

# Education



JOURNAL OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION

ISSUE 14 2025

QUARTERLY



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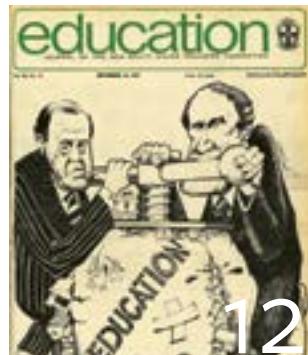
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# THE HEART OF TAFE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



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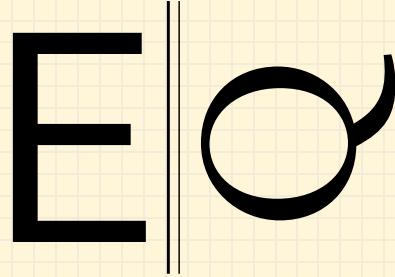


**ENTRIES CLOSE  
07 JULY 2025**



[aeufederal.org.au/photography-comp](http://aeufederal.org.au/photography-comp)

**Image credit:** 2024 National TAFE Photography Competition winner "Enjoyable Time" by Samin Zare. © AEU 2025 Authorised by Kevin Bates, Federal Secretary, **Australian Education Union**  
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Amber Flohm  
**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**  
Natasha Watt

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*Education* acknowledges the use of iStock and freelance imagery to supplement the provision of regular photography.

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ISSN 0013-1156

Opinions in published articles are not necessarily those of the editor or of the NSW Teachers Federation. Advertisements do not indicate Federation support or endorsement.

Authorised by Maxine Sharkey, General Secretary, NSW Teachers Federation,  
23-33 Mary St, Surry Hills 2010.  
Printed in Australia by IVE

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# PRESIDENT WRITES

**Henry Rajendra, President**

## Win or lose, there's work to do

**W**hen Australians went to the polls in May, the future of public education was on the line. Peter Dutton's Coalition was pledging to gut TAFE funding, refused to commit to fully funding public schools and was trying to stoke Trump-style culture wars against public school teachers.

But we didn't take Dutton's threats lying down — we fought right back. Thanks to thousands of Federation and Australian Education Union volunteers who leafleted, letterboxed and handed out how-to-votes at polling booths around the country, voters cast their ballots knowing how important this federal election was for public education. Now the results are in and the message from the Australian people couldn't have been clearer: threaten public education at your own risk.

Dutton's attempts to demonise public school teachers and talk down the public education system backfired. The new Parliament has an overwhelming majority of MPs and Senators — Labor, Greens, independents and other minor parties — who have committed to supporting public education.

I want to thank everyone who gave their time and energy to making this election campaign so successful. As I travelled around the state in the weeks leading up to, and including, election day, I saw public school teachers, principals and community members campaigning their hearts out. It was inspiring to see how visible our For Every Child and Rebuild With TAFE campaigns were and how strongly our members pushed to stand up for public education, our students and the profession.

When governments and parliaments recognise the value of public education — and the teachers who work so hard to make our public schools and TAFE colleges the best they can be — it has huge flow-on effects for society. Teachers feel more supported and secure in their work. It means more families and communities place their trust in public education. And it lets everyone focus on the most important thing: giving all students the high-quality education they deserve.

It's a big victory for our union and for our

movement. But we can't rest on our laurels. We need to hold the re-elected Albanese Government to its election promises: expanding Free TAFE, fully funding public schools to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard and the continued rebuilding of TAFE. As for the Liberal and National parties, they need to distance themselves from their anti-public education stance and support public school and TAFE teachers, students and communities if they wish to be taken seriously.

This will take much doing, noting Liberal leader Sussan Ley was a relentless critic of Free TAFE, making its abolition the centrepiece of many media appearances in the lead-up to the federal election.

So too for the National Party, which voted consistently against Free TAFE provisions despite the enormous impact it's having in regional, rural and remote areas, and also not promised to support the full funding of public education even though regional, rural and remote public schools would be among those to benefit the most.

Predictably, Peter Dutton's politics of division was a feature of the Coalition's federal election pitch; courting the likes of One Nation by engaging in preference deals with them and fuelling racial division in a desperate attempt to claw back votes from the far right. While a very difficult time for so many, it was heartening the nation as a whole rejected this divisive agenda on election day.

In a time where bigotry and discrimination are on the rise globally, public school and TAFE teachers have a special role to play in keeping people together. That's who we are: a union of teachers committed to fairness, equality and opportunity. We live those values in the classroom and in our communities.

We do what we do because we believe everyone — no matter where they live or where they're from — deserves a quality education and a decent life. No matter who's in power in Canberra or the political issue of the day, we hold ourselves to that truth. It has seen us through tough times in the past and will in years to come. For now, there's plenty of work to do — so let's get to it.

## IN BRIEF

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOAL

Federation is working to increase the supply of affordable housing for public school teachers, outlining a commitment to work with members and the broader union movement to make affordable housing a priority of governments.

At May Council, Federation resolved to:

- commission research papers that offer recommendations promoting housing as a mechanism to achieve economic equality as part of a just social wage for public sector teachers
- seek information from the membership with the intent to understand housing needs in relation to recruiting and retaining teachers in the public education system
- continue to work with the union movement to ensure housing for teachers in public education is affordable and ensures the supply and retention of teachers within the public education system regardless of the location or context of the co-located preschool, school, TAFE or departmental office.

“It is the responsibility of government to deliver funding and regulation for housing schemes as part of their economic responsibility to deliver a just social wage that guarantees qualified teacher supply into all public education settings and contexts,” the Council decision states. “Housing solutions for teachers in public education should include government-funded and maintained schemes and government-funded and maintained Teacher Housing Authority homes. Government must protect housing schemes from price gouging and wanton profiteering.”

Housing affordability is a major issue for teachers all over the country. A 2023 UNSW study found 90 per cent of teachers in NSW can't afford to live where they teach. Nearly 23,000 full-time teaching positions were located in postcodes where the median rent for a one-bedroom home was unaffordable on a graduate teachers' starting salary.

“The housing affordability crisis isn't just affecting teachers — it affects students, parents and communities,” Federation Senior Vice President Natasha Watt said. “Teachers must be able to afford to live close to where they teach. Teachers contribute to the fabric of communities where they work and live. It makes it harder to become part of the local community when commute times are too long. We've won big increases in pay and conditions for public school teachers in recent years. Housing affordability is also something that affects every aspect of a person's life. That's why Federation is joining with the rest of the union movement to see how we can make affordable housing a reality for Australians again.”

### AEU TAFE PHOTO COMP NOW OPEN

Submissions are now open for the Australian Education Union's annual 'The Heart of TAFE' photography competition.

TAFE students are invited to take photos that depict 'The Heart of TAFE' in 2025 and be part of telling a powerful visual story about the life-changing role of Australia's world-class TAFE system. Some \$14,000 in prizemoney is up for grabs, including \$5000 for first place, \$1000 for runner-up, and \$1000 for each state and territory winner. The winning photographs will also have their work published in the *Australian TAFE Teacher Magazine*.

Entries will be judged on relevance and/or interpretation of the theme, artistic merit and emotion. To learn more visit the Australian Education Union's website (scan the QR code on page 4).

## UNIONS UNITE AGAINST UNFAIR WORKERS COMP PROPOSALS

As NSW Treasurer Daniel Mookhey sought to push workers compensation changes through parliament recently, a rally was held adjacent to the NSW Government offices in Martin Place Sydney on 26 May.

Members from across the union movement protested against proposed changes that would make it much harder for injured workers to access mental health benefits and support.

### UNACCEPTABLE BURDEN SHIFT

“These changes will shift the financial burden from government to injured teachers and other workers,” Federation Deputy President Amber Flohm told the crowd.

“We know that when you increase the Whole Person Impairment [threshold] from 15 per cent to 31 [per cent], you effectively shut down psychological injury claims for workers in this state.”

“Doctors, mental health experts, lawyers and unions are standing united against these cuts because the fact remains, workers and essential workers and all workers in NSW deserve more than health that is determined by a spreadsheet.”

“Instead of focusing on preventing injuries, Treasury is focusing on preventing claims — and we cannot accept that.”

Ms Flohm said high workloads, high levels of burnout, bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment) and exposure to traumatic experiences and events are way too common in education.





Federation Deputy  
President Amber  
Flohm addresses  
the rally in Sydney

“[The proposed legislation] will do nothing for those individual injured workers or the teaching profession overall,” she said.

Federation supports Unions NSW’s five-point plan Financial Sustainability through prevention: a better way for NSW workers

compensation reform — fixing the system through prevention and supported return to work.

