

## Australian Education Union - ACT Branch: 2014 Operational Report

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## 1. Introduction

Since April 2014 AEU - ACT Branch negotiators have been engaged in bargaining with ETD for a Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement. An offer was made on 24 October and this was rejected the next day by Branch Council as being premature and manifestly inadequate. Negotiations have continued into 2015. On the national stage, the ACT Branch has participated actively in AEU campaigns in the context of a federal Coalition Government that is hostile towards public education at all levels. Minister Pyne's flagship policy for Independent Public Schools (IPS) was a dismal failure, with states taking federal money for governance training but refusing to create any IPS's. We continue to prosecute the Gonski campaign for a national needs based funding regime, with the ALP pledging support, and the coalition working to dismantle it. The next federal election is firming as a watershed moment in the history of school education in this country. TAFE has been all but deserted by a number of state governments, with the federal government watching on with apathy. By the end of 2014 we had started to see the private VET sector in turmoil.

## 2. CIT Enterprise Agreement

CIT had and retains its own teacher enterprise agreement. The new CIT Teachers EBA 2013 – 2017 was approved by the Fair Work Commission on 20 September 2014. Many of the gains made in the ACTPS Common Terms & Conditions agreement, including the salary increases, flowed to the CIT teacher workforce. In addition, there were a number of gains in CIT specific terms and conditions, chief amongst which are the following:

- Restrictions on annual overtime worked in addition to face to face hours,
- An examination of 15 non-teaching tasks (identified by facilitated teacher focus groups) currently performed by teachers and to be concluded by end of September 2015,
- Expanded use of teachers individual allocation funds regarding qualifications & skills,
- A job analysis of the work of AST's ahead of the progressive replacement of current AST & STP positions with a new Teacher Level 2 position by 1 January 2016.

This new agreement has been negotiated to ensure AEU teachers at CIT have a good industrial platform by which to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the Commonwealth's VET Skills Reform package and ACT Government's Skilled Capital program, the impacts of which will be felt in 2016.

## 3. Teachers Enterprise Agreement

After a lengthy consultation period with the membership in 2013-2014, involving a discussion paper and draft claim, the AEU served its claim on ETD just prior to 1 April 2014. Numerous fortnightly meetings were held after that, with a number of our 28 claims being resolved quite quickly. An offer was sprung by the Minister on members on 24 October 2014 prior to the resolution of a number of key claims at the bargaining, notably those that involved the provision

of additional resources and investment by the ACT Government. That offer was rejected by the AEU at the following Branch Council meeting. In the lead up to Christmas, ETD showed a willingness to work with the AEU on the very real problem of teacher workload, a problem which the Minister has previously sought to deny and deflect. Focus groups were convened at the request of the AEU and this exercise proved useful in identifying all the non-teacher work that teachers are currently undertaking. The focus of bargaining from the AEU's perspective became the addition of powerful protocols, policies and resourcing to strip non-teaching tasks away from teachers without shifting that work to other employees in schools. Discussions have been progressing fruitfully.

#### 4. School Assistants Enterprise Agreement

Enterprise bargaining for the approximately 1100 school assistants began in February 2013 and concluded with the approval of the new agreement by the Fair Work Commission on 23 May 2014. School Assistants are covered by the ACT Public Service Administrative & Related Classifications EBA 2013-2017 in Schedule T which covers specific terms and conditions in addition to the Common Terms & Conditions applicable to all ACT Public Servants.

This agreement is different in scope to those of previous years. The ACT Government has replaced its two former Directorate based enterprise agreements with what are referred to as 'stream based' agreements, i.e. five agreements (excluding teachers) grouping similar or related occupational classifications. During negotiations, AEU had argued strongly, but ultimately unsuccessfully, for either a school based employees' enterprise agreement or the inclusion of the school assistants in the teachers' agreement. We have not shelved either of those two objectives for the next bargaining round in 2017.

