TQI accredited.

Payment to Casual Relief Teachers meeting TQI Professional Learning requirements

OUR CLAIM
That ETD centrally funds Casual Relief Teachers being paid at their usual rate for each hour they spend meeting TQI professional learning requirements, to a maximum of 20 hours per year.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• ETD rejected this claim in the October 24 offer.

Check www.aeuact.org.au/ea_update for the very latest news
Payment of fees for applying for certification against national standards

OUR CLAIM
That ETD pays, on a maximum of one occasion within a three year period, any fees associated with a teacher’s application for certification against the Highly Accomplished National Standard or Lead Teacher National Standard.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• ETD have rejected the proposal that they pay application fees.
• ETD’s October 24 Offer included a proposal to provide a “…a financial reward to teachers on 27 January following certification at the higher standards of: an additional salary increment for classroom teachers on the salary scale, or an allowance for classroom teachers at the top of the scale and SLCs to be equivalent to an average increment and paid over one year.” We have put the position that it should be the top increment.

Reduced Face-to-Face Teaching Time For Teachers of VET

OUR CLAIM
That teachers of Vocational Education & Training (VET) have a reduced face-to-face teaching load equivalent to or pro-rata of one line for every four lines of VET classes. This time allowance may be accessed on a weekly basis or be accumulated and accessed as needed and through negotiation with the principal.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This claim was not addressed in ETD’s October 24 Offer. The views of VET teachers were sought through ETD-AEU focus groups conducted in the latter half of Term 4.

Resource Management Time For Teacher-Librarians

OUR CLAIM
That resource management time is guaranteed for Teacher Librarians.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This was not addressed in ETD’s October 24 Offer. Meetings with AEU Teacher-Librarian members have been facilitated with the aim of improving guidelines around role articulation.

New Educator Support Plans

OUR CLAIM
That New Educators (teachers in their first three years of service) negotiate with their supervisor during Term 1 a “New Educator Support Plan”. This document should be less than one page in length and should outline the intended use of the New Educator Support Days for that year.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This claim was not addressed in ETD’s October 24 Offer but has been positively received.

“Focus group meetings have been facilitated to investigate what aspects of teachers’ workload could be freed up to redirect time to core work.”

Check www.aeuact.org.au/ea_update for the very latest news
School Psychologists – Improved Remuneration

OUR CLAIM
That the quantum of the SEA (to be renamed “Attraction & Retention” arrangement) be increased to 50% of the base rate of relevant remuneration, to encourage new staff to enter the service and retain existing staff.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This was not addressed in ETD’s October 24 Offer. We await an offer from ETD.

Competitive School Principal Salaries and Conditions

OUR CLAIM
A Principal remuneration and career structure that provides increases in remuneration which recognise the increased and increasing complexity of principal work and which ensure ACT principal salaries are nationally competitive.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• ETD have offered a range of rhetoric about “transitional arrangements” (p.13) and promises to “develop the revised structure” (p.13). While the offer to teachers provided for 8 salary increases, it has only guaranteed three increases for principals: “Beyond the first three 1.5% increases, principal salaries will be determined through negotiation of a revised principal salary structure.” (p.4).

Appropriate synergy between all teacher appraisal instruments

OUR CLAIM
That ETD and the AEU participate in an audit of EA clauses and agreed documents that relate to teacher appraisal to ensure that there is appropriate synergy between them, and that all redrafting be completed no later than June 2015.

Further, greater alignment should be sought between the assessment processes for Accelerated Incremental Progression, Executive Teacher (Professional Practice) and Certification against the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Standards, and that officers from the Teacher Quality Institute are invited to contribute to that aligning exercise.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• This was not addressed in ETD’s October 24 Offer. We await an offer from ETD.

Domestic Violence Leave

OUR CLAIM
That provision is made for Domestic Violence Leave.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS
• The employer has agreed in principle to the provision of Domestic Violence Leave, in line with the rest of the ACT Public Service. This means that victims of domestic violence are eligible for up to 20 days leave in addition to other leave entitlements. Read more on why this entitlement is so important to supporting victims of domestic violence (p.43).

“The value of the salary offer depends on what comes with it.”

Check www.aeuact.org.au/ea_update for the very latest news
EA Negotiations – What next from here?

Following the rejection of ETD’s October 24 Offer by AEU ACT Branch Council, the bargaining process has continued.

Glenn Fowler (Branch Secretary), Andy Jennings (Lead Organiser) and Garrett Purtill (Industrial Officer) continue to meet with ETD representatives on a fortnightly basis in an attempt to hammer out a deal.

The next major development will be when ETD issues a second offer. It will then be up to AEU ACT Branch Council to decide whether to accept it. Sub-branches will have a crucial role in scrutinising the offer, discussing its merits and advising your councillors on what attitude to take in Council’s deliberations.

The main thing to remember is that when we negotiated the current Agreement in 2011, the Government made four offers. We accepted the fourth and final offer.

We hope it will not be so drawn out this time and that ETD’s next offer will, at the very least, be far more comprehensive than its first effort. However, it’s up to us if and when we accept a Government offer.

It’s common for new Enterprise Agreements to include back-pay of salary increases to the nominal expiry of the previous Agreement (in our case, October 1 2014). Achieving back-pay to this date will be a core-aim of the AEU bargaining team at the negotiating table.

Some of our colleagues might not be aware of how important our union is to their working lives. Now’s a great time to explain how we act as a bargaining agent to improve everybody's pay and conditions. Please download an application form from www.aeuact.org.au/join and ask them to join us.

Check www.aeuact.org.au/ea_update for the very latest news

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Andy Jennings’ guide to join conversations

The main reason why people don’t join unions is that they’ve never been asked. AEU ACT Lead Organiser, Andy Jennings, gives some tips on recruitment conversations.

It’s crucial that each and every one of us asks our colleagues if they’ve joined the AEU yet and, if they haven’t, discuss the benefits of joining. Here’s some key tips on talking to colleagues about joining our union.

Planning and Preparation
As with everything, being well prepared is the best way of reducing any nerves and presenting as effectively as possible.

Ensure you:
• Think about a good time and place to have a chat.
• Identify local and/or branch issues where you feel the AEU makes a difference, such as reduced face-to-face hours for New Educators and New Educator Support Days, big salary increases in the current EA, addressing workload in current negotiations for a new EA, or Gonski.
• Reflect on why being a member is important to you. Often it’s your story and the fact you care that persuades people more than anything else.
• Make sure you have an application form with you (which includes 10 reasons to join)!

Opening
One-to-one discussion encourages honest and open dialogue. Once you have chosen to start the conversation, be honest. State that you would like a little bit of time to talk about the benefits of being part of the AEU.

Ask questions
A recruitment conversation should not primarily be about you or the AEU. The conversation should be about the person you’re talking with and what’s important to them. Be interested and inquisitive rather than intrusive. Ask open questions about what being an educator means to them.

Listen actively
Take in everything: listen to the words and tone non-members/new educators use as they speak to you. Reflect back what you think they are saying to communicate you are listening and to ensure you’ve understood them correctly. Listen carefully to what’s important to them. Can you identify values they share with you and the AEU? If not, does what they’re saying suggest shared interests?

Bring good news and your story
On the basis of the common values and/or interests, discuss our recent successes and positive initiatives. Give them good news, increase their confidence and brighten their outlook. AEU ACT fights for better conditions both for the workforce but also the children and young adults we teach, and we should communicate our victories. Share your story about why the AEU is important to you.

Feed off enthusiasm
If they present a new idea, don’t rush to undermine it, try to support it, or explain how they could incorporate their suggestion into the work of the Sub-branch if it is practical to do so. Demonstrate the power of our democracy.

Ask them to join!
After engaging with the non-member use the shared values you have established, and subsequent connections to the work the union does, to ask them to join the union and contribute to its successes and democracy.

It is especially important every non-member is approached and engaged when they start at a new school. If unsuccessful, leave them with a copy of an application and follow up in a few weeks. Often the first conversation begins a process of reflection which in time can lead to a positive decision. //
‘But Don’t Teachers Work 9am to 3pm?’

Of course not. We know that but Garran Primary School teacher, Sally Baker, got so fed up with non-teachers underestimating the hours involved in our job, she put down on paper everything we do outside of the classroom. Next time relatives, friends or acquaintances confuse our face-to-face hours for our working week, read this to them!

I once mentioned to a relative that I get to school between 7:30 and 8am, depending on how busy things are, and am usually there until between 4 and 5pm. “But what do you do in all that time?” I was asked.

Another time, I mentioned to a friend that my hubby had cooked a lovely dinner that night. She replied, “Oh, I thought you would do all the cooking at your place, since you’d be home so much earlier from work than him”.