Members attended regional rallies in locations including Central Coast, Liverpool, Newcastle, Parramatta, Penrith, Tweed Heads, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.

## CONFERENCE BUILDS COMMUNITY

This year’s Federation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Members Conference and associated Friday Night Forum in May featured Aunty Brenda Matthews, author of the biography *The Last Daughter* and the director of the corresponding documentary.

On the Friday evening she shared her story before an intimate viewing of the film. Conference participants were fortunate enough to hear from Aunty Brenda again on the Saturday morning.

### MOVING MOMENTS

Both sessions moved members to tears as culture and belonging was examined through the lens of healing. As Aunty Brenda shared her story of being thrown between two worlds without the tools or skills to navigate the transition, members contemplated the duality of culture, family and country.

Her words of “healed people heal people” gave the audience an opportunity to ask themselves whether they “want to be a hurter or be a healer”.

Federation President Henry Rajendra told delegates the federal election result was more than just a win for a public education, it was also a win for a better Australia,

sending a strong message that as a nation we reject the recent racism and bigotry that the election brought to the forefront.

During the panel discussion members Charline Emzin-Boyd, Marcia Browning, Kerry Toomey, Ian Frape and Waine Donovan discussed recent political events and the path for moving forward.

### WORKSHOPS ADDRESS DIVERSE MEMBER NEEDS

While the Friday night and the morning sessions brought emotion and contemplation, the afternoon provided a variety of workshops tailored to the diverse needs of our members.

The conference is an important opportunity to grow community and support. Our Aboriginal teachers and Torres Strait Islander teachers are pivotal in fostering quality education for all students, but especially our Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students.

The annual conference is open to all financial Aboriginal members and Torres Strait Islander members and includes a Saturday night dinner and networking event.

Julie McMullen, Editor



Jess with former student  
Jordan Duncan during Star  
Struck in 2019

**H**elping kids discover the power of movement and creative expression and come out of their shells along the way has been one of Jess Maharaj's dreams for as long as she can remember.

"At school I always loved dance classes," Jess, a dance teacher at Camden Haven High School, said.

"I came from a big family — I'm one of eight — so I didn't always get the opportunity to go to dance school and things like that, but I remember seeing my dance teacher at the front of the room and thinking how happy she seemed. It made me think 'Wow, I want to do that'."

After finishing school, Jess won a scholarship to study a Bachelor of Dance Education at the Australian College of Physical Education (ACPE).

"I absolutely loved uni — I think that's where I found myself. That was the first time I really got to work with industry professionals and have a range of experiences like that."

During her time at ACPE, Jess travelled to Cambodia on a cultural experience program with the Cambodian Children's Fund. Teaching dance and physical education to children in orphanages there sparked a desire to bring a love of dance and creative expression to kids in Australia from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly in rural and regional areas.

After graduating, Jess began teaching dance in schools on a

casual basis. While working in a temporary role at a school in Camden in Sydney's southwest Jess first encountered a Federation representative.

"Fed was doing a site visit that day. I had a chat to one of the team members and she gave me so much information," she said. "Our faculty was really supportive — they were all proud members and told me it would be a really good idea to join. It's a great community to be in, to learn how we can protect our rights and support each other in our industry."

While Jess was a regular at union meetings from the start, her involvement with Federation has deepened over time. She's served as Minutes Secretary for the Moree Teachers Association and assisted her local Fed Reps and Women's Contacts.

"In my early years I was a bit shy to put my face at the front of the room. It wasn't until I moved to Moree that I started to get more involved in Federation and got to understand what it's about on a deeper level," she said.

"I find now I'm having more of those conversations with members of the younger generation coming through and encouraging them to join Federation because I know how valuable this community is to be in."

"Jess has always been a huge support and asset to the communities she's worked in," one of her former Moree

Secondary College Federation representatives said. "She provided tireless support to me as a Fed Rep for many years. Its not about the positions we hold, but rather all the work that is done behind the scenes. Jess stands to represent the ongoing work of teachers and activists, showing the power of the collective and how our impact can bring so much good to local communities."

Since starting her teaching career 10 years ago, Jess has run dance and creative arts workshops, including the New England Dance Workshops in Tamworth and Armidale, and dance groups at Moree Secondary College for Starstruck and the Schools Spectacular.

One of the highlights of her work so far came during her time in Moree, when Jess was involved in bringing the Bangarra Dance Theatre to town as part of their Rekindling youth program. Jess also reached out to local community organisations like Yulugi Marumali, a Moree dance company run by Gamilaraay woman Shae Duncan, to help the program have as wide an impact as possible.

"The kids loved it — Bangarra were fantastic with them. It was great to see everyone come together and form connections and learn about Moree's rich cultural history," Jess said.

"We saw a huge improvement in attendance and behaviour among the kids who were involved in the program. They found a real sense of purpose and pride in what they were achieving. We had kids who had never danced before, Aboriginal kids who'd never done traditional Aboriginal dance before who got to do that dance for the first time. It was beautiful to watch how so many kids took on leadership roles in the program and developed those skills and came out of their shells to perform in a showcase at the end. A lot of the kids formed real bonds with the Elders who were part of the program as well."

Jess has noticed that helping kids who are shy or self-conscious become confident enough to try dancing has become a bigger part of her work since COVID-19.

"That's something we're constantly working with as dancers. The kids need a safe opportunity to dance or experience it — little lead-in activities to build that rapport, or telling them to bring a friend, or using a Taylor Swift song they like. It can't always be talking about knowledge and technique; it's about bringing it down to the kids' level and knowing them so they feel supported."

Jess's advice to dance and creative arts teachers starting out is simple: "Build your community."

"It's challenging work, but dance teachers are very passionate and willing to help each other. You cannot do it all yourself — you need those mentors and those networks."

That need to work together also informs Jess's other piece of advice for young teachers: join Federation.

"That sense of community is so important — the reassurance that someone has your back if you need it," she said. "If you ever feel like you're stuck with a question in your workplace, the union is a great place to seek that advice and support."

**"We saw a huge improvement in attendance and behaviour among the kids who were involved in the program"**



**Jess with performers and community at various events**





# Celebration time!

The opportunity for guaranteed funding and improved conditions for schools and TAFE remains alive after the re-election of the Albanese Government on 3 May.

**F**ederation President Henry Rajendra said the election result was “a massive win for public education”.

“We staved off the threat of a Dutton-led government that would have decimated all we have achieved for TAFE and public schools,” Mr Rajendra said.

“Dutton made clear he would cut TAFE and wage culture wars against public schools instead of funding them properly.”

“This result proves beyond doubt that Australians are proud of our public education system, we value it and we want it to be strong, equal and fair,” he said.

“We have an enormous opportunity to rebuild the institution of public education — to make sure that every student, no matter where they live or how much money their parents make, gets the quality public education they deserve.”

## **ELECTION 2025: A CRITICAL MOMENT**

During the first term of the Albanese Labor Government, campaigning by the Australian Education Union (AEU) and its branches, including Federation, its members and allies achieved:

- agreements between the federal government and states and territories to deliver 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard — the minimum funding required to meet students’ needs — to all public schools
- 100,000 Free TAFE places annually
- increased TAFE funding, improving job security for TAFE teachers and giving students vocational education and training options
- new laws enabling increased job security for long-term casual and temporary TAFE teachers.

Federation members — who fought hard for years to secure these significant funding and structural improvements — did not want to risk the election of a Coalition government and jeopardise the commitments made by the Albanese Government.

Members understood that the provision of high-quality public education for decades to come was at stake, so participated in Federation’s election campaign activities.

## **A WINNING STRATEGY**

When the election was called for 3 May, Federation put into motion an election strategy to mobilise the public education movement.



Our members were out in force during the election period

Mobile billboards swung by public schools and TAFE colleges in targeted federal electorates to engage members, community and the media in our campaign.

Members volunteered to drop leaflets in letterboxes in their neighbourhood on 6 April to ensure voters understood that the election of a Dutton government would put public education in jeopardy.

School and TAFE leaflets were also handed out at railway stations.

Federation Workplace Committees addressed P&C and Aboriginal Education Consultative Group meetings.

At public education forums, audiences were educated on why voting for candidates who support public education was critical.

Members handed out the AEU's how-to-vote leaflets — outlining how Labor would deliver full funding for public schools, that the Greens support fully funding public schools and that the Coalition has never supported fully funding public schools — at some pre-poll locations.