Nonetheless, AEU, in conjunction with other unions, managed to secure significant gains for our members. Highlights include the following:

- Increases to salary of \$2090 as from 1 July 2013, followed by 6 increments of 1.5% over the remaining three years, making for a compound increase over the term of the agreement for school assistants of between 12.98% and 14.27%,
- Expansion of planning and preparation time from pre-school assistants to all classroom based assistants,
- Establishment of a working party to deal with a new skills & qualifications based classification and salary structure to be completed by 30 May 2015.

Additionally, all unions had advocated for a more professional and consistent approach by Directorate & Shared Services HR personnel in relation the disciplinary provisions found at Clause H, 'Workplace Values & Behaviours' of the Common Terms and Conditions' of agreements. The result has been to draft an agreed 'Guide to Managing Workplace Behaviour' which will be rolled out mid-2015.

In view of the Abbott Government's freezing of the former Labor Government's scale of increments in the employer contributions to the Superannuation Guarantee Levy at 9.5%, ACT unions were able to successfully negotiate a Deed of Agreement with the ACT Government to continue its employer contributions to 10.5% over the life of the agreements.

During negotiations, AEU employed its first school assistant Organiser who has not only increased AEU membership of school assistants fivefold but has also organised those members into an emerging constituency of activists.

## 5. Organising Model

2014 was an important year for the AEU - ACT Branch as a transition was made to an Organising Model. The result was more time and resources to developing activists on industrial matters and empowering sub-branches through strengthening democracy at all levels. Previously Organisers had worked under a Servicing Model, which meant that the office staff predominately handled issues on behalf of our members and took responsibility for organising and campaigning. The decision to move to an Organising Model was to develop skills and expertise at each sub-branch to help members as and when required. This develops a greater sense of collectivism and mutual support than a model focused on remote servicing.

To support the transition number of new working practices have been adopted and the following initiatives have been implemented:

- Each sub-branch will have a dedicated organising plan, the completion of which is a task for the respective sub-branch executive and the organiser assigned to support that sub-branch,
- The content of those plans lays heavily on member development via training, advice and applied learning,
- The organising plans will determine our activity based on democratically decided industrial goals, so that we are continually striving to achieve the targets as established by members in the sub-branch,
- Time allocated to Organisers to research and develop campaign plans as required for the important areas the union wishes to address,
- TAFE council and CIT sub-branches will all be governed in the exact same manner with higher levels of support from the full team of Organisers.

## 6. Rule Changes

AEU - ACT Branch Council approved two changes to the Rules in 2014 as follows:

### 1. **Adoption of Mandatory Reporting Rules**

In 2013, the Commonwealth Parliament had amended the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act to require Unions to report of the salaries of the two highest paid officers and on the sources of other income they may have. These changes had their origins in the recent history of the HSUA. Accordingly, the Fair Work Commission, Registered Organisations Branch, drafted the required new Rules to be incorporated in Union Rules. AEU - ACT Branch Council approved those changes in March 2014 and the Fair Work Commission certified them on 6 October 2014.

### 2. **Transfer of Certain Powers from Branch Council to Branch Executive**

In acknowledgement of the fact that AEU - ACT Branch Executive fulfils the role of a Committee of Management (as recognised by the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act), in that it has charge of the day-to-day operations and management of the Branch, and that the Branch Council more appropriately fulfils the role of the Branch policy making body, a Special Branch Council approved a set of changes on 15 May 2014 which transferred a number of operational & management functions to Branch Executive. The Fair Work Commission certified those changes on 6 October 2014.

## 7. Public Education Week

The 2014 Public Education Dinner was held at the National Press Club on the 22 May. The sold out dinner featured Nobel Prize winner Professor Brian Schmidt as keynote speaker, and social commentator Jane Caro as MC. The appearance of Professor Schmidt garnered significant local media attention, including an article in The Canberra Times which drew attention to his view that parents do children a disservice by sending them to private schools.