And just last week I visited a family day care centre to enquire about care for my son when I return to work from maternity leave next year. When I mentioned that I would need care from 7:30am to 5pm, the carer replied, “But aren’t you a teacher?!?”

By Sally Baker
Us teachers, and anyone who lives with us, knows that the idea of a teacher only being at work from 9 to 3 is not only madness but also quite impossible if we are doing our job properly.

So what do we do outside the hours of 9 to 3? Perhaps it’s time to let the wider community in on the ‘secret life of teachers’…

**Setting Up, Packing Up, Locating Resources, Liaising with Colleagues**

Our lunch times, and before and after school are generally spent doing such things as photocopying, binding activity books, finding textbooks, creating worksheets, trawling through library shelves to find picture books that contain plenty of words with the ‘sound of the week’, or finding poetry containing examples of personification.

We can spend half an hour squeezing paint into egg cartons, washing up paintbrushes, cleaning up vomit or wee from the carpet, laminating posters and games, pinning up student artworks, filing worksheets and student work samples, dusting the cupboards, and wiping down the desks. We spend time collecting test tubes/paint bottles/glitter/fossil samples/percussion instruments etc. for upcoming lessons.

We trawl the Internet for a video that helps explain states of matter, or for photos showing what life was like a hundred years ago. We inform colleagues about issues they need to be aware of with particular students, such as sickness, parent divorce, behavioural problems, and academic needs.

**Meetings, Emails & Consultations**

My current school begins each week with a 15 minute administration meeting on Monday mornings, to discuss upcoming events and issues for the week ahead. On Tuesday afternoons from 3:15 to 5pm we have professional development, and on Wednesday afternoons we have a team meeting, where team issues and planning are discussed and worked through.

Throughout the year, we receive constant emails and have meetings with school counsellors, parents, and executive staff to discuss a range of issues, from a child being bullied on the playground, to our own career development, to a student being sent to school with McDonalds for lunch every day.

**Planning, Assessing & Reporting**

As primary school teachers, we teach reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, maths, science, geography, history, arts, music, drama, dance, and personal...
development/ health/ physical education. Phew!! So on average, that’s about 15 or so unit plans we need to develop throughout the year, and then from that, about 5-6 different lessons per day.

For each of these 25-30 weekly lessons to plan for, we also need to find or make resources (worksheets, games, flashcards, literature units PowerPoint presentations, online videos, etc.) to go with them, and mark and analyse the work that students produce.

At the end of each unit, assessment tasks need to be created, administered, marked against assessment rubrics (also created by us) and analysed. We then record student results and many of us create MS Excel graphs and charts to provide visual representations of student achievement. After this process, we compare and check our marking against that of other teachers in the same year level, in order to ensure our grading is fair across the board- a process called moderation, which can sometimes take hours for just one assessment item.

Then, twice a year, we have student reports. This is often a case of multiple weekends of working 9-5 as we laboriously look through each student’s assessment tasks and results, wording comments, rewording them, and editing them. Spending multiple weekends writing reports all day, as well as squeezing in time for planning lessons for the upcoming week, is utterly exhausting, and families of teachers know that at these two times of the year, their teaching family member is not part of the family. They don’t resurface again until reports are done!

Once or twice a year, parents are usually invited to visit us for an interview as well. Last year I had 28 children in my class, and every set of parents had an interview. My school was wonderful enough to provide a day for me to do these interviews, but five parents could not come on the allocated day, so even in this wonderful scenario, I had five interviews of 15-30 minutes to fit in after school that week. Many schools are unable to provide any time for interviews.

Social and Emotional Development of Students

Lunch times and before and after school are often taken up with conflict resolution, working with students who have been fighting, are being bullied, or are having trouble making or maintaining friendships. This can involve lengthy discussions with groups of students, parents, and sometimes executive staff members and school counsellors, as we try to determine the cause of the problems, develop strategies for improving the situation, and determine if any consequences are needed for students at fault.

As teachers, we also deal with the vast range of issues students are going through in their private lives at home. Almost every year I have been teaching, a student in my class has had a parent battling cancer. As the child’s teacher, this can involve many heart-breaking conversations with both the child and parent, helping the parent find appropriate resources to help them speak with their child about the cancer, as well as lots of consoling, comforting, and talking through their fears with them. I have had a student announce her father’s cancer during news time, had a parent cry in front of me as they told me their cancer diagnosis and that they didn’t know how to tell their child, and I have had a child send me a private letter asking me “What does throat cancer do to you?”

We spend a great deal of time each year in meetings with parents and counsellors trying to help address the needs of children with a vast range of social, emotional and academic issues. This often involves us spending months documenting daily evidence of a child’s behaviours and abilities, and filling in various psychological and medical forms and checklists in order to assist in the diagnosis of language disorders, giftedness, autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, and more.

We watch on as our students act out, or become angry, sad, naughty, hysterical, or silent, when a pet or grandparent has died, or their parents have split up, got divorced, started living with a new partner, been injured, come out of the closet, or had an affair. Each time, we need to take the time to talk with the child or families, determine what is upsetting the child, and help the child to come to terms with the situation in the most sensitive way possible.
We have assisted girls who have come to us, awkward and embarrassed to tell us they have just started their period and don’t know what it is, or what to do. And we have spent mornings before school helping feed and clothe children suffering parental neglect, helped these children with homework and projects so they aren’t the only one in the class who hasn’t done it, and sat with children after school while they waited for their parents who turned up over an hour late. We have had conversations with students, counsellors and parents about students who have hinted at possible sexual or physical abuse, and have made nervous, heart-breaking phone calls to Care & Protection.

Weekends & Stand-down Time
Teachers are required to do 20 hours per year of professional development outside of teaching hours and normal after-school activities. This means toddling off to lectures, seminars, workshops or even postgraduate study on weekends and in term breaks. We often spend part of our summer holidays packing up our old classrooms, and preparing for our new classes - ducking into school to set up tables and chairs, laminate name tags, bag labels and book labels, organise classroom resources and furniture, and meet with ex-teachers, counsellors and parents of students who have special needs.

During the year, stand-down time may be taken up at least in part, by reading class novels in order to create literature studies, catching up on marking, tidying our classrooms, refining upcoming lesson plans, collecting & buying resources (think coloured velvet wall hangings & candles for a Harry Potter unit, dice for a maths game, toblerone chocolates to study the shape of triangular prisms, etc.).

Weekends regularly involve a few hours spent planning and collecting resources for the upcoming week. Because we teach so many subjects, we also aren’t always as familiar with all topics as is necessary to teach them well. So in this case, research is needed! We might spend our Sunday mornings researching atoms, how electricity works, world religions, Roman numerals, and more.

And so….
In my experience, the vast majority of teachers work very long hours each week, and put an amazing amount of time, thought, care and passion into their job. They genuinely care about their students and strive to do their best for them. I have felt such heartache, happiness, sorrow, love, pride, joy and excitement for my students over the years. They become such a part of your life for the time you have them. In fact, the first day of the school year has always been my favourite day of the year. I compare it to Christmas - I get 28 presents; 28 unique, amazing surprises to discover and invest my time, energy and thoughts in throughout the year.

If only the wider community could understand just what an amazing, exhausting, wonderful privilege it is to be a teacher! So what do teachers do between 3pm and 9am? The answer is, what don’t we do? //
The good, the bad and the ugly

As a father of six children, David Gillespie thought very long and hard about which school they would go to. On his calculation, educating his family in private schools would have cost him over a million dollars. So, he decided to investigate whether private schools actually provide a better education. The result of his research was *Free Schools: How to get a great education for your kids without spending a fortune.* By Tom Greenwell

**The Good**

The headline conclusion of *Free Schools* is that private schools are a waste of money: they don’t provide superior academic outcomes to public schools. Gillespie argues that with respect to standardised test scores: “Studies have consistently shown that when you adjust for the socioeconomic status of the children in the systems, all three Australian systems are equally effective…” While this is not a new finding - and Gillespie seems less interested in the great values public schools impart – it’s a powerful message to other parents tempted to think exclusive fee-paying schools are the answer.

Gillespie also looks at the broader education landscape. His account of what the highest performing education systems are doing could be right out of our Enterprise Agreement claim. He focuses on Shanghai and emphasises the value of mentoring; research; feedback; and lesson observations, facilitated by reduced face-to-face hours. The comparison he makes is striking. “A Chinese teacher spends just ten to twelve hours a week with their class whereas their Australian peer is slogging it out for 20 hours a week (almost twice as much of their time as a teacher is spent in front of their class.)”
The Bad

Unfortunately, as Gillespie ventures into territory beyond his experience and expertise, his book becomes increasingly tendentious. This is most apparent in his deep hostility to unionism in general and the AEU in particular. His thesis is that once upon a time the AEU was a genteel professional association but in the 60s we became a militant trade union.

