



Organiser's Report

August 2017

John Black, Regional Organiser

Schools Funding

From green shirts, hands and buses to green cordial, cakes and cookies (and everything in between); the powerful local campaigning of Federation members has created an unprecedented groundswell of parent and broader community activism on schools funding. Teacher union members have been unrelenting in campaigning for the right of all public school students to have their educational needs properly and fairly met.

In the last decade, the schools funding campaign has put the need to fund all schools (irrespective of sector) at the level identified by the School Resource Standard (SRS) at the centre of the national political debate. However, despite the amazing campaign driven by members, Turnbull Government legislation has unilaterally terminated all National Education Reform Agreements and dismantled the needs-based schools funding model. The Turnbull Plan will mean the majority of public schools will be funded below the School Resource Standard.

The position of the Federal Coalition is of no surprise; from the release of the School Funding Review, to the Abbott Budget of 2014, which failed to fund the model, through to the Turnbull Government's unilateral termination of the National Education Reform Agreements, the Federal Coalition has consistently opposed a genuine sector-blind, needs-based schools funding model.

Moving forward, the Federation, in collaboration with the Australian Education Union (AEU), will continue to pressure all political parties to restore a funding model that ensures all public school students' needs are met. To achieve a fully funded model that shifts resources to the public school system, campaigning must be built on broader and deeper community engagement. Accordingly, the Federation has begun to develop the most comprehensive schools funding campaign possible for the next Federal election. The foundations for this campaign will be built during the second half of the 2017 school year, for full implementation early in 2018 in preparation for the Federal election.

THANK
YOU!

TAFE

In 2012 all State and Territory governments, along with the Federal government, signed a national agreement to turn the vocational education and training sector into a market.

Five years on, this contestable funding experiment has resulted in huge losses to the public provision of VET services provided by TAFE.

Nevertheless, the *Stop TAFE Cuts* campaign achieved an historic win when, in May, the Federal ALP announced that it would guarantee at least two-thirds of public funding would go directly to TAFE. This policy offers the possibility for the public sector to be rebuilt, having been decimated by a lack of government funding, and the onslaught of a corrosive privatisation agenda.

TAFE RESTRUCTURE

The impending significant restructuring of TAFE NSW is being monitored cautiously by the Federation, initial responses have identified the deletion of specialist Outreach and Multicultural Coordinators and it is also clear that head teacher positions in regional areas have suffered cuts. Any attack on TAFE equity services must be opposed. Nevertheless, a One TAFE Governance model is one that the union could support if member concerns are addressed.

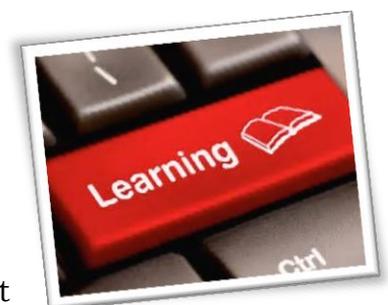
In recognition of the complexity of the proposal from TAFE, Federation will, as a matter of urgency, deploy additional research expertise to provide a detailed analysis of the changes, the potential impact on members and the ramifications for the system as a whole. A report will be provided to Senior Officers and, subsequently, to Executive and Council.

Ageing ICT Equipment & Inequitable Access across NSW Schools

A report by the NSW Auditor General, “ICT in schools for teaching and learning” (July 2017), has identified a number of serious issues in terms of the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) in schools and the need to improve teacher professional learning in ICT.

These systemic shortcomings exist at a time when the NSW Department of Education continues to push forward with: 1) plans for students to undertake tests online (such as NAPLAN) without due consideration being given to the technological and pedagogical limitations of such an approach; 2) increased demands on teachers to engage in online professional learning and compliance tasks; and, 3) changes to school management systems that continue to be plagued by setbacks and inadequate professional learning and which consume the energy and time of educational leaders, teachers and ancillary staff.

This issue has serious implications for school leadership, professional learning, school infrastructure, testing, assessment and reporting, and teaching and learning in the classroom and will be monitored closely by the NSWTF.



Selective and Specialist Schools

The Federation has reaffirmed its longstanding policy for the provision of a strong, well-resourced and comprehensive public school education as the best means to maximise the intellectual and social potential of every student in every community.

The introduction of selective and specialist high schools and classes continues to have a negative impact on comprehensive schooling. Comprehensive schools suffer because their high achieving students tend to leave based on the notion that selective and specialist high schools offer a superior education than a comprehensive high school. This residualisation distorts overall school achievement, falsely compares schools and unnecessarily results in students travelling well beyond their local public high school at a cost to taxpayers.