The survey of dinner attendees indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the event. 48% rated the night overall as 'excellent' and another 45% rated it as 'very good'. Jane Caro, Brian Schmidt and the opportunity to catch up with colleagues around the system were identified as the most enjoyable aspects of the night. Some concerns about space and timing have influenced planning for the 2015 dinner.

The 2014 Public Education Awards were presented at the Public Education Dinner. The Public Education Award was received by Jason Borton and the Friend of Public Education Award was received by Jane Caro. In a departure from past practice, the 2014 Reconciliation Award was also presented at the Public Education Dinner and was received by the staff of Jervis Bay School. This change occurred after consultation and was motivated by a desire to enhance the prestige of the

award by presenting it with a large audience in attendance. The award was presented by Dr Chris Bourke MLA who also spoke extensively on the meaning of reconciliation.

The 2014 Public Education Showcase was held at Westfield Belconnen rather than the traditional location of City Walk. This change was inspired by the view that an indoor venue would garner more focused attention from the community. It was also done on the basis that the location could alternate between the Northside and the Southside. Feedback from teachers who participated indicated this approach worked well.

Public Education Week Launch was held again in 2014. This event garners minimal attendance and was experienced as a demand on organiser and member time during an already busy week.

In concert with Federal Office, a Twitter chat was conducted on the eve of Public Education Week. While we don't have precise metrics, the #PublicEdWeek hashtag trended in Sydney and Melbourne bringing significant attention. The chat also allowed public education supporters to share a sense of community. Minimal time was committed to organising this.

In Public Education Week, a series of successful events were held which celebrated the achievements of public education in the ACT and promoting public education to the broader community. Public Education Week may be enhanced by increased coordination with the Education & Training Directorate and the ACT Council of P&C's. Additionally, there is potential to work with Federal Office and other branches to enhance cooperation around national media events. Finally, the effectiveness of the week may be increased by more strategic and targeted messaging.

## 8. ACT Educator

In response to a member survey in August 2013, 14.15% of respondents stated they always read the ACT Educator (then known as Public Education Voice); 24.44% stated 'Mostly' and 31.51% stated 'Sometimes'. 17.73% of respondents stated they read 'Most of the journal' and 30.85% answered 'A number of articles'. When asked how they'd feel about the journal being published in electronic form only, 22.51% stated 'Negative – I like having a hard copy'.

These results were interpreted as important confirmation of the value of the journal in the Branch's communications, and as indicating preference amongst a significant group of members for the print version justified its cost.

On the basis of the survey, other feedback, and further reflection, a range of changes to the journal were instituted in 2014.

The name was changed from Public Education Voice to ACT Educator. The rationale for the change was that the title should have the widest possible appeal, and each edition should take readers on a journey into deeper commitment and engagement. While we aim for all members to have an active commitment to public education, it is a mistake to take it as a starting point. For instance, some members send their own children to private schools.

The title change reflected a broader desire to make the journal member-centric. We have striven over the last year to increase the proportion of stories and imagery by and immediately about members (as opposed to paid staff). While there has not been systematic measurement of this approach, it has received anecdotal support. For instance, an article by a member at Garran Primary, Sally Baker, 'But don't teachers work from 9am – 3pm?' received over 75,000 unique visitors when published online.

The ACT Educator is now delivered direct to member's homes. The previous two-step process whereby magazines were distributed to sub-branch Secretaries for distribution was viewed as time-consuming, unreliable and subject to delay. A small number of copies are still delivered to each school for placement in staff common areas.

Over the course of the year, the size of ACT Educator has been expanded to 48 pages. This has been significantly subsidised by increased advertising revenue.

## 9. Communications

A website with a new look and feel was launched in February 2014, with a blog, events calendar, social media plugins embedded in the homepage and a campaign slider running across the top. An immediately successful element of the site has been the event manager. This has helped increase attendance at events and, significantly, has enabled the office team to take action in advance when there is a possibility Council or other meetings will be inquorate.

Due largely to challenges associated with the API bridge between NationBuilder and our membership database, MemForce, there has been a long and frustrating delay on launching a membership area.