From before election booths opened at 8am on election day until they closed at 6pm, more than 350 Federation members across more than 90 booths greeted voters with the AEU leaflets and explained that the outcome for public school and TAFE students would be very different depending on the election result.

“Our For Every Child and Rebuild With TAFE campaigns were visible at polling booths all across the state, making sure that voters knew the choice was between those that value public education and a Liberal-National Coalition that wants to tear it down,” Mr Rajendra said.

“Together, we made sure public education was on people’s minds when they went to the ballot box.”

For more election photos visit pages 32 and 33 and visit our Flickr account



## **Our campaigning forces** **politicians to act**

Relentless campaigning by Federation and Australian Education Union members is impossible for politicians to ignore, comments at Federation’s Western Sydney Education Forum on 10 April reveal.

“[Federation is] like a walking, talking army, keeping governments and oppositions on the straight and narrow in terms of education, keeping needs-based funding always at the front of our mind.”

“I know that Federation will always take it to us on behalf of members in classrooms and entire campuses as well.”

“If anyone knows how hard Federation can campaign, it’s me.”

### **NSW Deputy Premier and Education Minister Prue Car**

“You’re what inspires me to act, but more than that, you are the reason that forces governments to act ... When no one else is fighting, it’s this union that’s fighting, that never gives up. It has always fought for public education [and] will never stop.”

### **Federal Education Minister Jason Clare**

to Federation President Henry Rajendra and AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe

# education

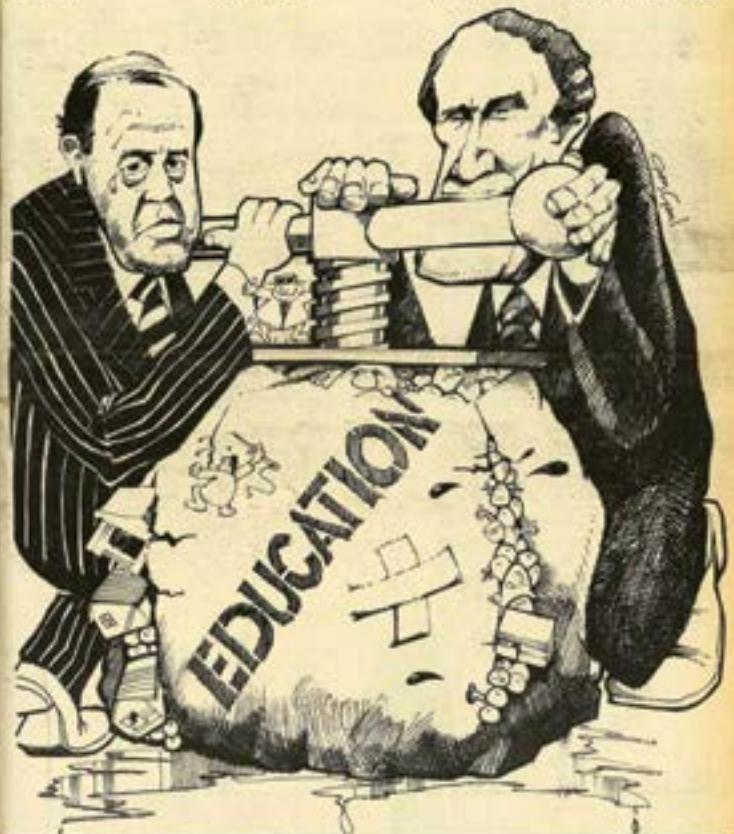
JOURNAL OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Vol. 26, No. 15

SEPTEMBER 14, 1977

Price: 50 cents

CODE OF ETHICAL PROFESSIONALISM

1977 **WESTERN TEACHERS FIGHT BACK**

— Page 226, 228



1991



2002



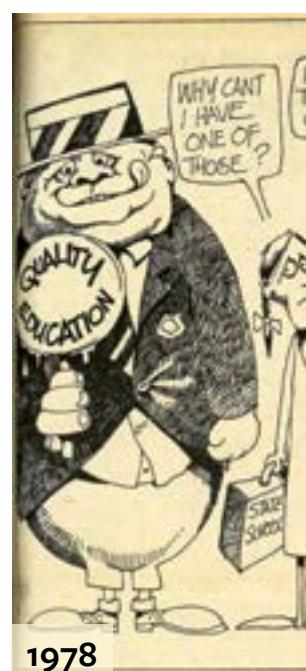
1999



1981



1987



1978

Greg has used his wit and a pen to sum up the heart of the matter in a few words and a powerful illustration

# Laughter in the face of struggle

Words *Kerri Carr*

**A** long the road to full funding for public schools, you may have felt like crying — but cartoonist Greg Gaul is likely to have drawn a smile from you on the issue with his satirical cartoons in Federation's journal.

As we celebrate the federal election result, which brings us closer to all public schools being fully funded, we thought you would enjoy some of Greg's clever takes on the topic since he first started drawing for *Education* in 1977.

While writers have taken hundreds of words to explain the situation, he has used his wit and a pen to sum up the heart of the matter in a few words and a powerful illustration.

Greg first drew for the journal when black and white was

the only option. This was a time when there was no readily available fax, internet or email.

"I would make the journey from home in the Blue Mountains to the Sussex Street offices to be briefed about the subjects for the illustrations, return home and draw, before heading back to town with the work," he told *Education* in 2019, when some of his cartoons for Federation were showcased in an exhibition of his work.

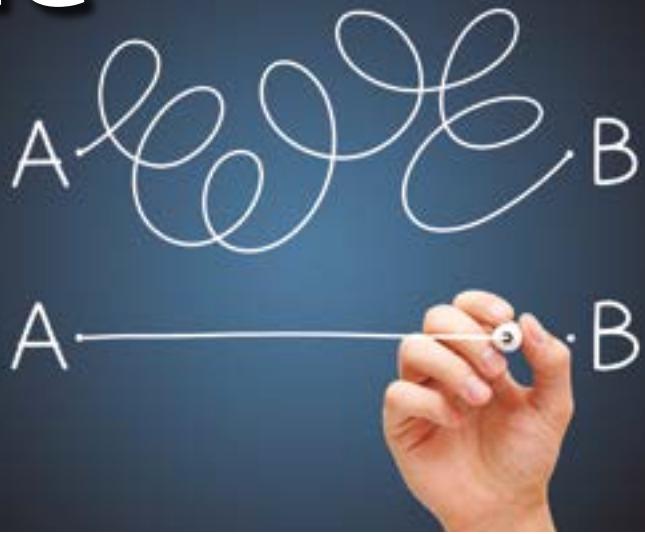
Over the years, technological advances in newspaper printing enabled full-colour newspapers, so Greg started colouring his drawings using coloured pencils and later enhanced them with computer design software.

Greg's wit, humour and heart have enlivened *Education* and our union for 46 years.

Thanks Greg!



# Teaching life made easier



The teaching profession continues to enjoy significant improvements introduced in the 2024 schools Award. These include improvements to teachers' and principals' workload and addressing burnout, plus employment practices that specifically target the gendered nature of the teaching profession and attract and retain teachers.

"This package embeds your rightful place as a trusted and respected teacher, with autonomy to make your own decisions about your work and intellectual labour, for the benefit of your students and the communities you serve," Deputy President Amber Flohm said.

This edition shines a light on:

- workload reduction, including administrative tasks
- more equitable professional learning funds alongside procedures for Performance and Development Plans
- increases to support, including leave and allowances.

Many of the gains allow teachers to access various levels of support, additional allowances in times of need and uncertainty, as well as measures to relieve the pressures impacting teachers' work, health and personal lives.

## REDUCING THE ADMINISTRATION BURDEN

Through the Award, the Department also committed to ongoing discussions on workload reductions and a number of programs to reduce the administrative burden on teachers:

- a new program to make reports easier to understand and construct
- increasing administration support for 700 schools through a refocussed school administration improvement program (now called the School Admin Reduction Program)
- moving beginning teacher release funding to staffing entitlement allocation (this is a project already underway).

**Further measures negotiated through the Award with the Department include the following areas, which have commenced implementation across the public education system.**

## BETTER DIRECTION ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

More direction to schools to ensure professional learning funds are used equitably, so all teachers can engage in funded

Professional Learning. Learning will be connected to teachers' Performance and Development Plans to allow for planning over time.

## SORRY BUSINESS

Family and community service leave of up to two days per occasion will be granted as an entitlement, and cannot be declined, when a teacher is seeking additional leave on the death of a family member for the purposes of Aboriginal kinship, in accordance with Family and Community Service (FACS) leave provisions. This allows for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in culture and support community in moments of mourning and healing knowing they have the support to do so.