Perhaps the clearest indication of his deeply anti-union bias is his take on the first time our NSW counterparts - Teachers’ Federation - struck in October 1968. On Gillespie’s own account the strike took place because there was a majority member vote in the face of a Government refusal to negotiate on maximum class sizes of 49 (average 36); provision of relief teachers only after 4 days of absence; and salaries. On the day of the strike, the NSW Government requested $5 million in extra funding from the Commonwealth and, a few days later, added $1 million to the education budget.

Gillespie actually thinks this was a bad thing. He seems to believe that taking action to reduce class sizes from 49 was an instance of teachers pursuing our own interests to the detriment of students – rather than a case of improving learning conditions and working conditions.

Gillespie regards the AEU’s significant responsibility for class-size reductions as Exhibit A in his case for our pernicious influence. The effect of class size reductions is the subject of incredibly extensive study in which scholars typically wield meta-studies. Gillespie has just two case studies. He just doesn’t consider – or even mention - the extensive evidence that reduced class sizes significantly improve student outcomes.

The gold standard in this kind of research is large-scale randomized trials such as the Tennessee STAR project and the Wisconsin SAGE project. In these studies, students were randomly assigned to classes of different sizes in order to isolate the impact of class size from other variables. They found that students placed in smaller classes performed better than their peers in larger classes across all grades and geographic regions. Sadly, Gillespie just ignores the evidence that doesn’t fit his conclusion.

On his own account, the examples he mentions have unique characteristics. In a case he uses from California, class size reductions occurred so rapidly, 28,500 new teachers (an increase of 46%) were brought in over just 3 years. Unsurprisingly, this meant many teachers in the system were inexperienced and this negatively affected quality. A warning against extremely rapid change perhaps, but hardly evidence against class size reductions per se.

Furthermore, Gillespie contends that, as a union, we protect bad teachers and seek to censor the reality that there are better and worse teachers. He doesn’t refer to AITSL certification at all, any of the performance management mechanisms in our Agreements, or any statements we’ve made. It’s just caricature.

The Ugly

Education policy is a hotly contested space and it’s always valuable and invigorating to engage with different views. Sadly, much of the time Gillespie seeks to disparage the basic motivations of those he disagrees with. So, on Gillespie’s account, the reason the AEU differs from him on class sizes is not because we interpret the evidence differently but because “Unions like smaller class sizes because any reduction in class sizes leads to a significant increase in the number of potential fee-paying members.” (p.51) Really. His argument gets that puerile.

This reflects an approach which is not only offensive but intellectually sloppy. Around issues like class sizes and teacher performance, Gillespie tends to cherry-pick evidence and consistently fails to consider counter-evidence, opposing views or prominent objections to his conclusions. Moreover, he tends to attribute straw-man positions to his opponents without quoting or otherwise demonstrating they hold the positions he ascribes to them.

Gillespie’s interrogation of the myth that ‘you get what you pay for’ in education is a very welcome contribution. Sadly, he obscures his important message with a series of unfortunate prejudices about education policy and education unions.
Ten Steps to kick-start your sub-branch in 2015

Active Sub-branches allow us to make decisions and take action together. Here’s ten steps to kick-start your Sub-branch in 2015.

1. Join Conversations
   The start of the school year is the best time to ask new colleagues to join our union. This is a responsibility of every one of us. ‘Join packs’ to give to new staff at your school will be sent to Sub-branch Executives shortly. Check out Andy Jennings guide to recruitment conversations (p.15).

2. Membership Check
   This is a job for Sub-branch Secretaries. The AEU ACT office team will send you the list we have of current members of your Sub-branch and a form for you to complete and return to the office (aeuact@aeuact.org.au, fax: 62731828). The form asks if any members have moved sites in 2015. We also ask that you add any new colleagues that have arrived at your site and indicate whether, if they’re not already AEU members, they have been asked to join.

3. February Sub-branch Meeting
   We encourage all Sub-branches to meet in February to elect 2015 Sub-branch representatives and consider any developments that have occurred as part of EA negotiations. Nomination forms will be provided in the Sub-branch Executive Guides that will be distributed early in Term 1. The Guides will also include the number of Councillors your Sub-branch is entitled to. Completed forms can be submitted at February 14 Council.

4. February 14 Council
   This is the last meeting for councillors elected at the start of 2014 before your term ends in March. In the past, Council hasn’t met this early but we think it will really help the process of getting sub-branches going in the new year. It will also be a chance to update councillors on any developments in EA negotiations. This meeting will also receive the 2014 annual report. NB: This meeting is indeed on February 14 despite the AEU Planner having it on the 21st.

5. President and Principal Meeting
   When your Sub-branch has elected representatives for 2015, it’s a great idea for the 2015 President to organise a meeting with the Principal. An effective Sub-branch establishes a constructive dialogue between staff and the school leadership and the President-Principal relationship is at the heart of this dialogue. It can be useful to: discuss when Sub-branch meetings will be held through the year; talk about whether the Principal intends to attend Sub-branch meetings; to organise for regular meetings after each Sub-branch meeting where staff concerns can be represented; and to schedule the first meeting of the Workload Committee. Come along on Thursday February 26, AEU ACT is hosting a forum for AEU Principals and Sub-branch Presidents at the Centre for Teaching & Learning.
6. Workload Committee Meeting

Workload Committees work best when they’re proactive rather than reactive. A meeting early in the year is very valuable. The following matters are useful to consider: scheduling of meetings and other activities; consultation about any new initiatives; any out-dated non-mandatory programs or procedures that can be shed iv. are practices and systems as efficient as possible? v. The working arrangements for vocational education teachers. vi. any workload issue that is causing concern amongst staff. If you’d like some support come along to our ‘Making Workload Committees Work’ training session at the Centre for Teaching & Learning on Thursday, February 19.

7. Supporting New Educators

New Educator Contact Officers should meet with New Educators as early in the year as is possible. It’s the best time to ensure New Educators have the reduced face-to-face hours they’re entitled to; and everyone is aware that they are entitled to New Educator Support Days. It may also be helpful to check in whether New Educators are clear about probation and TQI registration. Also, please spread the word about the New Educator Conference in Bundanoon on February 28 & March 1. New Educators and New Educator Contact Officers are invited to our information session at the Centre for Teaching & Learning on February 12.

8. March 21 Council

This is the first Council meeting for 2015 Councillors. NB. This meeting is indeed on the 21st despite the AEU planner having it on March 14th. Especially if you’re new(ish) to Council, you might like to come along to our training session on ‘Being an effective AEU Councillor’ at the Centre for Teaching & Learning on Thursday March 12.

9. Birrigai AEU Leaders Retreat, March 27&28

We had our first Birrigai AEU Leaders Retreat in 2014 and it was a great success. It is an excellent opportunity to participate in an intensive series of workshops on leading our union in your workplace. It also gives you the chance to meet lots of other active AEU members and share experiences.

10. Preparing for Public Education Week

Public Education Week 2015 is going to be bigger than ever. Mem Fox will be our special guest speaker at the May 29 Dinner. Why not book a table of colleagues? Also don’t forget to nominate anyone you know who would be a worthy recipient of one of the Public Education Awards and to register for the Public Education Showcase. //

Update Your Details – Just Call Tracey on 6272 7900

Are you at a new school this year? Have you moved house recently? Have you got a promotion to an SLC, SLB or SLA position recently?

If yes, we hope it’s going well! Please let us know your new details. It’s just a very quick call - 6272 7900 or email – aeuact@aeuact.org.au.
Be a leader in your sub-branch!

Being a Sub-branch representative is a really rewarding way of playing an active role in our union. It allows you to make a positive difference in the lives of your students and colleagues and to play a part in the broader affairs of our union.

The ‘Sub-branch’ is the union at your site. Each year, members of every Sub-branch choose their representatives. Last year’s Sub-branch Executive (that’s the President, Deputy President & Secretary) will call a meeting early in Term 1 to conduct this process. They will have nomination forms for all the positions that need to be filled. If there is more than one nomination for a position, a ballot should be conducted. Here’s what’s involved in each role.

**Sub-branch President**
The chief job of the President is to arrange, advertise and chair regular Sub-branch meetings at your site. As the leader, it is the President’s job to be the voice of the Sub-branch. So, it is primarily the President’s job to represent individual and collective grievances to the school leadership. The President should also ensure the Sub-branch is always represented at meetings of ACT Branch Council.