NationBuilder's email blaster has given the office team a much greater capacity to communicate effectively with the membership. Whereas email blasts were previously sent from a generic email address (priority1@aeuact.asn.au) and didn't include the sender's name, emails are now from a personal address with the sender's name. It gives us the capability to address each recipient by name and provides statistics on how many recipients open emails and click on links. Most importantly, we are now able to easily define email lists based on roles, events attended and other actions members have taken, making our email communication more targeted.

In 2014 we continued a strong presence on Facebook, using it to share news, promote events, support petitions, celebrate achievements and successes and build a community of shared commitment to public education. We have established a Twitter account and built up a following of around 500.

## 10. Governance

During 2014 Branch Executive members and federal conference delegates attended financial management training. The internal policy manual continues to serve us well, though slight amendments have been mooted. Much attention is given within the Branch office satisfying all requirements under the Fair Work Act 2009.

## 11. Staff Structure

On the industrial side of the organisation, the structure continues to be the right one for us, with the Secretary overseeing the work of the Lead Organiser, who supervises the Industrial Officer, Communications and Research Officer and the three Organisers. The Organisers now work across all categories of members on a regional basis, with 30 or so sites being a more intimate 'patch'. Each organiser has specialities, such as Woman's Officer, New Educators, School Assistants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and LGBTIQ. In practice, the Industrial Officer and Communications and Research Officer often work directly to the Branch Secretary, on a case-by-case basis, and this works well. The structure is a clear one that continues to bed down well, providing accountability whilst remaining open to flexibility.

Significant changes were made to the administration team and the structure of member services during 2014. A range of financial activities managed within the office were contracted to a specialist bookkeeping service to address issues related to segregation of duties, skill management and continuity. The transition was extremely successful, resulting in significant improvements to financial management processes, reporting and transparency. A new role of Industrial Support Officer was created to better support the needs of members with queries relating to their work and entitlements. The Industrial Support Officers receive support and mentoring from Organisers to enable them to manage member issues, providing the Organising team with more time to support sub-branches, train members, recruit and campaign.



## 12. Membership Statistics

AEU Members - Total	1 January 2014			31 December 2014		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Early Childhood	4	87	91	4	87	91
Primary	196	1226	1422	203	1233	1436
Secondary	458	721	1179	454	723	1177
Other	86	315	401	89	386	475
TAFE	91	119	210	84	121	205
<b>Total</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>2468</b>	<b>3303</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>2250</b>	<b>3384</b>

AEU Members - Specialist Categories	1 January 2014			31 December 2014		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	5	14	19	6	16	21
Principals	28	38	66	35	48	83
School Assistants	16	155	171	18	229	247
Special Education	12	42	54	12	47	59

## 13. Member Training

Training for members and activists in 2014 faced a number of key changes. We have redesigned our training material to focus on member and activist empowerment. Topics include;

- How to Write a Motion
- The Role of a Sub-Branch
- Workload Committees: Making Them Work
- Sub-Branch Presidents and Principals Working Together.

As well as conducting courses at union offices, we are now delivering much more training at sub-branch sites. Bite size training packages delivered at the site are available to any sub-branch with a particular industrial issue they wish to address, as we are now able to write and deliver training to meet specific requirements.

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A weekend industrial training event at Birrigai was introduced in 2014. The event sought to bring activists together from across the Branch to learn and share experiences on the industrial matters facing our members and how to implement best practice to support them.

We also delivered our local campaign skills training for activists. A two day event that helps activists develop the skills to conduct effective campaigns on industrial and social matters. This is again part of the process of empowering our activists with a broader range of skills so that they can help members achieve their goals.