The recently announced review of the selective schools entry test by the Department of Education Secretary does not address the fundamental problems outlined.

It has also been reported that the Department will consider creating 'selective primary schools'.

As such the Federation will be:

1. calling on the State Government to commission a review into selective and specialist schools and classes and the impact on comprehensive schools,
2. working with allied groups such as principal and parent organisations, and
3. opposing any attempt to create 'selective primary schools' and the creation of any new specialist selective secondary schools.

Valuing and Supporting Teacher Professional Judgement by Addressing Work Overload

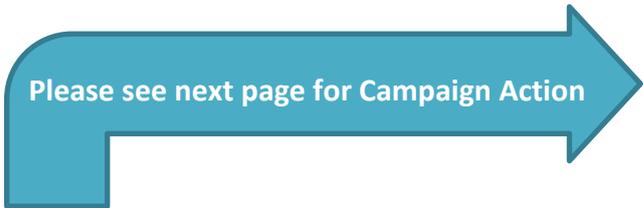
The work of classroom teachers, executives and principals is intellectually, emotionally and often physically demanding. Specifically it is the loss of the professional authority to determine work tasks that is most troubling.

Today, teachers report feeling that they have little effective control over determining what they do, how and when they do it, and why it needs to be done. The volume and intensity of workload demands from the Department means teachers can experience significant stress as a result of the cumulative effect of the emotional, cognitive and physical demands made on them.

The implementation of *Local Schools Local Decisions* drastically reduced system level support and, combined with the number of 'reforms' implemented over the last five years, much work and the responsibility to account for it has been devolved to schools. The increase in the government's 'efficiency dividend' from 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent for the next three years will cause further job cuts and impose additional responsibilities on schools.

Exacerbating these cuts is the increased demand for student data collection which has distracted from teaching and learning as voluminous materials are prepared.

The rollout of a range of software including SPARO and the A-Z tool has also been problematic with little or no technological support or assistance provided.



Please see next page for Campaign Action

Campaign Action

Federation Workplace Committees and Associations will be provided with support and training to build the capability to take on issues in schools collectively, particular workload issues. Risk factors that can be addressed in this way include:

- work practices – the demands of pressures from meeting deadlines, high physical, emotional and cognitive demands, lack of variety, work overload, long and/or unsociable hours and limited flexibility in working hours.
- work organisation – the demands and effectiveness of systems, the clarity of roles and responsibilities, adequacy of training in job skills, level of participation in decision making, communication and consultation including for the implementation of new technology.

In the lead up to the NSW election in March 2019 the Federation will lead a teaching and learning campaign to seek commitments that any new government will negotiate an appropriate industrial agreement with the Federation, which will provide:

- a reduction in face-to-face teaching;
- a minimum lead time of one year for planning and preparation around significant system wide changes;
- a process of review to be used before educational ‘reforms’ are implemented in NSW schools.



EAL/D Support Positions

With the increasing numbers of EAL/D and New Arrivals students in our public schools, the loss of consultancy roles has had a significant impact on schools' ability to access expertise in a number of areas in order to meet these students' needs.

The Federation will pursue the reinstatement of centralised support for schools and report on progress before the end of the year especially given the implementation of the new HSC syllabus.

The Future of Assessment and Testing

An obsession with mass-testing and NAPLAN has narrowed the range and depth of what is taught; has caused a culture of shaming vulnerable children and communities with a profound human cost; has led to a decline in the educational experience of school children in the creative, performing and imaginative arts and in parts of the curriculum that are intangible and immeasurable but vital to the human and ethical development of young people.

In response to increased concern about NAPLAN testing and its move online, the Federation has developed a set of *Principles for Assessment and Testing* which will be used to advocate for the complete replacement of the current NAPLAN approach to assessment and testing.

The principals were based on *Crossroads: A Green Paper* on assessment policy written by Federation Vice President Denis Fitzgerald. Members are encouraged to read and discuss this paper which can be access via the following link www.nswtf.org.au/crossroads.

In addition the Federation has written to members asking them to share their experiences of the Department's trial of NAPLAN Online, the impact on classes and students, and any concerns members may have about the process.

Members can contribute to the review in two ways:

1. NAPLAN Hotline: Call 02 9217 2132 and leave a message of up to five minutes detailing your experience
2. Visit www.nswtf.org.au/NAPLANonline and enter your information in response to three prompts.