## REPRODUCTIVE AND FERTILITY LEAVE

Significant additions to Reproductive and Fertility Leave allow teachers more flexibility and autonomy for their futures.

In addition to the current paid leave for special fertility support, teachers are entitled to an additional 10-days of leave without pay for this purpose.

Additional unpaid reproductive and fertility leave includes managing fertility treatment, pregnancy, breastfeeding, menstruation, breast and prostate screening and issues related to perimenopause and menopause.

## FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The evidence requirement for Family and Domestic Violence Leave has been removed and this leave type is no longer reflected on pay slips, helping to ensure teacher safety.

The Department is also working with Federation to:

- develop an emergency response process, which may include notification to an alternative workplace manager
- develop further resources and undertake education in relation to family and domestic violence, including for LGBTIQA+ teachers.

Teachers facing domestic and family violence are now entitled to an additional 10-days of leave without pay, as well as the previous paid leave. This leave without pay entitlement is automatically approved.



**Larelle Gorman**



**Jessie Eather**



**Caitlin Bradley**



**Kate Wealleans**



**Christianna Billows**



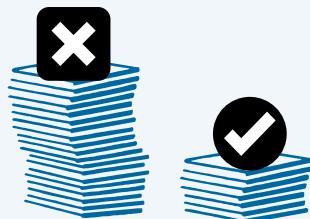
**Nancy Penfold**

## **Members happy about the new inclusions**

### **REDUCING THE ADMINISTRATION BURDEN**

Since I started teaching, my administrative workload would have easily doubled in 20 years. I'm excited to see this decreasing, which will help with teacher retention.

**Larelle Gorman, Lake Illawarra High School**



### **REPRODUCTIVE AND FERTILITY LEAVE**

As a single person, I'm really excited to be able to ... go down that route on my own, if I want to. [IVF treatment takes] so much time out of your month and your year ... Living in the country, it's not an easy thing to go and do.



**Jessie Eather, Armidale Secondary College**

As someone who is in my early 30s, I'm at a point in my life where starting a family is on the cards. Knowing that I have the ability to take leave and be supported makes that next step a big deal.

**Caitlin Bradley, Hay War Memorial High School**



### **BETTER DIRECTION ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

As a teacher-librarian, it is especially important that the professional learning I access is tailored to supporting my role and individualised Performance Development Plan goals.



**Kate Wealleans, Tuggerawong Public School and Chatswood High School**

### **FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Just knowing that the leave is there and that there are safety measures to ensure my protection is a great comfort, regardless of whether I think I'll ever need it. Expanding the criteria of who can access this and including more LGBTIQA+ circumstances is a step in the right direction to ensure safety for all teachers.



**Christianna Billows, Finigan School of Distance Education**

### **SORRY BUSINESS**

Securing Sorry Business leave is a step in the right direction, showing respect for mob and allowing time to grieve. It's a start, as we work towards truly supporting our people and creating an inclusive system.

**Nancy Penfold, casual teacher**

**AWARD  
IMPLEMENTATION  
RESOURCE**



# A time and place devoted to improving teachers' working lives

Words Kerri Carr

**S**chool and TAFE days leave little time to share great things happening in our workplaces and address the problems that make working in public education settings more difficult than it needs to be, but Federation's regular local Teachers Association meetings — held after work — are dedicated to conversations about issues in workplaces, ensuring a strong public education system with well-qualified and supported teachers, and protecting and improving teachers' working conditions and salaries.

We encourage you to attend your local Teachers Association meetings to share your ideas and concerns with your union colleagues and contribute to the efforts needed to improve teachers' working lives.

#### **RELATABLE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

You are likely to relate to the issues being raised, because nearby workplaces often face similar situations. Many issues are common to the wider profession. Similarly, it can be an opportunity for teachers to share the good things that are working in their schooling environment and share strategies and knowledge.

Teachers discuss issues like:

- staff shortages
- special education
- work health and safety
- resourcing
- school mergers
- the need for teacher housing, given rental shortages.

#### **BROAD POOL OF EXPERIENCES**

One of the brilliant things about Teachers Association meetings is that the breadth of experience among members contributes to informed problem solving and decision-making, be it the sharing of an idea that's worked in another workplace or a suggestion that's never been raised before.

#### **STAY INFORMED**

Reports from the local Organiser and Association Councillor/s will keep you informed about what's been discussed at state Council, planned campaign activities and opportunities such as Trade Union Training course offerings and the affirmative action Anna Stewart Program.

#### **INFLUENCE UNION POLICY AND DIRECTION**

Teachers Associations are the key avenue for members to let Federation know what issues they want the union to focus on. After an association has passed a motion on an issue, the association may bring the motion forward for consideration by state Council or Annual Conference, our peak decision-making body. Topics raised by Teachers Associations that have been discussed at Council or Annual Conference, and now form part of Federation policy, include:

- workload
- work health and safety
- school infrastructure such as air conditioning, new builds and maintenance
- support and provisions for students with additional needs.

**Left: Teachers gather at an Inner City Teachers Association meeting**



### COMMUNITY-BASED CHANGE MAKERS

Teachers Association members not only identify priority areas, they help campaign for the changes they seek.

These local collectives organise action to win local change or contribute to broader campaigns.

Members conduct campaign actions including lobbying local MPs, community outreach through stalls and letterboxing, hosting events and local protest actions.

### FROM THE SEED OF AN IDEA TO SUCCESS

Campaigning and/or negotiations based on ideas and concerns initially raised in Teachers Association meetings and endorsed by Federation have gone on to achieve wins to benefit the whole profession. Examples include:

- provisions in Award settlements such as meeting time restrictions and flexible work arrangements
- improvements in Departmental consultation regarding work health and safety matters
- changes to Departmental policy on new builds.

### DEVELOP SKILLS

Through Association-organised Trade Union Training seminars, members can develop skills to build Federation engagement at the workplace level.

### BE PART OF CHANGE

Check Federation's events calendar for the date of the next Association meeting in your area.



**Inner West Teachers Association members rallied outside Anthony Albanese's electorate office in 2024 as part of Federation's For Every Child campaign**

"Everybody is made to feel welcome. You learn about Federation's opinions on issues, what's happening in other schools and how to get the most out of the Award and Staffing Agreement."

**Chantelle Chong,**  
Melonba Public School, Hawkesbury TA



"It was really great to work with like-minded people [from my association] on election day and be inspired by each other to be activists for something that is so important to us as teachers – full funding for public schools."

**Trish McCombie,**  
Wheeler Heights Public School, Manly-Warringah TA



"The meetings are a very supportive environment... It's nice to find solutions out of other people's ideas."

**Tahlia McGuinness,**  
Denison College (Bathurst campus), Bathurst TA



"You get to have conversations that you can't have in the staffroom or during a staff meeting.

It's a more relaxed place to raise problems and there's no students to interrupt you."

**Uvaraj Ganesbaran,**  
Guyra Central School, Guyra TA



"Teachers Association meetings tie teachers – who spend all their time in a single workplace – to the wider teaching service, as teachers don't get to network with other schools during the school day."

**Jacob Fryatt,**  
Taree High School, Manning River TA



"The meetings are a good way to stay updated on campaigns."

**Trang Dao,**  
Moree Secondary College, Moree TA



"When I got in the room I felt like I'd found my people. It's a safe place to air concerns. I feel supported and not alone in my thoughts and my experiences."

**Sinead O'Hara,**  
Mortlake Public School, Inner West TA



"Meetings are conducted in a respectful environment where you learn from one another. There's a strong social aspect. We stay for dinner afterwards and share common experiences from the profession."

**Chris Suter,**  
Carlton Public School, St George TA



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# Gender-neutral class greetings

Here are some easy suggestions to be more inclusive

Have you ever stood in front of a class and said “Okay, guys, eyes to the front” or something similar? While most teachers have moved away from saying phrases like “Okay, boys and girls”, there are times when we may, accidentally, be addressing whole classes or groups using gendered language.

## Easy basics

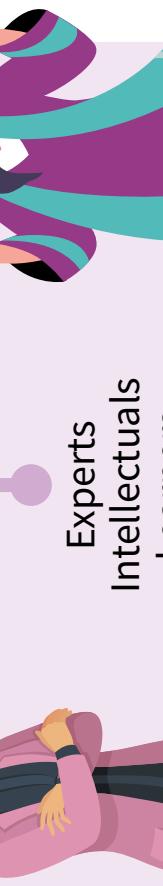
These are terms that can be put into action quickly. They are perfect for those starting out with changing their language behaviours as well as for situations where creative would not be appropriate.