### 14. Member Satisfaction Survey

1. I believe I have a say in our union												
Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	40	20%	10	42%	10	38%	18	46%	2	40%	80	27%
Agree	105	51%	8	33%	10	38%	19	49%	3	60%	145	49%
Neutral/Don't Know	38	19%	4	17%	5	19%	1	3%	0	0%	48	16%
Disagree	15	7%	2	8%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	19	6%
Strongly Disagree	6	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	2%
Total	204	100%	24	100%	26	100%	39	100%	5	100%	298	100%

2. The AEU ACT office team is helpful and effective when members seek advice and support.												
Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	51	25%	8	31%	7	28%	23	59%	3	60%	92	31%
Agree	88	44%	9	35%	14	56%	13	33%	2	40%	126	42%
Neutral/Don't Know	45	22%	7	27%	2	8%	1	3%	0	0%	55	19%
Disagree	15	7%	1	4%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	17	6%
Strongly Disagree	1	0%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Skipped	2	1%	1	4%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	5	2%
Total	202	100%	26	100%	25	100%	39	100%	5	100%	297	100%

3. I have asked a colleague to join our union in the last 12 months.												
Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	107	52%	20	80%	20	80%	35	88%	5	100%	187	62%
No (I Don't Feel Confident)	13	6%	1	4%	3	12%	1	3%	0	0%	18	6%
No (I Don't Want To)	12	6%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	13	4%
No (Other Reason)	73	36%	3	12%	1	4%	3	8%	0	0%	80	27%
Skipped	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	2	1%
Total	205	100%	25	100%	25	100%	40	100%	5	100%	300	100%

4. I know who the leaders of my sub-branch are and what their roles are. (ETD General Member/CIT Member) / We have an active sub-branch. (Sub-Branch Executive/Branch Councillor/ Branch Executive)												
Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	44	22%	8	33%	3	12%	9	24%	0	0%	64	22%
Agree	95	47%	5	21%	10	40%	12	32%	3	60%	125	43%
Neutral/Don't Know	38	19%	8	33%	8	32%	7	18%	1	20%	62	21%
Disagree	20	10%	3	13%	2	8%	8	21%	1	20%	34	12%
Strongly Disagree	4	2%	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	6	2%
Skipped	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	2	1%
Total	201	100%	24	100%	25	100%	38	100%	5	100%	293	100%

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### 5. I understand the role of AEU ACT Branch Council. (ETD General Member, Sub-Branch Executive/Branch Councillor/ Branch Executive) / I understand the role of AEU TAFE Council. (CIT Member)

Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	27	14%	7	28%	9	36%	16	41%	5	100%	64	22%
Agree	121	61%	11	44%	12	48%	18	46%	0	0%	162	55%
Neutral/Don't Know	32	16%	3	12%	1	4%	3	8%	0	0%	39	13%
Disagree	14	7%	3	12%	2	8%	1	3%	0	0%	20	7%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Skipped	4	2%	1	4%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	7	2%
Total	200	100%	25	100%	25	100%	39	100%	5	100%	294	100%

### 6. I believe our union has improved over the last year.

Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	16	8%	3	13%	4	17%	8	21%	4	80%	35	12%
Agree	61	31%	9	38%	9	38%	19	50%	1	20%	99	34%
Neutral/Don't Know	86	43%	7	29%	9	38%	8	21%	0	0%	110	38%
Disagree	25	13%	3	13%	1	4%	2	5%	0	0%	31	11%
Strongly Disagree	8	4%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	3%
Skipped	2	1%	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	4	1%
Total	198	100%	24	100%	24	100%	38	100%	5	100%	289	100%

### 7. Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of our union?

Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Very Satisfied	46	23%	7	27%	10	40%	17	45%	2	40%	82	28%
Satisfied	89	45%	13	50%	8	32%	15	39%	2	40%	127	43%
Neutral/Don't Know	27	14%	3	12%	5	20%	4	11%	1	20%	40	14%
Dissatisfied	32	16%	1	4%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	35	12%
Very Dissatisfied	5	3%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	2%
Skipped	1	1%	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	3	1%
Total	200	100%	26	100%	25	100%	38	100%	5	100%	294	100%