In addition the Federation will pursue the issue of minimum standards and the HSC whereby the processes of eligibility for a HSC should be maintained within the timespan and assessment and examination mechanisms of the HSC itself. This is as currently exists for all aspects of the current HSC and the question of minimum standards of performance and eligibility can be readily and coherently encompassed within Years 11 and 12.



Addressing Behavioural Risks in the Workplace

Teachers and students have a right to expect that risks to both physical and psychological health will be addressed consistent with the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The Audit Office of NSW has recommended that 'The Department should consider the effectiveness of workplace health and safety strategies for addressing the rise in psychological injuries'.

This is in response to the 32.5 per cent increase in workers compensation claims for psychological injuries and the 71.5 per cent increase in cost of the claims. A significant component of these claims cites bullying, harassment and violence in the workplace as the cause of injury. These types of claims have increased by 33.9 per cent from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

The increased cost and number of injuries suggest the need for more effective management of these behavioural risks.



Work related bullying

The results of the People Matter Survey 2016 for 'Public Schools – Teachers' show that 40 per cent of the respondents reported they had witnessed bullying at work in the past 12 months and 22 per cent reported they had been subjected to bullying in the past 12 months.

Work related violence

The *WH&S Act 2011* requires action to be taken to eliminate or minimise risks including those posed by violent behaviours 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

The *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures* play an important role in risk management. Suspension is not aimed at punishing students. It allows the removal of the risks posed by behaviours including violence for a period of time. During this time the procedures allow 'the school and government school system to put measures in place to ensure the safety of students and staff'. Simply put; until all risks associated by a student's attendance at school have been eliminated or minimised the student should not return from suspension.

Campaign Action

1. The Department will be called on to review the policies and procedures that are currently in place to minimise or eliminate the risks of workplace bullying, harassment and work related violence in consultation with the Federation.

2. The Federation will call for more resources and funding for schools and colleges to meet the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* in relation to risks posed by violent behaviour. This should include:

- the provision of public preschool education placements for all students with full access to any necessary early intervention strategies;
- sufficient resources including release time to facilitate consultation, including with affected classroom teachers and support staff around identifying and assessing and managing risks;
- providing additional support and resources to address risks relating to the physical environment of schools and colleges including overcrowding.

Professional Development

'We now have a Department with no capacity to provide professional development. No capacity to support teaching and learning. No curriculum expertise. No capacity to develop leadership' (Maurie Mulheron in Education, April 2017).

Significant and ongoing cuts to non-school based teaching service positions through successive restructures have resulted in the Department no longer having the capacity to deliver effective and relevant professional learning. This has left it to already overworked executive and classroom teachers to create their own professional learning from scratch, and schools and teachers prey to shonky, overpriced private providers.



Rather than focusing on onerous paperwork, the DoE needs to provide teachers with access to effective, targeted, face-to-face professional development rather than one-size-fits-all courses. Teachers need to be allowed time for study and time for meaningful work with students and colleagues.

Federation will campaign to ensure:

1. The DoE restore all of the NSBTS positions that support teaching and learning that have been cut from across the state since 2003.
2. The DoE provide a range of professional development courses to cater for the diverse needs of teachers in different roles and career stages.
3. The DoE will pay university and TAFE fees for all teachers undertaking tertiary studies relevant to their teaching practice.
4. All teachers have access to relevant academic literature through a DoE virtual library.
5. All teachers undertaking tertiary study are able to access adequate study leave.
6. University and TAFE study provides credit for professional learning.

Special Religious Education and Scripture in Schools

Recent evidence suggests that families are increasingly nominating “no religion” when completing student school enrolment forms. This data correlates with recent ABS census data showing a decline in religion-based affiliation.

Acknowledging the ever changing social landscape of school communities and the broader population, the complexities of school organisation and the sensitive nature of Special Religious Education, Federation will conduct a review of existing policy. The review will seek the views of members and representatives from parent and principal organisations.

The findings of such a review will inform a draft policy to be developed by the Federation’s Senior Officers for consideration at the 2018 Annual Conference.

Federation will write to the State Government to make sure they officially release the full findings of the review into Special Religious Education. Federation will use these findings to assist in its own review. In addition, the Federation remains opposed to the Federal Chaplaincy program and any locally funded positions and will seek information on it in this review.