**Sub-branch Deputy President**
The Deputy President carries out the responsibilities of the President in their absence and assists as part of the Sub-branch Executive (see below). The Deputy President should help the President support colleagues who encounter any issues in your workplace.

**Sub-branch Secretary**
The Secretary is responsible for the administration of the Sub-branch and ensuring all members are kept informed about the union’s activities. This includes and producing agendas and minutes for Sub-branch meetings and forwarding any resolutions to the AEU ACT office (62727900, aeuact@aeuact.org.au). The Secretary also has an important role in liaising with the AEU ACT office to ensure records of members at your site are correct and keeping the AEU noticeboard up to date in your workplace.
Sub-branch Executive (President; Deputy President & Secretary)
The Sub-branch Executive is comprised of the President, Deputy President & Secretary. The Sub-branch Executive conducts the affairs of the Sub-branch between meetings. All members of the Sub-branch Executive have a role in supporting individual members who face industrial issues. While it is the responsibility of all members to ask non-members to join the AEU, the Sub-branch Executive should lead this effort. Members of the Sub-branch Executive may also be Councillors.

Councillors
ACT Branch Council is AEU ACT’s ultimate decision-making body and has representatives from every Sub-branch. For example, when the ACT Government makes an Enterprise Agreement offer, it’s up to Council to decide whether to accept it. The job of Councillors is to attend Council meetings (held on 8 Saturdays over the course of the year), represent the interests and concerns of your Sub-branch and to report back from each meeting.

Workload Committee Representative
Our Enterprise Agreement requires each school to have a Workload Committee with an AEU representative on it. The role of the AEU Workload Committee representative is to take up workload issues with the school leadership in meetings of the Workload Committee. Such issues may include: scheduling of meetings and other activities; new initiatives; out-dated non-mandatory programs or procedures; inefficient practices and systems; working arrangements for vocational education teachers; Any workload issue that is causing concern amongst staff.

New Educator Contact Officer
We all know how hard it is being a New Educator. The role of the New Educator Contact Officer is to: ensure New Educators know about and receive their entitlement to reduced face-to-face hours and New Educator Support Days; inform New Educators about their broader rights. New Educator Contact Officers should also talk to new colleagues about joining our union and spread the word about opportunities for New Educators to get involved. New Educator Contact Officers often aren’t New Educators themselves.

Women’s Contact Officer
The AEU has a proud tradition of fighting for equal pay, permanent part-time work and maternity leave. However, women still face significant issues in our workplaces. The Women’s Contact Officer is a workplace contact for the AEU on gender equity and women and girls’ education issues. The Women’s Contact Officer provides information about issues facing women, our rights and encourages the involvement of women in leading our union. Women’s Contact Officers are supported through regular women’s network meetings.

Workplace Safety Representative
The Workplace Safety Representative’s powers and responsibilities come from the Work Health & Safety Act (2011). Essentially, the job is to monitor your workplace to ensure it is a safe physical and mental environment and to pursue any issues that arise. WSRs are entitled to a week’s training on request. NB: The custom is for the AEU to conduct elections for Workplace Safety Representatives but the Workplace Safety Representative does not have to be an AEU member.
Slater and Gordon is proud to partner with the AEU ACT Branch

Slater and Gordon has partnered with unions and their members since 1935. We understand the legal challenges you face at work and everyday life.

Our services include:

+ Workers Compensation
+ Industrial and Employment Law
+ Motor Vehicle Claims
+ Superannuation and TPD Claims
+ Family Law
+ Medical Negligence Claims
+ Public Liability Claims
+ Wills and Estate
+ Conveyancing
+ Other legal services

Benefits for AEU Members:
AEU ACT Branch members are entitled to:

+ Initial obligation-free consultation
+ A Free Standard will*
+ 25% off Fixed Fee Conveyancing*
+ 10% off Family Law Fixed Fees*
+ Discounted rates for services

GET IN TOUCH
AEU ACT Branch office
02 6272 7900
for a referral to Slater and Gordon
slatergordon.com.au

*Conditions apply. Standard wills may not be suitable for all estate types. Fixed Fees excluded disbursements which are charged at cost. See slatergordon.com.au for details.
Term 1 training and information sessions

New Educator Information Session
4 – 6pm, February 12
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
This session is for New Educators and New Educator Contact Officers. We all know the first years of teaching are very challenging. This session is designed to provide the key information New Educators need. Whether it’s reduced face-to-face hours, New Educator Support Days, contract and probationary processes; TQI registration or saving time by sharing and collaborating with colleagues – this session will help ensure New Educators are in the know.

School Assistants Information Session
Tuesday February 17
4 – 6pm
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
This session is designed to show School Assistants how you can get involved with the AEU and become an active member. Find out what Union is all about and gain information about your Enterprise Agreement and what is happening with the School Assistant Classification Review. It is a great opportunity to ask questions, whether it’s about leave entitlements, hours of work or anything else.

Sub-branch Executive Training
4 – 6pm, February 18
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
Whether you’re relatively new to a Sub-Branch Executive role or would just like to learn more about your role, this session is for you. It will set out the key elements of the roles of President, Deputy President and Secretary and provide a forum to ask questions and share experiences.

Making Workload Committees Work
4 – 6pm, February 19
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
This session for AEU Workload Committee Representatives sets out how to get the Workload Committee going; who should sit on it; what kind of issues the Committee should address; how decisions are made; and the AEU rep’s relationship with the Sub-branch. School leaders also welcome.

Navigating Annual Professional Discussions
4 – 6pm, February 25
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
Annual professional discussions can be challenging for both teachers and principals. This session is designed to help you feel confident about your rights and responsibilities and the best approach to take to the discussion.

Working together - AEU Principals & Presidents
4 – 6pm, February 26
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
An effective Sub-branch establishes a constructive dialogue between staff and the school leadership and the President-Principal relationship is at the heart of this dialogue. This session is for Principals and Presidents (Deputy Principals and other Sub-branch Executive members are also welcome). It will guide Principals and Presidents through some of the main elements of the relationship and explore key negotiation and communication skills involved.

Workplace Safety Representative Information Session
4 – 6pm, March 4
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
Workplace Safety Representatives play a crucial role in monitoring health and safety issues in our workplaces and pursuing solutions when issues arise. This session with AEU ACT Industrial Officer, Garrett Purtill, and Unions ACT, will take you through key aspects of the role and give you a chance to network with other WSRs.

Being An Effective AEU Councillor
4 – 6pm, March 12
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling
Do you want to move that? Or second it? Or make an amendment or go into Committee? Formal meeting procedure can be pretty confusing and sometimes a little intimidating. It’s crucial to have meeting procedures to allow us to efficiently and effectively make decisions together. This session will explain how it all works and give you confidence to speak up at Council. We’ll also look at the critical task of communicating big decisions and key asks back to colleagues in your workplace.

AEU Leaders Retreat
March 27 & 28
Birrigai
Our first Birrigai Retreat in 2014 was a great success. This two-day intensive course facilitated by AEU ACT Lead Organiser, Andy Jennings, equips you with the knowledge and skills to lead our union in your workplace. You are entitled to apply for Industrial Leave for Friday, March 27.
What’s the role of a Councillor?
Council is AEU ACT’s ultimate decision-making body and has representatives from every Sub-branch. The job of Councillors is to represent the interests and concerns of your Sub-branch and to report back from each meeting. It’s a great way to make a difference in your workplace and play a part in the broader affairs of our union. Each Sub-branch is allocated a Councillor for every 20 members (or part thereof) belonging to the Sub-branch. At the first Sub-branch meeting of the year, councillors and other Sub-branch representatives are elected. If you think you might be interested, you should talk to your current councillors or your Sub-branch President to find out what’s involved.

Resolutions from Term 4 Council Meetings

Resolution on Resignation of Angelo Gavrielatos as Federal President, Passed by AEU ACT Branch Council, November 22
Moved Roger Amey/ Ingrid Bean
The AEU ACT Branch congratulates Angelo Gavrielatos on his appointment to Education International and thanks him for his significant contribution to the Australian Education Union. Branch Council requests that the Secretary communicate this message of thanks to Angelo.

Resolution on MTeach, Passed by AEU ACT Branch Council, November 22
Moved Roger Amey/ Stephen Hood
That all payments to mentors for all practicum placements in all ETD schools be reviewed immediately and be adjusted to a level that as a minimum is equivalent to the NSW payment of $26 per day.
That all PL funds allocated to schools by universities be expended on the teachers who either mentor or supervise the Pre-Service Teachers.