### 8. I know who is on AEU ACT Branch Executive and what their roles are.

Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	5	3%	4	17%	4	17%	7	18%	0	0%	20	7%
Agree	83	42%	5	21%	14	58%	25	66%	0	0%	127	44%
Neutral/Don't Know	72	36%	8	33%	2	8%	5	13%	0	0%	87	30%
Disagree	34	17%	6	25%	3	13%	0	0%	0	0%	43	15%
Strongly Disagree	3	2%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Skipped	1	1%	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%	5	100%	8	3%
Total	198	100%	24	100%	24	100%	38	100%	5	100%	289	100%

### 9. As a Sub-Branch Executive member, I know what my role is and receive the necessary information, advice and support to perform it effectively. / As a Branch Councillor I receive the necessary information, advice and support to perform my role as a councillor effectively. / As a Branch Executive I understand my role on Branch Executive and receive the necessary information, advice and support to perform it effectively.

Response Options	Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	7	29%	13	33%	3	60%	23	34%
Agree	12	50%	20	51%	2	40%	34	50%
Neutral/Don't Know	4	17%	4	10%	0	0%	8	12%
Disagree	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Skipped	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	2	3%
Total	24	100%	39	100%	5	100%	68	100%

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**10. I feel confident supporting members with issues and concerns in my workplace. (Sub-Branch Councillor) / I feel confident participating at Council meetings. (Branch Councillor) / As a member of Branch Executive, I feel confident making strategic decisions about the direction of our union. (Branch Executive)**

Response Options	Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Strongly Agree	7	28%	7	18%	2	40%	16	23%
Agree	13	52%	22	56%	3	60%	38	55%
Neutral/Don't Know	3	12%	5	13%	0	0%	8	12%
Disagree	1	4%	2	5%	0	0%	3	4%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%	2	3%
Skipped	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%	2	3%
Total	25	100%	39	100%	5	100%	69	100%

**10. What do you think our union is doing well at the moment?**

Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Answered	145	72%	23	96%	19	79%	30	79%	5	71%	222	76%
Skipped	56	28%	1	4%	5	21%	8	21%	2	29%	72	24%
Total	201	100%	24	100%	24	100%	38	100%	7	100%	294	100%

**11. Are there any areas that you would like to see our union improve on in 2015?**

Response Options	ETD General Member		CIT Member		Sub-Branch Executive		Branch Councillor		Branch Executive		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Answered	136	69%	16	67%	14	58%	21	55%	4	67%	191	66%
Skipped	62	31%	8	33%	10	42%	17	45%	2	33%	99	34%
Total	198	100%	24	100%	24	100%	38	100%	6	100%	290	100%

## 15. Recruitment

Our recruitment strategy has been to build collective strength, solidarity, empowerment and union involvement through the education of members. Organisers have been making personal contact with individual members and sub-branches to plan and organise workplaces and to also ensure that they get to know the membership well.

The AEU has been working to develop the capabilities of sub-branch delegates and activists through on and off site training in many areas including the AEU Leaders Retreat at Birrigai. 2014 saw approximately 50 members attend the retreat and the feedback was extremely positive. This has led to members becoming more confident in approaching non-members and discussing union values and asking them to join. This has also been followed up with training during Branch Council and articles in the ACT Educator magazine about having join conversations in the workplace.

Organisers are also implementing sub-branch organising plans and workplace mapping. This is done in consultation with sub-branch Presidents and members. Organisers are also ensuring that members are asked to take up a reasonable task and support members to complete the task and to give recognition for their involvement. Mapping of the workplace requires assistance from members on the ground and this is essential in order for the AEU to target potential members where the union might be under-represented. Workplace maps are also used to assist in communication between members and activists and identify contacts in different parts of the workplace.

Our main focus is to educate, support and encourage effective delegates who have self-belief, are active and want to build strength in the union through collectiveness.

## 16. School Assistants

Therese Tonna was our School Assistant Coordinator in 2013 and became an Organiser 2014. This has meant that the task of recruiting School Assistant members has now been divided amongst three Organisers. This has had an impact on the continuing growth of the School Assistant membership and has seen this membership flat line. However, activism amongst the School Assistant membership has been growing steadily.