Maximising Permanency for Teachers in NSW Public Schools

The Federation achieved a significant improvement in the current staffing agreement in the form of Clause 16, which allows schools to create additional permanent position using Gonski Funds. However, it would appear that few positions have been filled permanently under Clause 16 and the Federation will seek to maximise permanent employment for teachers, by:



1. Finalising and distributing the School Staffing campaign kit in Term 3.
2. Seeking a meeting with the peak NSW principal organisations with the aim of developing a joint approach to promoting and implementing Clause 16.
3. Pursuing with the Department the development of a renewed approach to implementing Clause 16.
4. Renewing the content for Federation Trade Union Training courses.
5. Including increased permanency as a key priority when pursuing campaign objectives with political parties in the lead up to the next state election.
6. Continuing to pursue with the Department the filling of vacant permanent teacher positions.
7. Seeking a commitment from the Department to properly resource the Staffing Unit.
8. Establishing a committee to consider Federation's development of a staffing claim.
9. Attempting to negotiate with the Department a clear, consistent and equitable policy for the filling of permanent positions on a temporary basis.

Injured Workers need your support

On June 19 2017 it will be five years since the NSW Government introduced sweeping changes to the Workers Compensation Legislation which cut the rights of those injured at work. In those five years Unions NSW, working with Federation and other unions, has coordinated a campaign to pressure the NSW Government to reverse the worst of these changes.

Improvements have included access to free legal representation, improved access for workers over 65 and an extension from 48 hours to up to three months for your GP to decide what treatment you may need, without having to seek approval from the insurer.

The campaign continues and current goals include:

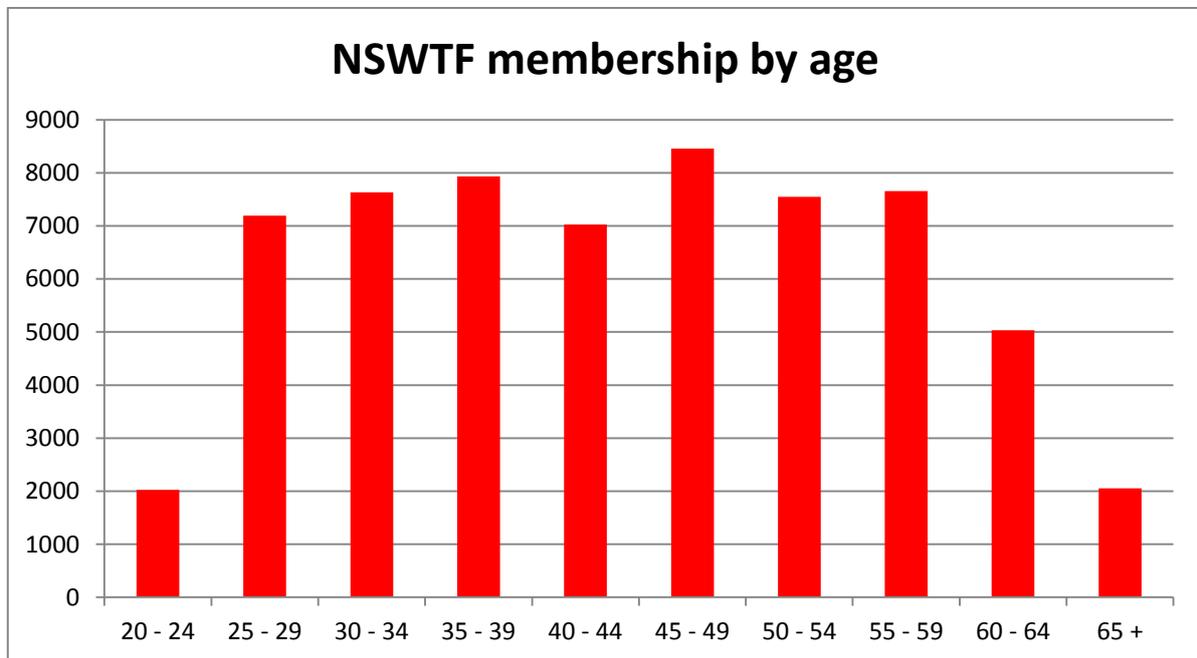
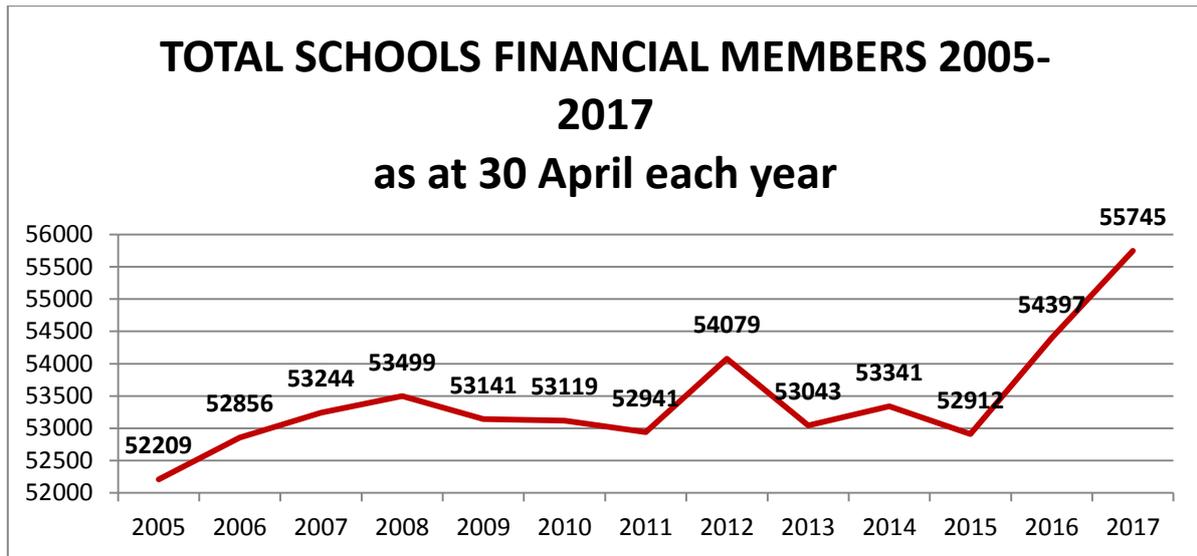
- Ending the five year limit on weekly payments
- Offering realistic suitable duties for those returning to work
- Increasing return to work rates
- Reinstating journey claim cover.