## Empowering terms

Consider using phrases that empower students. Consistent reinforcement of self-worth allows students to value themselves and become leaders, motivators and professionals.



Experts  
Intellectuals



Grade level  
Students  
Everyone  
Everybody

- Learners
- Epic humans
- Awesome humans
- Future leaders
- Change-makers
- Superstars

An illustration of a person sitting cross-legged on the floor, holding a silver laptop. They are wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, dark blue pants, and brown shoes. A yellow backpack with a green diamond logo is leaning against their back. A green book is on the floor to the right. To the left, the word 'de level' is written vertically. To the right, the words 'dents', 'erone', and 'rybody' are stacked vertically.

## Subject-specific

To engage your students, use terminology that relates to the subject area you are teaching. By associating the subject with the relevant profession, students feel their knowledge is valued and view themselves as professionals in those spaces.

Artists

Musicians

Composers

Scholars

Collaborators

Readers	Mathematicians
Writers	Critical thinkers
Actors	Problem-solvers
Playwrights	
Poets	

## Scientists Explorers Investigators

**Subject-specific**

**Athletes**  
**Team Achievers**

**Scientists**  
**Explorers**  
**Investigators**

**Mathematicians**  
**Critical thinkers**  
**Problem-solvers**

**Readers**  
**Writers**  
**Actors**  
**Playwrights**  
**Poets**

**Artists**  
**Musicians**  
**Composers**

**Scholars**  
**Collaborators**  
**Historians**

To engage your students, use terminology that relates to the subject area you are teaching. By associating the subject with the relevant profession, students feel their knowledge is valued and view themselves as professionals in those spaces.

Authorised by Maxine Sharkey, General Secretary, NSW Teachers Federation, 23-33 Mary St, Surry Hills 2010. 25046

**Andrew Clifton**

When I see someone wearing an LGBTIQA+ pin or lanyard I feel safe. I know this is someone I can be myself around, with the courage to visibly show their allyship. It makes me believe that we can make this world a better place, together with the young people we teach. I feel most affirmed and hopeful when allies speak up, share their pronouns and raise issues of inclusion. Those of us in the community have no choice but to advocate, but we can't do this alone.

**Jack Brooks**

When I see people include their pronouns in their email signature, it is a visible demonstration of inclusion and support for LGBTIQA+ students and staff and a clear indication that the person including their pronouns is a safe and supportive person.

**Katie Cherrington**

Representation at Mardi Gras is important because people can see what they can be. It is an opportunity to celebrate our unique diversity and culture without shame. And it is an opportunity to celebrate what in some spaces is marginalised and silenced. Seeing this celebration is vital in providing a balance to the negative experiences we are sometimes subjected to as queer people.

**Demelza Sawyer**

It's important to show our kids and our peers that we are all allowed to be who we are and we are not going to put up with the rising tide of intolerance.

**Ollie Hand**

It's so important to have [LGBTIQA+] representation for the kids so that they know it's okay. How are they going to do that if it's not role modelled?



# Advocacy: a tool for inclusive culture



words *Kerri Carr*



**E**veryone deserves to be treated with respect and fairness.

While Federation speaks up for members' individual, professional and civil rights at a government and department level, a healthy workplace culture is dependent on local members advocating for respect and fairness.

Empowered by the knowledge that your voice and actions have the potential to have an immediate positive impact on your colleagues, you are encouraged to seize relevant moments in the workplace to champion dignity and equity.

One section of our membership that isn't always treated with respect and fairness in society is LGBTIQA+ people, who often face high levels of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion.

## PERSONAL AND POWERFUL ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

While Federation continues to campaign for society-wide inclusion of LGBTIQA+ people, in the confines of individual workplaces there are a number of ways you, as an individual Federation member, can support LGBTIQA+ identifying colleagues, students and parents/carers:

- promote workplace standards and values of equality, respect and communication
- wear a lanyard or pin that demonstrates your support for members of the LGBTIQA+ community
- include your pronouns in your email signature
- use teaching resources and materials that include LGBTIQA+ representation, such as the centre liftout
- call out and challenge homophobic language, remarks and behaviours as they occur
- vocally and publicly support those who challenge and/or face anti-LGBTIQA+ sentiment in the workplace.

Actions like these will be a positive signal to LGBTIQA+ colleagues that you are their ally.

## SPREAD THE LOVE

Your leadership on respect and fairness has the potential to inspire your workplace colleagues to take similar stances, making LGBTIQA+ members feel they are welcome and supported and have allies in their workplace.

As these actions are undertaken in concert across workplaces and members gain the confidence to speak up during informal discussions in the wider community, respect and fairness will spread one interaction at a time.

As you and your colleagues gain confidence in standing up for respect and fairness, through your actions you'll inspire people in their sphere of influence to do likewise.

## FEDERATION'S SUPPORT FOR LGBTIQA+ MEMBERS

Our Federation Representatives and Women's Contacts support members with LGBTIQA+ issues in the workplace and many Teachers Associations have an LGBTIQA+ Contact.

City and Country Organisers and Professional Support also advise members about workplace LGBTIQA+ issues.

The union's LGBTIQA+ Special Interest Group (SIG) is concerned with how LGBTIQA+ issues affect teachers and workplaces. The SIG is open to any Federation member, regardless of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and intersex status. Meetings are held once per term, both in person and via videoconference.

The SIG is active year-round, including at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, regional Pride events and Wear It Purple Day. It also raises awareness of Federation campaigns in support of LGBTIQA+ people, such as our support for marriage equality and our opposition to ►►



Federation Deputy Secretary (Operations) Mel Smith

It's very important, as an ally, to stand next to people to show them I support their freedom to be who they want. Teachers and young people do amazing things when they are safe and free to do so, so it's very important that public school teachers are always at [Sydney] Mardi Gras and supporting its excellent themes.

To be someone who is queer in a school community and feels alone is terrible, so we want to make sure that students don't feel alone – that they feel part of their school community, feel accepted and are able to thrive.



Senior Vice President Natasha Watt

◀ 21

One Nation's harmful Religious Freedom Bill in 2020. To join the LGBTIQA+ SIG please contact Federation via phone (02) 9217 2100 or email [lgbtiq@nswtf.org.au](mailto:lgbtiq@nswtf.org.au).

The LGBTIQA+ Restricted Committee also makes policy recommendations to Federation's Council about issues affecting LGBTIQA+ members.

Support for LGBTIQA+ members is covered in Trade Union Training's New Activist Conference and LGBTIQA+ Association Contacts courses.

#### STRIVING FOR EQUALITY

Our advocacy extends beyond support for LGBTIQA+ members in workplaces. Federation has shown leadership on gender and sexuality equality issues since the 1970s. Cases of discrimination against gay and lesbian public-school teachers like Greg Weir and Penny Short were some of the most high-profile struggles against the institutionalised homophobia of the day and led to the anti-discrimination laws that protect our members today.

In 2025, we demonstrate our support for the LGBTIQA+ community by participating in events such as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (including Fair Day) and regional Pride events in Newcastle, Wagga Wagga, Kempsey, Parramatta, Hay and Dubbo.

#### TAFE TALK

### Privatisation of vocational education: never again

**ROB LONG and KATHY NICHOLSON**

Federation's call to never again privatisate TAFE is a plea to preserve the integrity and accessibility of vocational education in Australia.

It is a call to ensure that TAFE remains a public institution dedicated to serving the educational needs of all Australians, regardless of their socio-economic background.

By keeping TAFE public, we can safeguard the future of vocational education and ensure that it continues to play a vital role in Australia's economic and social development.

Recently, the Minns Government committed to remove TAFE NSW from the former Coalition government's experiment with neoliberalism — the contestable vocational education and training (VET) funding market — which trashed TAFE and has been a disaster for TAFE students, teachers, support staff and local communities.

The contestable funding model transferred public funds from TAFE institutions to private for-profit entities with disastrous effect. Teachers were made redundant and casualised, TAFE suffered a significant loss of corporate knowledge, student fees increased, TAFE course offerings dropped and rural and regional education was left devastated.

The impact on the workforce cannot be overstated. TAFE graduates are essential across the economy, including in industries such as healthcare, construction, hospitality and many others. A decline in the quality of TAFE education directly affects the skill level of the workforce, leading to broader economic implications. The important role of access and equity, second-chance learning and disability support cannot be overlooked.

One of the most significant issues with privatisation is the shift in focus from education to profit. Private providers are primarily driven by the need to generate revenue, which results in cost-cutting measures that compromise the quality of education. This profit-driven approach undermines the fundamental purpose of TAFE, which is to provide accessible and high-quality vocational education to all Australians.