In 2014 we had our first School Assistant Sub-branch President, Councillor, Woman's Contact Officer and Observers at Branch Council and our first School Assistant Executive member. We also held our first School Assistant Dinner in National Support Staff Week, which was a successful night. In March 2014 three female members attended our first AEU Leaders Retreat at Birrigai. Two of these members have since taken on leadership roles on their sub-branch.

School Assistants are really starting to stand up and stick together as members of the union and this is due to the success of our Campaign in 2013-2014 of Recognise Our School Assistants and also the involvement of School Assistants in the School Assistant Review. This review is a result of the EA Negotiations which were completed in 2013. The Review is due to be completed by May 2015. Its purpose is to develop a classification structure that supports career development and to provide clear work expectations including work skills and qualifications.

On a Federal level we have also succeeded in beginning to align activities and common issues with all Support Staff in SA, TAS & VIC. In 2014 these states, in conjunction with the ACT have aligned a National Support Staff Week which takes place in August each year. During this week sub-branches are encouraged to hold events in their schools to celebrate all of the hard work that Support Staff do. Organisers attend these events to show support and solidarity.

Three of our most active School Assistant members (one male & two females) attended the South Australian SSO (School Support Officer) Conference in July 2014. This was a huge success and was a way of showing solidarity with colleagues and sharing experiences and successes. Our School Assistants were excited to see that in SA many Support staff were 'Stepping Up' and taking on leadership roles within the AEU sub-branches at individual sites.

There remains hundreds of School Assistants who are not members of any union, and the AEU will continue to make recruiting them to the Union a priority.

## 17. Member Welfare Fund

In 2014 the Teacher Welfare Fund was renamed the Member Welfare Fund to better reflect the membership of the branch. New member guidelines, loan criteria and management process were developed and approved by Branch Executive to improve management and decision making relating to loans. During 2014 five loans for members in need were approved to a total value of \$23,800. One loan was repaid in full.

## 18. Women's Network

The Women's Officer role has changed since 2013 and is now part of the Schools' Organiser role. Currently the Women's Officer role involves attending the Women's Officer meetings at the Federal office, providing training, resources and information to the AEU Women's Contact Officers, organising an AEU International Women's Day event, organising delegations to the NSW Teachers Federation Women's Conference and the Federal Women's Conference, holding regular Women's Network meetings, developing AEU policy on Women's issues, completing the annual Federal Women's Survey and regularly reporting to AEU Branch Executive and Branch Council.

There is a Women's Contact Officer position in each sub-branch. Although not a decision making group they are provided with information through the Women's Officer to support other staff members in relation to current issues in the system, returning from maternity leave and accessing part time work. They are encouraged to bring women's issues to sub-branch meetings and to provide information to the AEU - ACT Branch Women's Officer as they arise in the workplace. The number of positions filled has shown a steady increase over the last two years.

Women's Network meetings were held each term during 2014. The meetings were well attended and a group of activists are now starting to emerge from this regular contact. The topics covered at the network meetings included domestic violence, superannuation for women, gender equity, developing leadership programs and sexual harassment, including the Below the Line campaign. The network meetings hosted two speakers during the year. Hannah Wandel from the YWCA who spoke about gender equity and the program that she has developed From Country to Canberra, a leadership development program for young women. Kim Sattler the previous Secretary of Unions ACT spoke at the last network meeting for 2014 on a range of topics including the importance of superannuation for women. In 2014 there were a number of women network attendees who provided expressions of interest for the NSWTF Women's Conference and the Federal Women's Conference. A full delegation was taken to each of the conferences in 2014 due to this interest. Four of the regular network attendees also applied for the Anna Stewart Program. During 2014 the women who attended the network meetings were encouraged to involve their schools to participate in two campaigns. One global campaign, 2014 Day of the African Child and one national campaign, the Below the Line sexual harassment campaign. Women who have been active in

network meetings during 2014 are now emerging as sub-branch leaders, councillors and Women's Contact Officers.