That mentoring teachers have the option to:
- Take the payment as cash.
- Take the payment into their individual school based PL fund, this fund to be accessed only by the teacher and that it be transferable to other schools/workplaces within ETD if they move. That this PL payment not be able to be converted to cash.

That a payment process be negotiated that is the same for all schools, and that once agreed it not be varied.

That a process to monitor workloads of mentoring teachers be implemented and that a required set of conditions be identified under which mentoring teachers can work.

That agreement be sought between the AEU, ETD and the universities that all PSTs be placed only if the environment in the school is suitable to their training needs.

Resolution on School Chaplaincy Program, Passed By AEU ACT Branch Council, November 22

Moved: Ingrid Bean/ Margaret Gummow

Branch Council notes the decision at its meeting on Saturday 21 June 2014: Council welcomes the decision of the High Court to declare the National School Chaplaincy Program unconstitutional. Council notes that a likely outcome of this decision is that the Commonwealth will consider providing block funding to states and territories, and seek to require them to continue the chaplaincy program in schools.

Council respectfully requests that the ACT Government takes the opportunity to re-establish the secular nature of public schooling by ending once and for all the employment of religious chaplains in our public schools. Council requests that the ACT Government re-direct any funding it receives from the Commonwealth into areas of student need, and in particular the employment of a greater number of fully qualified school psychologists and health professionals.

Council notes with disappointment that, despite a number of public statements made by the ACT Education Minister and Chief Minister regarding the importance of secular provision, the ACT Government ceded all ground to the Commonwealth in the negotiations on this matter. The Commonwealth has, for clearly ideologically reasons, mandated the removal of secular student welfare workers from schools and dictated that all workers in the program be sourced from religious organisations.

Council reinforces its demand for the provision of evidence-based support services for all students, by appropriately qualified school psychologists and other health professionals.

Council reiterates its support for our Union’s objective to preserve the secular nature of public schooling. Secular schools provide the optimal environment for people of all religious faiths, or indeed those with no religious faith.

Council acknowledges that some ACT public school communities will be keen to retain their chaplain, due in part to positive relationships that have been formed with that individual.

Council notes that the Commonwealth will be eager to see that the opportunity to have a chaplain will be expanded to as many schools as possible.

Council respectfully requests that members in schools refrain from applying for a chaplain for their school if a chaplain is not currently present in that school.

Council asks each AEU Sub-Branch President and/or other Sub-Branch Executive members to meet with their school principal to discuss the AEU’s position on this matter.

Resolution in Response to ETD Enterprise Agreement Offer, Passed By AEU ACT Branch Council, October 25

Moved: Roger Amey/ Aaron Kingma

AEU ACT Branch Council is deeply disappointed in the ACT Government offer to school teaching staff as received on 24th October 2014.
It is clear, from the offer as written, that the Government has dismissed the core priority and Claim 1 of the AEU ACT Branch log of claims for 2014. This fundamental failure, along with an inadequate pay model which leaves the ACT as no longer nationally competitive, renders the offer completely unacceptable in its current, admittedly sparse, form.

Branch Council notes the following points from the offer:

1. With the exception of once-only payments for teachers achieving certification, the offer is cost neutral, despite six months of bargaining.
2. The salary offer is wholly within the cost envelope of the Gonski 3% guaranteed increase for education funding.
3. Not one extra resource has been found to address the serious issue of excessive teacher workload and the challenge of maintaining sustainable, properly resourced professional learning communities which are key for improved student outcomes.
4. That this offer fails to address the needs of students in ACT public schools, it demonstrates the ACT Government does not adequately value the young people of the ACT.

As a consequence, Council does not view the Government offer to teaching staff dated 24th October 2014 as being worthy of serious consideration by the Union. Furthermore, Council reaffirms our support of the Union’s negotiating team in pressing for the full log of claims as agreed by AEU members in March 2014.

Resolution on Climate Change, Passed By AEU ACT Branch Council, October 25
Moved: Karl-Erik Paasonen / Peter Curtis
Branch Council commends the work of the Pacific Warriors in drawing attention to the effects of the actions of successive Australian governments in promoting and facilitating the export of coal, a major contributor to the process of sea-level rise through global warming. Branch Council also commends the decision taken by the ANU to disinvest its financial holdings in coal production and export despite the hostile campaign run against that decision by the Coalition Government, right wing media and coal industry lobbyists.

Branch Council calls upon the Branch Secretary to communicate in writing with the leaders of all major political parties in the ACT Legislative Assembly, calling upon them to disinvest any financial holdings in BHP Billiton, Anglo American, Peabody Energy, Glencore, Exxon Mobil, as they are the largest-polluting companies in which the ACT government has direct investments. //

2015 Council Dates

February 14
(This is the last meeting for councillors elected in 2014. The 2015 AEU Planner places this meeting on the 21st — that is an error.)

March 21
(This is the first meeting for councillors elected in 2015. The 2015 AEU Planner places this meeting on the 14th — that is an error.)

May 9
June 13
August 8
September 5
October 25 (Annual Conference)
November 21

Meetings of Council are held in the J Block Theatre at CIT Reid, 37 Constitution Avenue, Reid.
ACT Branch Executive – elections in 2015

What’s the role of Executive?
Executive comprises of the Secretary; Branch President and Vice-Presidents; 8 General Membership Representatives; a TAFE Representative; and a Preschool Representative. AEU ACT staff attend Executive in an *ex officio* capacity.

Executive conducts the affairs of our union between meetings of Branch Council. It meets 14 times a year on Tuesday evenings. It is responsible for overseeing the finances of our union. Members of Executive also sit on Branch Council.

Executive Elections – Calling for Nominations
The current term for the 8 General Membership Representatives and the TAFE and Preschool Representatives expires on June 30. Therefore, elections for the two-year term beginning on July 1, 2015, will be held this semester. All financial members are invited to consider nominating – it is a great way of becoming deeply involved in your union and developing a broad understanding of education across the ACT. Nominations will be called for during Term 1. If you’re interested, keep an eye on your email and the website. Please contact AEU ACT Branch Secretary, Glenn Fowler, if you would like to chat about the role (6272 7900, glenn.fowler@aeuact.org.au).

2015 Executive Dates
- February 10: July 28
- March 3: August 25
- March 24: September 15
- April 28: October 13
- May 12: November 3
- June 2: November 24
- June 30: December 8

All ACT Branch Executive meetings are held in the United Voice Boardroom at 40 Brisbane Avenue, Barton.

A passionate teacher is hard to forget

We’re rewarding seven passionate students with a $5,000 Future Teacher Scholarship. If you’re studying at university to become a teacher, our scholarship will help you focus on your future and not worry about your finances.

Plus, to thank you for your effort, we’re also rewarding 10 runner-ups with $250 each!

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*A membership eligibility applies to join Teachers Mutual Bank (TMB). ^ Conditions apply. Full terms & conditions available at tmbank.com.au/fts. ABN 30 087 650 459 AFSL/Australian Credit Licence 238981 | 005642-FUT-1014-PDVACT
Connecting, Learning, Sharing

New Educators’ Facing Challenges Together

With all the challenges of being a New Educator, it’s crucial to work together and share the load. That’s why the AEU holds a number of conferences through the year to bring New Educators together to share experiences, identify common problems and work together to achieve solutions.

**AEU National New Educators Conference - October 2014**

Last October, Sam Townsend (Lake Ginninderra College) and Amelia Ghirardello (Narrabundah College) and AEU ACT Organiser, Therese Tonna, had a fantastic weekend at the National New Educators Conference in Brisbane. They give an insight into their experience.

**Sam Townsend says:**
The 2014 AEU New Educator Conference, held in balmy Brisbane over the weekend of October 18-19, began with an impassioned keynote speech from AEU Federal President, Angelo Gavrielatos. The emotional and heated address was the result of recent media attention surrounding Barry Spurr and his derogatory ‘leaked’ exchanges.

This set the tone for the weekend as motivated delegates from around the country engaged in a series of workshops, lectures and discussions surrounding leadership skills, recruitment, teacher workload, ways to implement effective social media campaigns and sustainability.

Highlights included Union Moment Stories from Bronwyn Caldwell, Kate Ruttiman and Adam Surmaz; tales and experiences told by individuals with varying backgrounds and journeys, all reiterating the bond and solidarity we share as educators in this unique profession.

**Amelia Ghirardello says:**
Thank you to the ACT AEU team for giving me the opportunity to attend the National New Educators Conference.

It was a real eye-opener about the Union movement and the state of education nationally and internationally.