Federal and state governments have used increased compliance measures to attempt to "weed out" dodgy private for-profit trainers, but this increased compliance has had detrimental impacts on student and teacher workload, reducing the quality of education and increasing administrative burdens.

We need to rebuild high-quality vocational education without the increased burden of government compliance.

We need to rebuild TAFE to attract, recruit and retain the best teachers.

We need to rebuild the confidence of students. Thousands of students have been disadvantaged by unscrupulous private training providers. Many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have found themselves priced out of essential training programs.

We need to rebuild quality vocational education for all Australians, with a future of public funding exclusive to TAFE.

**Kathy Nicholson** is a Life Member of Federation. **Rob Long** is a former TAFE Organiser and a delegate educator for the ACTU.

## EARLY CAREER INSIGHTS

### The accreditation journey

**KATINKA KASTNER** Membership and Training Officer

#### WHY DO WE HAVE ACCREDITATION?

Teacher accreditation helps protect the integrity and status of the profession and ensures school students are taught by qualified teachers who continue to meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards).

#### WHEN DO I GET STARTED?

If you're Conditionally accredited, it means that you are still completing your degree and you may be eligible to teach at the same time. At this stage in your career, although you may feel pressure from schools to work or take on a bigger teaching load, it's important to continue to dedicate time to finishing your studies.

If you're Provisionally accredited, you can begin working towards becoming accredited at Proficient and list this as one of your goals in your Performance and Development Plan (PDP). Your school has an obligation to support you to meet your PDP goals and throughout your accreditation journey.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NSA), which regulates teacher accreditation in NSW, recommends a minimum 160 days of teaching is necessary for a teacher to meet the Standards for accreditation at Proficient.

However, it is important to note that salary benefits associated with Proficient Teacher accreditation commence after completing 406 days of teaching. From the moment you submit your application in eTAMS it could take up to three months to process.

As a point of reference, there are about 200 teaching days in a calendar year, so it's advisable to have completed the requirements for teacher accreditation and submit your application three months before you're due to complete your 406 days.

#### WHERE DO I GET HELP?

You will work closely with your accreditation supervisor during this process and their role is to support you. If you're Provisionally accredited and don't have a supervisor yet, be proactive and contact your principal to have one allocated.

NESA's *NSW Teacher Accreditation Manual* sets out all requirements for teacher accreditation. Additional documents are available on the NESA and Department of Education's websites. Particularly relevant to Provisionally accredited teachers are the *Applying for Proficient Teacher Accreditation Procedure* and the *Proficient Teacher Evidence Guide*.

This article touches on some of the elements of the accreditation processes and it's important to remember that these processes change frequently. For up-to-date information go to the NESA website or call Federation's Professional Support line on 1300 654 369.

Federation's free Beginning Teacher Conferences include workshops on gaining and maintaining accreditation, sessions which outline teacher working conditions and professional learning on behavior management, planning and programming and Aboriginal education. Conferences are planned for Newcastle on 21 June and Bundanoon and Dubbo on 20 September. For more details visit [nswtf.org.au](http://nswtf.org.au), call Trade Union Training on (02) 9217 2460 or email [tut@nswtf.org.au](mailto:tut@nswtf.org.au).



Federation's free Beginning Teacher Conferences are a valuable resource for early-career educators



## YARNING IN PROGRESS

### Federation workshop empowers principals to lead Aboriginal education

**RUSSELL HONNERY** Aboriginal Education Officer

A recent workshop at Federation's Principals Conference led by experienced Aboriginal members, entitled *Leading Aboriginal Education in Your School*, provided invaluable insights for principals.

With two back-to-back sessions held to cater to a large and diverse audience from various school contexts, the workshop focused on building cultural knowledge and understanding to lead Aboriginal education effectively.

The session was divided into three key focus areas:

- the policy context of Aboriginal education
- fostering cultural connections and relationships
- practical implementation strategies.

Participants explored Federation's Aboriginal education resources, key frameworks and strategies for improving cultural responsiveness within schools.

The first focus area emphasised the importance of understanding the policy landscape that drives and underpins Aboriginal education in NSW schools. Attendees discussed Federation's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and its alignment with the 25-Year Approach and the NSW Department of Education's *Guiding Principles in leading Aboriginal education and Strong strides together* documents.

The second area concentrated on culture and connection, recognising the critical role of cultural responsiveness in shaping a more inclusive school environment. Principal participants were guided in ways to create stronger ties with local Aboriginal communities, create culturally safe environments, collaborate effectively with local organisations and support and ensure localised cultural knowledge is embedded into the curriculum.

Finally, the workshop addressed the notion that leading Aboriginal education requires more than knowledge — it demands action, commitment and a culturally responsive approach that drives meaningful change.

This workshop empowered participants with transformative strategies to implement key frameworks effectively, ensuring Aboriginal education is embedded in school practices. Through robust discussions, participants explored how to leverage Federation's resources, enhance family and community connections and develop culturally responsive teaching approaches that authentically meet the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

The workshop was highly interactive and well-received by all attendees, leaving participants empowered with strategies, resources and renewed enthusiasm to drive positive change in Aboriginal education across NSW schools. The session's success highlights Federation's ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment.

## WOMEN IN EDUCATION

### Nominated transfers and parental leave

**LEEANDA SMITH** Women's Officer

Revised nominated transfer procedures came into effect in August 2024. An important retention is wording in relation to avoiding nominating particular groups such as people on parental leave. Section 3.3 of the procedures states principals should avoid selecting "any teacher who is on parental leave at the time of nomination and will not return to duty before the end of the school year, unless this is absolutely unavoidable". It is important to note that people on parental leave are not exempt from the nominated transfer process and this wording has remained consistent in procedures since 2008.

The new procedures are more explicit in the expectation that before commencing the nomination process "the principal must consider all options to manage the reduction or change in the school's staffing needs by other means" and provides a list of examples. It further states that any feasible option "must be employed by the principal". This includes impending resignations, retirements, applications for leave without pay, parental leave, other leave and temporary staff movements that could prevent the need to transfer a permanent teacher from the school. The procedures note that when a principal has assessed that a nominated transfer is unavoidable, specifically from the groups identified in section 3.3, they must get advice from Teacher Recruitment before proceeding. The principal must also notify their Director, Educational Leadership that they are commencing this process.

The principal is required to advise all teaching staff (including those absent, if announced at a staff meeting) that the school's permanent teaching entitlement will be reduced. A record of this advice must be maintained (eg. minutes of a staff meeting or a copy of written communication sent via email). When identifying the need to proceed with a nominated transfer, the principal will provide the procedure document to all teaching staff. The principal must also offer an indicative timeframe in which decisions will be made. If no teacher self-nominates for transfer, the principal will identify the teacher to be nominated but is required to consider curriculum, experience, caring responsibilities, childcare availability and any other information that the affected teacher deems relevant. A positive feature with the new procedures is the change to match relocated teachers to a suitable vacancy within approximately one hour's travel time based on their home address rather than their place of work.

To ensure procedural fairness, teachers who are advised they have been nominated for transfer will be able to request a review of the decision if they believe the procedure has not been followed. This is a further improvement. All review requests will be considered by a Teacher Recruitment Manager.

## MULTICULTURAL MATTERS

### Who is your school's anti-racism contact officer?

#### **MANDY WELLS** Multicultural Officer/Organiser

Fairness, equality, care and respect are values that resonate across Australia and form the foundations of the public education system, in which schools and TAFE colleges deliver learning opportunities to the students who will shape our nation.

Our public education settings value and accept all, regardless of cultural background, identity, ability or socio-economic status. The principles of diversity, equity and inclusivity are important features of the public education system and students are supported to develop the positive behaviours that contribute to achieving a socially cohesive society.

*"Racism seeps into almost every aspect of people's lives, and in ways that have become so normalised that victims don't feel they can talk about it and 'learn to live with it.'*

*"Everyday racism is hidden in plain sight."*

**Australian Human Rights Commission Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman**

Misinformation, racism and discrimination erode social cohesion and democracy. The politics of division unleashed during the federal election campaign actively promoted distrust among communities and provided public platforms that spread fear and hate. This in turn saw the acceptance by some of policy ideas designed to 'punch down' on vulnerable groups within our communities and the belief that policies that protect human rights, equality, multiculturalism and the recognition of the true history of this country are somehow the cause of society's ills. This, along with current world events, has resulted in a concerning rise in bigotry, intolerance and even violence.

All teachers have a responsibility to eliminate hate speech, racism and discrimination — as well as to challenge the behaviours and attitudes that enable them.