Over 50 people attended the 2014 AEU International Women's Day event at the Legislative Assembly on the 6 March 2015. The AEU theme for the event was 'Inspiring Change'. There were two speakers at the event, Jane Thomson and Robyn Martin. Jane Thomson, Human Rights Legal and Policy Adviser for the Human Rights Commission, spoke on gender equity and in particular discrimination against women returning from maternity leave and Robyn Martin, Manager of Beryl Women's Refuge, spoke on domestic violence and the impact on families and particularly students in our schools. The speakers were well received and provided an opportunity for a question and answer session with the members.

Each year members are encouraged to apply for the Rosemary Richards scholarship. Cathy Radisich from Namadgi School was our accepted applicant for the Rosemary Richards Scholarship. In 2014 there were only 5 entries from across Australia.

The NSW Teacher's Federation Women's Conference was held in Sydney on the 17 May 2014. The theme for the conference was Women Working Together. The conference was a great opportunity for women unionists to come together to focus on the purpose of unions and unionism and to engage in professional conversations and learning across the many and varied workshops provided on the day. Three members attended the conference due to the sponsorship provided by the Teachers' Mutual Bank. The attendees included Lee Leong, a LOTE teacher from UC Lake Ginninderra College, Susan Thompson and Sally Higginson, School Assistants from Turner School. This was the first time School Assistants have participated in a Women's Conference delegation from the ACT. Reports presented by the women leaders at the conference illustrated how collaboration is a key to challenge inequality and injustice for not only women but all areas that need to be changed. One of the workshops that were particularly meaningful and relevant to our current ACT system was run by Sue Simpson (NSWTF) on 'Women teachers working longer- What are the challenges?'. It not only provided information to attendees but also set about collating information to find ways to support not just women but all teachers who are going to be working in the system past the 54.11 milestone. With the retirement age being lifted there is a real need for us to be thinking about what these needs are and whether all systems have the right conditions in place to support this group of workers.

The Federal Women's Conference was held in Melbourne on the 4-5 October 2014. A delegation including Tabatha Kellett (Dickson College) Margaret Gummow (Kingsford Smith School) and Katherine Bell (Campbell High School) attended and provided positive feedback. The theme for the conference was 'Gender Matters'. AEU women attending the conference heard from experts in their field regarding issues relevant to assisting the AEU put into context the programs, policies and affirmative action strategies that we employ in our union activities. There were presentations

on the ongoing arguments on the disadvantages that women and girls experience both in education, the world of work and more generally in our community/globally.

## 19. Anna Stewart Memorial Program

Heather Page, a regular women's network attendee was the recipient of the Anna Stewart scholarship for 2014. During her time in the AEU office Heather attended meetings at the office, Branch Executive and parliament house with Kim Sattler (Unions ACT), Lyn Caton (IEU) and Lyndal Ryan (United Voice). Heather shadowed Organisers in their daily routines and spent time with other staff learning about their roles in the AEU. As part of her time in the office Heather looked carefully at her own school and developed an action plan for her sub-branch. Heather also focused on the area of sexual harassment, an item that had been a network topic for discussion, and during her time in the office created a draft AEU - ACT Branch Sex-Based Harassment Policy.

## 20. Bill Book New Activist Program

2014 saw the launch of the Bill Book Activist Scholarship. The scholarship was conceived with the idea of providing the opportunity for an AEU member, with a passion for the Union, to spend a week learning about the work of an Organiser.

The successful applicant in 2014 was Lisa Styles, who is based at Lake Tuggeranong College. Lisa spent a week observing the work that Organisers do: including preparing for and attending sub-branch meetings with members, how Organisers research and respond to member queries, and how Organisers develop their organising plans for sub-branches.

The AEU ACT branch will be reviewing how we can make the scholarship an even greater success in 2015.