I really enjoyed meeting Angelo Gavrielatos, an inspiring and excellent orator; learning about the challenges in the teaching profession nationally and internationally from NSW Teachers Federation President, Maurie Mulheron;
and hearing about the state of education in New Zealand, Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

It was refreshing to hear from other new educators in other Australian states about the common issues we have, including workload and the small number of new educator days offered and how difficult it is to use these days. //

Five Things New Educators Need to Know

1. First year teachers are entitled to a reduction in our face-to-face teaching loads
As a first year teacher, you have a reduced face-to-face load: a maximum of 20 hours per week in preschools and primary schools (down from 21.5) and a maximum of 18 hours per week in high schools and colleges (down from 19). We all know our first year of teaching is particularly challenging – we won this condition in 2011 to help relieve some of the pressure. How you use your extra hour away from the classroom can be negotiated with your supervisor; for planning and preparation; lesson observation and team teaching; consultation with your mentor. It’s ultimately about helping you.

2. New educators are entitled to 15 days release from face-to-face teaching
As a new educator, you’re entitled to 15 days release from face-to-face teaching over your first three years. You can use these days to observe other teachers, receive coaching and mentoring or engage in other professional learning. If you are encountering any difficulties accessing this entitlement speak to your New Educator Contact Officer, Sub-branch President or call the AEU ACT office team on 6272 7900.

3. You are entitled to recognition of additional qualifications and prior experience
If you have gained a tertiary qualification (over and above the four years full time study leading to a teaching qualification) you may be entitled to move up one increment in the pay scale. You just need to attach a certified true copy of your academic transcript to a completed Application for recognition of additional qualifications that can be obtained from https://index.ed.act.edu.au/.

You’re entitled to advance one step in the salary scale for every year you have worked as a qualified teacher in the school education industry, every two years you’ve worked in a tertiary or other education setting, or every three years you’ve worked in a occupation related to teaching. To apply, attach a Statement of Service from your employer with a completed Application for recognition of prior experience form, obtainable from https://index.ed.act.edu.au/.

4. Contract teachers still get holiday pay
Teachers on a long-term contract are paid the same salary as a permanent teacher of similar experience and qualifications. Full-time contracts covering a full year accrue 20 days recreation leave and 18 days personal leave. Contracts of less than a school year accrue leave on a pro rata basis. If you’re employed on a long term contract on either side of a term break you are entitled to payment over the holiday period in between.

5. There’s lots of support!
New Educators are invited to the information session at the Centre for Teaching & Learning on February 12 and the New Educator Conference at Bundanoon on February 28 & March 1.

More info
NEW EDUCATOR INFORMATION SESSION
4 – 6pm, February 12
Centre for Teaching & Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Come to the New Educators’ Conference at Bundanoon February 28 and March 1
Every year we join new educators from NSW for a weekend in scenic Bundanoon. We’d love you to be part of the AEU ACT delegation this year.

It’s a two-day conference open to teachers in your first three years of employment with the ACT Education & Training Directorate. The conference will explain employment conditions, teachers’ rights, issues for probationary teachers as well as practical professional workshops focusing on classroom management and pedagogy.

Participants will also discover the support and member services offered by our union. We receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from beginning teachers who attend Bundanoon. As the conference draws on AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers you will be able to use it as Teacher-Identified Professional Learning to meet TQI requirements.

Go to www.aeuact.org.au/events for information about expressing interest.
AEU ACT Organiser, Therese Tonna, looks back at School Assistant successes in 2014 and what’s coming up in 2015.

What a year we’ve had!
The last 12 months have been a very active time for School Assistants in the AEU, giving us a great platform to build on in 2015. 2014 saw our first School Assistant Councillor (Sue Thompson, Turner School), our first School Assistant Sub-branch President (Georg Cygan, Lyneham High), our first School Assistant on Branch Executive (Julie Sherd, Gold Creek School) and of course our first School Assistant Dinner!

School Assistant Review
The School Assistant Classification Review, arising out of the Enterprise Agreement, is currently underway. It is a mechanism through which we can continue to win big gains for School Assistants. The purpose of the Review is to:

• Develop a classification structure that supports career development for School Assistants
• Provide clear work expectations, including the required skills and qualifications, for School Assistants.
• Consider the relationship between any changed expectations and appropriate remuneration
• Develop clear and transparent processes for the administration of relevant allowances.

All School Assistants will have the opportunity to have their say through various methods including:
• Focus Groups
• Surveys
• One-on-one interviews
• Attendance at appropriate forums

I encourage you to contact me (6272 7900, therese.tonna@aeuact.org.au) if you would like to be involved or have any questions or queries. Information will also be available on Index (schools bulletin).

AEU School Assistant Goals for 2015
Thank you to all the School Assistants who attended our Annual Conference workshop late last year. At the conference, we broke up into workshops to identify our union’s main goals in 2015.

The goals School Assistants identified were:

• Clarification of the role of school assistants. There is currently a lack of clarity about the job of school assistants which sometimes leads to confusion amongst school assistants, teachers and managers. This will be a primary objective of discussions with ETD under the School Assistants Classifications Review.

• Incremental/Salary advancement/allowances for all classifications aligned to each School Assistant position and qualifications. Again, we will pursue this objective through the School Assistant Classifications Review.

• One school-based Agreement, either as part of the Teachers Agreement or just for School Assistants. This is a long-term one!

By AEU ACT Organiser, Therese Tonna
A Great 12 Months for AEU School Assistants

Harrison School Assistants proudly wearing their AEU School Assistant shirts.

Jen, Therese, Julie and Jayson in South Australia at their Annual School Assistants Conference.

Enjoying ourselves at the first School Assistants Dinner.

With South Australian School Assistants at their annual conference.

Jayson Perrin at the South Australian School Assistants Conference.

Wanniassa Hills Primary School celebrating 2014 National School Support Staff.

School Assistants at Wanniassa Hills enjoying 2014 National School Support Staff Week.

Georg Cygan from Lyneham High -- our first School Assistant Sub-branch President.

School Assistants enjoying the first AEU School Assistants Dinner.
AEU ACT Industrial Officer, Garrett Purtill, explains some new features in the new Enterprise Agreement for CIT teachers.

Q. What has changed for casuals between the old and the new CIT Enterprise Agreements?

Two things have changed:

In old CIT EBA Clause 14.2.1, ‘a sufficient period of time’ which can trigger a request by the occupant of a position for that position to be advertised as either permanent or contract ‘means employment over four consecutive semesters with an average of 8hrs or more per teaching week.’

In new CIT EBA Clause 14.4.1, ‘a sufficient period’ means ‘employment over four consecutive semesters with no less than 144hrs during each individual semester’.

This change was made for two reasons:

to better test the viability of the position for progression to an on-going one.

So, theoretically, there is no cap on the number of actual hours per engagement. There is certainly no cap of 8hrs per engagement.

At new CIT EBA Clause 40.2 & 40.3, Qualification Requirements, casual teachers are required, for the first time, to have a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (either at the commencement of the CIT EBA ie 20 Oct 2014 or within 12months). This has been done so all teachers are on a level qualifications playing field.

Q. Do the new provisions for casuals exclude ‘guest’ lecturers or presenters?

No, far from it. Many courses contain ‘guest’ lecturers or presenters who bring a special expertise to a course. The new CIT EBA does not upset those arrangements. However, it is important to remember that the ‘guest’ be under the supervision of the course teacher and not in substitution for them.

Q. How is a casual defined and did anything change in the new Agreement?

A casual is defined as an employee engaged on a non-regular and non on-going basis ie each engagement stands alone. Where the employment is of a regular and on-going basis, then the job should be covered by other than a casual engagement. The hours of work...
for a casual are not stated in the CIT EBA or included in the definition of a casual. However, where a casual is engaged for more than 8 hours, the health and wellbeing of that employee should be seriously assessed.

There has been no change made to the definition of a casual in the new CIT EBA.

Q. The new CIT EBA has made some changes to overtime. What are they and when do they commence?

A2.1: No changes have been made to overtime until 1 Jan 2015. So it is THE status quo of 70hrs per calendar year, without Chief Executive approval, until that date [see CIT EBA Clause 22.12.1]. However, from 1 Jan 2015, the overtime limit, without Chief Executive approval, reduces to 20hrs per calendar year. [see CIT EBA Clause 22.12.2]. Where overtime exceeds that limit, it will trigger a review of the overtime workload which may result in the engagement of additional staff or redeployment of some or all of that workload. [see CIT EBA Clause 22.13.1]. With CE approval, it will still be possible to work more than 20hrs per calendar year.

Q. Why has the AEU agreed to this change?

AEU members have been pressing the Union for some time that their workload is excessive and they have attributed this to two factors: overtime; and teachers having to perform increasingly non-teaching tasks. Consequently, AEU included these two items on its Log of Claims.