Schools and TAFE colleges are expected to build cultures of safety, inclusion and respect and to implement programs that address bullying, racist and discriminatory behaviours.

The NSW Department of Education's Anti-Racism Policy requires every public school to appoint an anti-racism contact officer (ARCO). The ARCO supports schools to promote inclusion and anti-racism education. ARCOs assist teachers to access quality resources for teaching and learning programs and collaborate with leadership teams to address racist behaviours, provide advice to students, staff and community members in the reporting of racism, and maintain records of reports and outcomes.

Homebush Boys High School ARCO Usha Deo said having an ARCO in every school is essential. "One of the most fulfilling parts of my work is mentoring a strong student representative group who lead anti-racism campaigns and visit local primary schools to engage younger students in conversations about respect and cultural understanding" she said.

Funding to support the release of ARCOs for training and resource development is provided each year and schools may choose

to provide additional relief to meet identified contextual needs. Comprehensive information about racism, policies and procedures and the roles and responsibilities of ARCOs, along with links to anti-racism professional support, staff professional development and resources for schools to access are provided on the Department's Anti-racism education webpage.

Each Federation Teachers Association elects an ARCO Contact to support and advocate for ARCOs in schools.

"ARCOs play a crucial role in Australian schools by fostering a culture of respect and inclusion, ensuring that racism is addressed, voices are heard, and diversity is embraced across the whole school community," Fairfield Teachers Association President and ARCO Contact Shane Gordon said.

"Providing additional release time will empower ARCOs to actively support their school, address racism, and lead meaningful change across the whole community."

When our students are free to be themselves, connected and learning in safe and supportive environments, they can develop to their potential. Schools and TAFE colleges must be a safe space for all, where everyone belongs, voices are heard and problems are resolved together.

*"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For indeed, that's all who ever have."*

**Author Margaret Mead**

Be an anti-racist. Stand up to hate and all forms of discrimination. Educate for peace.

Scan the QR code to the online version of this article for live links to quality education resources.



### Refugee Week | 15–21 June 2025

**Finding Freedom: Diversity in Community**

Federation is a proud sponsor of Refugee Week 2025, which has the theme Finding Freedom: Diversity in Community.

Members are encouraged to plan activities that focus on the positive role our diverse public education communities play in our lives.

Teaching resources are available from [refugeeweek.org.au](http://refugeeweek.org.au).

Make this Refugee Week a time to celebrate the contributions refugees make and showcase how diversity and unity makes our public education communities stronger.

**Usha Deo**



Amy,  
Member of NSWTF and  
Teachers Health

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## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Merit selection and election of the teacher representative

**SAM CLAY** Deputy Secretary (Research, Industrial and Professional Support)

All merit selection panels must have a representative who has been elected by and from the teachers in a school. The process for electing a teacher representative must be transparent and occur at least on an annual basis. If the school has a Federation Representative and/or Women's Contact, these teachers will automatically be included as nominations, unless they request not to be included. Any teacher or executive on staff may be nominated or self-nominate to be considered for the vote, including staff who are absent on the day of the election.

The conduct of the election and the nature of representation are matters that must be decided by the teaching staff in the school.

Two election mechanisms that the teaching staff of schools commonly choose to utilise are a show of hands or a secret ballot, which may be conducted electronically, provided that the information is managed with appropriate sensitivity and security.

How each representative will be attached to each panel is another matter, which must be decided by the teaching staff. Common examples include:

- a ranked pool of teacher representatives (i.e. the elected representative and a first reserve/second reserve etc), with the elected representative to sit on all panels in that year, to be replaced by the reserves in order if they are unable to participate
- a pool of teacher representatives to be rotated sequentially as each merit process arises
- an election process for each merit selection panel arising at the school, with a unique nomination process.

In relation to the first two options noted above, it is important that the teaching staff decide on the number of representatives and establish an order through the election process. There is a significant benefit in establishing a ranked (or ordered) pool of teacher representatives. It is a requirement that there must be a teacher representative on each merit selection panel. However, if the designated teacher representative cannot participate, an alternate teacher representative from that school will then be utilised. Establishment of a pool with a defined order means that the appointment of an alternative teacher representative will occur by a fair and transparent process.

Teachers do not need to have already completed merit selection panel training to be eligible to nominate for the role of teacher representative. However, they must complete the training before participating in a selection panel.

## RETHINKING ABILITY

### Programming for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools

**JOHN SKENE** Disability Officer

When programming for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools, teachers **are required** to:

- know their students and how they learn
- exercise professional judgement
- consult with the student and/or their associate (a relative and/or carer) to determine, implement and evaluate adjustments
- engage in collaborative planning to make curriculum decisions and personalise learning and support
- follow the Department's policies, which comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005
- implement NESAs syllabuses and adjust where necessary and reasonable\*
- record evidence of adjustments made (this can be done within your whole class program)
- seek information and support as necessary from the student, parents/carers, colleagues, specialist teachers, Learning and Support Team, Team Around a School and/or Inclusion and Wellbeing Directorate.

When programming for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools, teachers **are not required** to:

- develop a separate individual programming document for each student with disability in their class\*\*
- take sole responsibility for programming and adjusting for students with disability
- implement adjustments that are not deemed reasonable and/or that pose unjustifiable hardship.

Also, see *Disability Standards for Education 2005, Section 1.4.*

\*An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. See *Disability Standards for Education 2005, Section 3.4.*

Note: Judgements about what is reasonable for a particular student or a group of students with a particular disability can change over time.

\*\*The only exceptions are for students in Out of Home Care for whom an Education Plan is required. In this instance, Federation advises that time should be provided to collaboratively develop such plans.

For more information, see Federation's *Programming for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools* information leaflet in the Member Portal.



## A CASUAL WORD

### All about bookings

**ANTHONY BRERETON** City Organiser

#### What do I have to do each time I attend a school for casual employment?

Casual teachers are required to sign the attendance book and record their time of arrival and departure from the school.

#### What happens if I am late to school because of a late booking?

Casual teachers will receive a full day's salary when, because of inadequate notice by the school, the casual reports for duty no later than 30 minutes after the normal start time.

#### Can I be employed for less than a full day?

Casual teachers can be employed on either a full-day, half-day or hourly basis. Where the casual is to be paid on an hourly basis, the daily salary is divided by six. Where the bookings cover recess, a casual will receive a 15-minute paid recess break; the half-hour lunch break is unpaid.

Where teachers are employed for a full day, the total time spent at school equals 6.5 hours.

#### What is the minimum length of my casual engagement?

The minimum engagement for a casual is two hours. Unless the school has a variation of school hours, the hours of duty for a casual teacher are within the following periods:

- Morning 9am–12.30pm
- Afternoon 1pm–3.30pm.

#### Am I required to develop lessons for the casual day?

If a teacher has taken unplanned leave, assistance should be provided by the faculty head or assistant principal, including class roll information and the programming where the delivered program is for casual teacher to continue. Sometimes casual teachers may be required to teach their own activities so casuals should always be prepared with a range of activities suitable to their teacher qualifications. If a teacher has taken planned leave, common practice is that they provide resources to continue programmed learning.

#### Am I required to attend meetings after school?

Not unless there has been prior consultation with the principal and your attendance has been deemed to be in the interests of the school, while also taking into consideration your family and community commitments.



# Quality Teaching Rounds support teachers and students

Words Professor Jenny Gore

Professional development in the form of Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) supports teachers by building morale, efficacy and collegiality while simultaneously improving the quality of teaching and lifting student academic achievement, extensive research shows.

More than 20 years ago, Associate Professor James Ladwig and I developed an evidence-based pedagogical framework for the NSW Department of Education to improve teaching quality. The Quality Teaching Model (summarised in the table below) has been the Department's framework for teaching since 2003.

But creating a framework is never enough to change practice and positively impact teachers and students. We needed a powerful way to support teachers to embed the model in their everyday work.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

A series of research studies between 2009 and 2012 developed and refined the approach to professional development we call QTR, which brings teachers together to learn from each other and improve their practice.

Any four teachers form a professional learning community (face-to-face or online) and then observe, analyse and discuss one another's lessons using the Quality Teaching Model across four days of professional learning, spread over a period of at least four weeks.

QTR doesn't dictate particular teaching methods but focuses on improving pedagogy to ensure high-quality student learning experiences.