Federation members are urged to become informed and involved in this campaign. Go to nswforall.org.au for further information and to email your local MP to tell them to improve the rights of those injured in the workplace.

Recruitment - Join OUR Union!

Membership of the Federation continues to grow, particularly in the schools section (see first table). Also encouraging is the number of younger teachers joining the union (see second table). Nevertheless, despite positive trends, all members and particularly Workplace Committee Members should be asking any new teacher to the school to *join our union*.

Federation Representatives are also reminded to update the workplace list **at least** once a year through *Fed Reps Online*.



DPs Conference

The Federation Executive has determined to hold a “DPs” Conference on Saturday 2 September at Federation’s Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir Street, Surry Hills.

The conference will include a mixture of plenary sessions and workshops on a range of topics pertinent to Deputy Principals. The conference will provide an opportunity to explore and seek advice on a range of topics, network with colleagues and discuss school based issues.

As a general guideline, members eligible to attend the conference are those in schools where they are required to run the school in the principal’s absence. This includes:

- Deputy Principals in High Schools or Primary Schools
- APs in schools where there is no Deputy Principal
- HTs in High Schools or Central Schools where there is no Deputy Principal

Federation will fund one primary, and one secondary member fitting the criteria above, **from each Association**. An Association Officer (President or Secretary) must confirm approval of the Association delegate by signing the conference application form. Additional delegates may be sent to the conference at the cost of the Association, or at the cost to the individual.

Additional places will be available for members from the following groups, with selection of delegates taking into account geographical location and gender:

- Central Schools (up to 10 places)
- Aboriginal members (up to 10 places)
- Special Education Schools (up to 10 places)
- Small Schools (up to 10 places)

Attached is a registration form for all participants including a travel and accommodation booking section for country participants. All accommodation and flights for Federation funded delegates is booked by Federation.

Federation regards this conference as an important forum for Deputy Principals and encourages all eligible members to participate.

New Activist Conference 2017

The 2017 New Activist Conference will be held on Saturday 14 October from 9.00am to 4.30pm in the Federation Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir Street, Surry Hills.

The conference is for teachers in their first 5 years of teaching, or first 10 years if they hold a Federation position, who are interested in becoming more active within the Federation.

One delegate from each school Association will be funded by the Federation. In addition, the Federation will fund 20 Aboriginal members, 20 TAFE members and 5 Corrective Services members.

Associations are encouraged to endorse a delegate to attend. In addition, they are encouraged to send additional delegates funded by their Association.