AEU has taken the view that overtime is a signal that there is additional work available and if it is of an on-going [rather than incidental] nature, then there needs to be an analysis of how that work should be performed and by whom. One outcome maybe that some casual teachers could be offered contracts for on-going work.

Q. What does the new CIT Enterprise Agreement say about workload?

It has been a long time since the teaching tasks have been examined. Teaching and non-teaching tasks have grown like topsy and teachers absorbed the tasks they perform to fill the evolving space. Teachers told the AEU in the preparation of the Log of Claims that it was time to draw a line in the sand.

To identify the teaching and non-teaching tasks teachers found acceptable and the non-teaching tasks they did not, AEU & CIT conducted three, consultant facilitated, focus groups of teachers in Oct 2013 as part of the enterprise bargaining negotiations. The teachers nominated 15 non-teaching tasks which they said reduced their planning and preparation time for their face to face teaching tasks and which could be performed by non-teachers. Those 15 tasks now appear in the CIT EBA at Clause 25.5.

Q. How will this examination of workload be conducted?

Workplace groups of teachers will examine these non-teaching tasks from early in 2015 with the objective of re-deploying them to non-teaching staff.

At present, AEU & CIT are conferring on the practical operational aspects and timetabling of this agenda of work. This work is to be finish by 20 Oct 2015. //
A conversation with
Penny Gilmour

Penny Gilmour was the Secretary of the ACT Branch of the AEU from 2008 to 2012 and (worked in a range of roles in our union before that). She’s now an Associate Member of our branch and Professional Officer in the AEU Federal Office in Melbourne. Educator caught up with Penny to find out what she’s been up to.

Q. You spent time working with the union movement in Vietnam through APHEDA Union Aid Abroad. What were you doing exactly? How did you find your time overseas?

A. I applied for a one-year placement as an APHEDA Union Aid Abroad volunteer working on their Union Capacity-Building Project in Vietnam. In this project APHEDA works with officials in the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (a peak body like the ACTU) and with regional officials in Federations of Labour (a bit like regional Labour Councils) to provide union education training support for union officials who deliver union training in workplaces. Vietnam’s labour laws are changing and encouraging more authentic roles for unions, so it was an interesting time to be involved in this work.

My job was to mentor and support trainers, including providing training observation & feedback, evaluation and coaching; review existing curriculum, in consultation with the Vietnamese trainers; write new curriculum as required, in consultation with VGCL and FOL officials; hand over new curriculum to Vietnamese trainers by conducting “train the trainer” sessions; and write reports as required – monthly for APHEDA, and as part of feedback on courses or trainers.

I enjoyed the role very much, and I worked with some wonderfully dedicated, enthusiastic and talented people. It was quite challenging to structure training sessions that covered the material well, but took account of the limits on the content that could be delivered because of the time required for translation back and forth throughout the session. I tried hard to learn how to introduce myself in Vietnamese, and my attempts always broke the ice by causing everyone to laugh at my poor accent!!

The Vietnamese trainers enjoy working with Australian union trainers because of our emphasis on active, adult learning.
techniques, and our willingness to be quite flexible and informal, both of which are often quite different to the passive, lecture-style training they are used to. The biggest technical challenge for the trainers is translating active learning techniques into the delivery of other curriculum that has not been written from that perspective. It was especially rewarding to see some of the trainers really understand the approach and successfully adjust their delivery of content to keep their sessions on dry topics like the law active and engaging for the participants.

Q. You’re now the Professional Officer in the AEU Federal Office in Melbourne. What does this role involve?

There are a number of Professional Officers in Federal Office, but others have specific briefs and so have titles such as Research Officer, Industrial Officer, Aboriginal Education Officer and Women’s Officer. My job is a new position, which is exciting because the tasks are developing. The key tasks at the moment are around supporting and managing our relationships with stakeholders and allies, undertaking work in support of various AEU campaigns, co-ordinating the compilation of the Australian Educator journal, assisting with administration of some of our international work, writing reports & correspondence, and – of course – “other duties as required”.

It’s an interesting role and I am enjoying the fact that after 25 years working in teacher education unions, there are tasks that are new to me so I learn something every day!

Q. How do you find the federal perspective on our union? Has that given you any new insights?

Because I was a member of Federal Executive when I was ACT Branch Secretary, and I’ve attended many other national meetings and conferences over the years, the Federal perspective is not new to me. I think the capacity of the AEU’s Branches and Associated Bodies to unite across the country as we pursue the AEU’s national campaigns is a real strength. Having said that, there’s always a big difference between being a visitor to Federal Office for a meeting or a conference, and being part of the day-to-day work and machinery that make the Federal activities happen. I’m enjoying the different task-set and the opportunity to work with the talented and committed people who work in the Federal Office.

Q. Do you miss Canberra? Are you enjoying living in Melbourne?

I don’t miss winter in Canberra at all, but I certainly miss people and places. And I really miss the long hot summer! After 12 years with the ACT Branch, I have lots of memories and many good friends to visit in Canberra so I’m lucky in that respect!

I am enjoying Melbourne very much. It’s the third Australian capital city I’ve called home. When I first came here I lived in Richmond, which is the heart of Vietnamese Melbourne, so that was a great way to transition back into Aussie living after my year in Vietnam! Melbourne always makes me think of trams, and I loved using them when I was a visitor. Now that I live south of the city I can walk to work, but I still really enjoy the fact that I can jump on a tram whenever I need to get around. //
Three decades of combatting sex-based discrimination

Heather Page from Forrest Primary was the 2014 Anna Stewart Officer. The Anna Stewart Program gives an AEU woman member a chance to spend a week in the AEU ACT office. As part of her time in the office, Heather researched our progress in combatting sex-based discrimination – and the ongoing challenges.

Legislating against sex-based discrimination

2014 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the introduction of sexual discrimination legislation in Australia.

Women’s organisations had been advocating for the recognition of sexual discrimination since the 1970’s. Within the union movement, activists had also been campaigning for women’s rights such as maternity leave, the provision of childcare as well as legislation to address sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

In 1983, Australia ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and this led to the legislation which made sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace unlawful.

Over the past thirty years there have been numerous high profile sexual harassment cases, most notably the estimated $37 million dollar claim by Kirsty Frazer-Kirk against David Jones boss, Mark McInnes which was settled in 2010. Unfortunately, the majority of claims for sexual harassment are settled for much smaller amounts, $7000 on average.

How much have things improved?

But, thirty years since it was legislated against, is sexual harassment still a problem in our workplaces?

In 2012, The Australian Human Rights Commission conducted a survey which found that sexual harassment is a “persistent and pervasive problem in Australian workplaces”. Women are still more likely to be the targets of harassment; reporting of harassment remains low; and complainants are now more likely to experience negative consequences as a result of making a report or complaint of sexual harassment. Measured against the legal definition, the survey indicated that more
In 1983, Australia ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and this led to the legislation which made sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace unlawful.

than one in five respondents (21%) had experienced sexual harassment, a slight increase on the previous survey in 2008.

The Human Rights Commission survey indicated that there has been little progress in reducing sexual harassment in Australia and that misunderstanding exists with regard to what constitutes sexual harassment.

**What is sex-based harassment?**

Under the Sex Discrimination Act, harassment includes:

- Unwanted sexual attention such as unwelcome touching
- Inappropriate staring or leering
- Repeated or inappropriate invitations including advances on email or social networking sites
- Intrusive questions about a person’s private life or physical appearance
- Sexual gestures, comments or jokes that make another person feel offended
- Sexually explicit emails, text messages, pictures or gifts
- Requests or pressure for sexual acts
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Actual or attempted sexual assault
- Any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature

Rather than ‘sexual harassment’, the term ‘sex-based harassment’ is becoming more commonly used, since it encompasses the many different forms of harassment which are based on how a person identifies as male or female. As one educational resource defines the phenomenon, “Sex-based harassment occurs when someone becomes the target of harassment—the object of subjugation—primarily through the way they live their gender and sexuality”.

**Sex-based harassment in education**

Despite government and departmental policies on equity and diversity, sex-based harassment endures in many Australian schools. Students who are viewed as “outsiders” often experience oppressive harassment.

It is important that educators recognise when teasing and name-calling is a form of harassment and that it often sits on a continuum with bullying and physical violence. Students need to understand when what they are saying or hearing is wrong and why it is wrong.

Unlike some other legislation, the Sexual Discrimination Act (1984) holds a person as culpable from the age of sixteen. This has important implications for schools which are responsible for students of this age.

It’s imperative that we teach our students that sex-based harassment is not a ‘joke’. Offenders are liable to be judged on the impact of their behaviours, which may differ from their intentions. //

* If you think you might be interested in applying to be the 2015 Anna Stewart Officer, we will be advertising the program a little later in the year. Contact AEU ACT Women’s Officer, Sue Amundsen, if you’d like to chat about what’s involved (6272 7900, Sue.Amundsen@aeuact.org.au).

Find out more

The Australian Human Rights Commission provides information on the issue of sex-based harassment in Australian schools. Their website provides free educational resources including videos, resource sheets and activity sheets: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sexual-harassment-education

Thank you to more 30 year members!

This year we’ve made a special effort to thank over 200 loyal AEU ACT members who have been part of our community for over 30 years. In the process, we’ve found out about a few more special 30 year members. A heartfelt thank you to Glenn Ford, Judy Walding, Mark Turnbull, Sandra Neville, Stephen Thearle, Sue Amundsen and Wendy Wurfel.
Pregnancy discrimination is pervasive

Along with Margaret Gummow and Katherine Bell, Tabatha Kellett was an ACT delegate at the 2014 AEU Federal Women’s Conference. Tabatha reports back on what she learnt about the widespread phenomenon of pregnancy discrimination. By Tabatha Kellett


The report revealed that 49% of the women surveyed had experienced some form of discrimination during their pregnancy. The discrimination included; losing their job, a loss of pay and negative comments and attitudes. The ramifications of pregnancy discrimination are long term. It can impact the mother’s mental and physical health as well as affecting her career prospects. Although pregnancy discrimination affects up to 110,000 women a year only 4% formally complain.

The advice given by Melanie is;

• It’s prudent for pregnant women to speak with their employer about their plan to return to work before going on maternity leave. They may not keep that timeframe but it gives them something to work from.

• women are encouraged to seek professional advice such as that provided at www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/pregnancy

• talk to your AEU Women’s Officer, Sue Amundsen on 6272 7900 or at aeuact@aeuact.org.au

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Domestic violence leave –
A new entitlement for all ACT Public Servants

Domestic Violence Leave is a new entitlement which has been incorporated into new Enterprise Agreements covering CIT teachers and School Assistants. Although the new ETD Teachers Agreement is still being negotiated, Domestic Violence Leave has already been agreed to in principle (and it is available immediately).

This is a significant achievement which will make a positive difference in the lives of victims of domestic violence.

What is domestic violence leave?
If you are experiencing domestic violence, you are entitled to access up to a maximum of 20 days per calendar year of paid leave. This entitlement is in addition to your other leave entitlements.

It can be used to:
- attend appropriate medical appointments for referral to other appropriate counselling or support services;
- obtain legal advice;
- attend counselling appointments;
- seek assistance from other relevant support services;
- attend court proceedings;
- attend prosecution appointments;
- attend police appointments.

or to access:
- alternative accommodation;
- alternative childcare or schooling for children.

Who can take domestic violence leave?
Leave for domestic violence purposes is available to all employees with the exception of casual employees. Casual employees are entitled to access leave without pay for domestic violence purposes.

How can I access domestic violence leave?
If you wish to access leave for domestic violence purposes, you should discuss making an application with your manager/supervisor or an appropriate HR Manager as soon as reasonably practical. (Managers are required to keep all information concerning the leave application strictly confidential. After sighting any supporting documentation, they are obliged to return that documentation to you).

For confidentiality and privacy reasons leave for domestic violence purposes will be attributed as coming under “where leave cannot be granted under any other provision” which is included and identified within “Other Leave Types”.

Evidence of the occurrence of domestic violence does need to be provided and may include:
- a document issued by the Police;
- a written referral, issued by a registered medical practitioner or registered nurse, to a counsellor trained in providing support in domestic violence situations;
- a document issued by a Court, or a counsellor trained in providing support to people experiencing the effects of domestic violence;
- written confirmation from an Employee Assistance Program provider or from a domestic violence support service that the employee is experiencing domestic violence issues.
Musings of a bookie rookie –
Report on the Bill Book New Activist Program

In 2014, Lisa Styles was the first participant in the Bill Book New Activist Program. Named after the former AEU ACT Organiser, the Bill Book Program gives an AEU member a chance to spend a week in the AEU ACT office. Lisa reports on her experience.

When I got the phone call congratulating me on being successful in my application to undertake the Bill Book New Activist Program I wasn’t really sure what I had signed up for. I knew I wanted to find out more about how the union works and I also needed some inspiration to become a more active member. My underlying worry was that I had somehow faked my way into the role and was under-equipped with knowledge and skills to do the job.

Once I arrived at the office all of my worries dissipated and I found the inspiration I had been looking for. The AEU ACT team is a well-oiled machine and each member has a clearly defined role. My orientation included an introduction to the Schools Organisers, the Industrial Officer, the Communications Officer, the administration team and the Branch Secretary.

My week began with an introduction to the role of organiser, Sue Amundsen, who in addition to being a schools organiser is also Women’s officer. I immediately identified a future research project work around the issues of the gender pay gap. I observed the casework that Sue does in dealing with member issues that arise.

It was a particularly exciting week to be here in the union during the Enterprise Agreement bargaining process. The first insulting government offer (October 24) didn’t address any of the claims around excessive teacher workload and was rejected unanimously by Council on Saturday (October 25). After that, the schools organisers were busy attending sub-branch meetings to discuss the reasons why the offer was rejected. I enjoyed the first-hand experience seeing how Lead Organiser, Andy Jennings, empowers sub-branch members to run their own union meetings and work to resolve their own issues.

Through my attendance at meetings and discussions with the organisers I have developed a much broader understanding of the function of the union in empowering its members. I am impressed with the new focus of the AEU ACT office team as facilitators rather than problem-solvers. It is exciting to see sub-branches embracing activism and empowered to coordinate their own campaigns. I get the message “The union is its members”. Union is not a dirty word (contrary to media portrayal). Industrial action benefits the whole school community. Having completed my week in the Bill Book New Activist program I have renewed my desire to be an active member of the union and to help make a difference. //

More info
If you think you might be interested in applying to be the 2015 Bill Book New Activist, we will be advertising the program a little later in the year. Contact AEU ACT Lead Organiser, Andy Jennings, if you’d like to chat about what’s involved (6272 7900, Andy.Jennings@aeuact.org.au).
In negotiations for a new ETD Teachers Enterprise Agreement, we are seeking a guarantee of classroom temperatures between 17 and 30 degrees at all times. In the meantime, here’s five steps to prepare for and cope with really hot days.

1. Monitor temperatures closely
   Ensure temperatures are carefully monitored. It’s desirable to have thermometers in learning spaces across your school. If you need more thermometers, just contact the AEU ACT office team on 6272 7900.

2. Plan ahead
   Workplace Safety Representatives have a really important role. They should meet with principals to plan ahead. The ‘ETD Extreme High Temperatures Schools Preparation Checklist’ is a useful tool which lists all the things you should do to prepare. Some of the actions it recommends are: checking air-conditioning (if it exists!) has been serviced; checking high windows are in good repair to allow night-venting; ensuring portable fans are available and working.

3. Take action
   Whenever physical conditions become distressing to students or intolerable to staff, the Workplace Safety Representative, with the support of the AEU Sub-Branch President, should request appropriate action be taken to rectify the situation. Such action may involve steps like rotating classes around cooler areas on site such as the hall or library or using additional fans or coolers. It may also involve implementing procedures for the relocation or cancellation of classes.

4. Lodge a Hazard Notice
   When high temperatures in working and learning environments persist, the Workplace Safety Representative should lodge a hazard notice with ETD to formally notify them of the issue. This instigates a process under the Work Safety Act which obliges the employer to respond appropriately.

5. Our rights
   The AEU believes that members have a right to decline to teach in situations where classroom temperatures are lower than 17 degrees Celsius or more than 30 degrees Celsius. The AEU ACT office team will support members in exercising this right. Additionally, the Work Safety Bill 2011 makes it legal to refuse to work on the grounds of a “reasonable belief that the work involves a significant risk to work safety.”

More info
Contact the AEU ACT office team on 6272 7900 or at aeuact@aeuact.org.au for support.
Join us today!

To make joining even easier, we’ve created a special form just for School Teachers, School Assistants and CIT Teachers respectively. This year, we’re really encouraging students and retirees to join us, hence the special Student and Associate Membership forms.

Membership forms can be downloaded at www.aeuact.org.au/join.

Please advise new members to send completed forms to:
PO Box 3042, Manuka ACT 2603, Fax: 6273 1828, or scan and email to: aeuact@aeuact.org.au.

Find the forms on our website!

www.aeuact.org.au
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