QUALITY TEACHING MODEL	
Dimensions	Elements
Intellectual quality	Deep knowledge, deep understanding, problematic knowledge, higher-order thinking, metalanguage, substantive communication
Quality learning environment	Explicit quality criteria, engagement, high expectations, social support, students' self-regulation, student direction
Significance	Background knowledge, cultural knowledge, knowledge integration, inclusivity, connectedness, narrative

## IMPROVED QUALITY OF TEACHING

In 2014–15, with funding from the Department, we undertook the first randomised controlled trial on QTR, which investigated its impact on the quality of teaching, teacher morale and sense of recognition and appraisal.

The trial, which involved 192 teachers from 24 NSW government schools, found significant positive effects on teaching quality for primary and secondary teachers in both metropolitan and rural locations, regardless of their years of experience. Importantly, these effects were sustained six months later.

## BOOSTS MORALE AND CONFIDENCE

We also found participation in QTR had significant positive effects on teacher morale and their sense of recognition and appraisal, and our qualitative data showed it improved collaboration among teachers, boosted beginning teacher confidence and rejuvenated experienced teachers.

Our theory of change — improve the quality of teaching to improve student learning — was supported by these findings, but we needed to test the causal link between QTR Rounds and student achievement.

As part of the *Building Capacity for Quality Teaching in Australian Schools, 2018–2023* research study, we conducted a series of randomised controlled trials to investigate the impact of QTR on student and teacher outcomes in a range of contexts.

In total our four trials in this program of research involved 1400 teachers and 14,500 students from 430 schools across NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

The program of research included case studies, longitudinal research (schools and teachers were tracked over the five years of the study) and evaluations of a partnership model for whole-school engagement in QTR, which focused on improving outcomes for teachers and students in disadvantaged schools.

This program of research makes QTR one of the most comprehensively evaluated professional development initiatives in the world.

## POSITIVE EFFECTS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The four trials in the *Building Capacity* project replicated the results of the 2014–15 study, demonstrating that teacher participation in QTR improves the quality of teaching, teacher morale, sense of recognition and appraisal and school culture. For the first time, we also tested for, and found, increased teacher efficacy.

Most importantly, three of the four trials in the *Building Capacity* project produced robust evidence of positive effects on student achievement. Excitingly, we found these results were stronger in disadvantaged schools, signalling the potential for QTR to help narrow pervasive equity gaps.

Our studies compared students' scores on progressive achievement tests in mathematics and reading. Across the four trials, we tested students in term 1 to provide a baseline score and then again in term 4 after their teachers had participated in QTR (intervention group) or completed their usual professional development (control group).

While we didn't see an identical set of results in every study, three of the four trials produced statistically significant positive

effects on student learning. These improvements ranged from two to three months' worth of additional achievement growth in mathematics and reading for the students whose teachers participated in QTR compared to teachers who didn't.

Importantly, these results were amplified by the qualitative insights of teachers and principals throughout the project. These rich qualitative data enabled a deeper understanding of how, why and under what conditions QTR is effective.

For example:

*"Long after the [QTR] process is done, I don't think I'll ever not think about these 18 elements to some level as I go through my practice. Even now when I start thinking about planning the next area or planning the next unit, I will run through the things in my head like: 'How am I going to make sure I'm inclusive? How am I going to make sure that I look at different cultural knowledge? Where can I draw on the kids' background knowledge?' I just find it's going to be beneficial and helpful long term." (Ava, teacher in a metropolitan secondary school)*

## QTR WORKSHOP

Thanks to the funding provided in the *Building Capacity* project, teachers across Australia can access QTR through our non-profit social enterprise, the QT Academy.

The Australian Government has also provided funding for 1600 teachers to take part in a free QTR workshop between 2023 and 2026 as part of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan. The *Strengthening Induction through QTR* project aims to improve the morale, confidence, job satisfaction and retention of early career teachers across Australia.

Our partnership with Cessnock High School, one of the most disadvantaged schools in NSW, led to the school achieving the greatest NAPLAN growth from year 7 to 9 in the Hunter region and the 11th greatest in the state by engaging in whole-school QTR. Simultaneously, teachers reported greater morale and improved school culture, which are critical factors in addressing the current teacher shortage crisis.

This partnership model is now being rolled out to 20 disadvantaged schools in NSW to support teachers and improve outcomes with a key focus on equity.

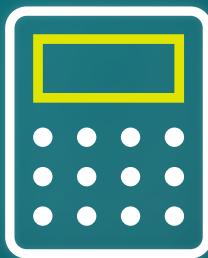
Our research shows the Quality Teaching approach has clear potential to address many of the most pressing concerns facing education in this country. By engaging in QTR on a wide scale, we can support the teaching workforce while achieving excellence and more equitable outcomes for Australian students.

Laureate Professor Jenny Gore AM is the Director of the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre at the University of Newcastle

This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in the semester 2, 2024 edition of the *Journal of Professional Learning (JPL)*. Scan to view the full article, including references.

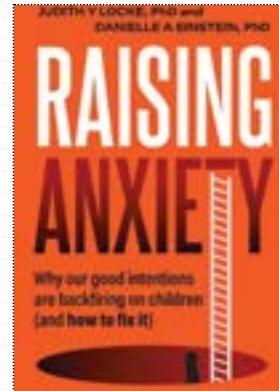


# Take a small step towards your financial goals



Our easy to use calculator can help  
you set realistic goals right for you.

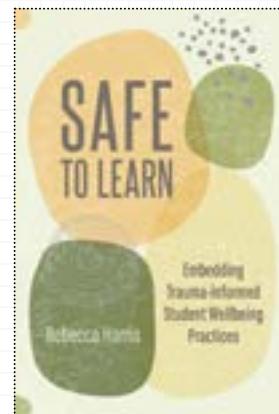
[tmbank.com.au/calculators-and-tools](https://tmbank.com.au/calculators-and-tools)



## Raising anxiety: why our good intentions are backfiring on children (and how to fix it)

BY JUDITH Y LOCKE AND DANIELLE A EINSTEIN. AUSTRALIA: THE AUTHORS, 2024

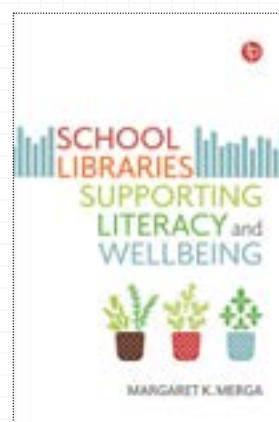
“Judith and Danielle give you practical strategies to help your child face their day-to-day responsibilities in their life, handle the complexities of interacting with others, and positively use technology. They also include a new approach to managing worry which will help you and your child tame your anxiety” (back cover).



## Safe to learn: embedding trauma-informed student wellbeing practices

BY REBECCA HARRIS. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2023

“Safe to learn offers readers an understanding of behaviour through the lens of trauma and adversity, and provides practical strategies for primary schools and educators to become trauma-informed and responsive in a way that best supports all students, regardless of their life experiences” (back cover).

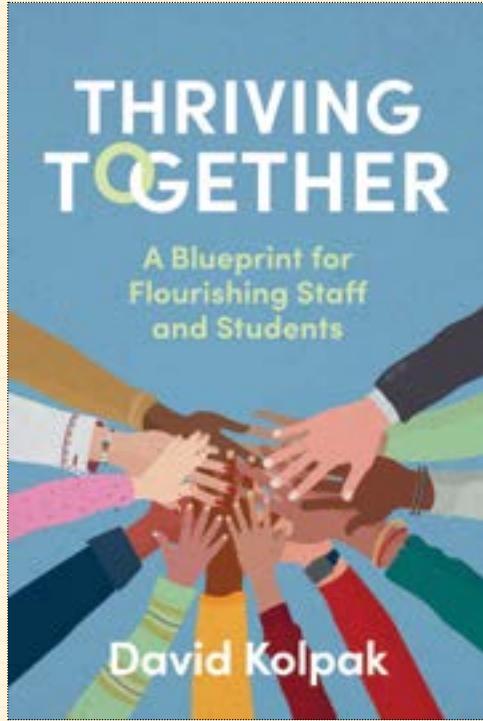


## School libraries supporting literacy and wellbeing

BY MARGARET K MERGA. LONDON: FACET PUBLISHING, 2022

“With the number of students who struggle with basic literacy skills increasing in many nations, school libraries can play an important role in improving the academic, vocational and social outcomes for these young people, thereby increasing their opportunities. At the same time, fostering student wellbeing is also a key priority for schools, given the challenges young people currently face. *School libraries supporting literacy and wellbeing* is a comprehensive guide that promotes a greater understanding of the links between reading, literacy and wellbeing to help students cope with these challenges ... Specific attention is paid to how school library professionals build reading engagement and promote student wellbeing through various approaches, such as fostering health literacy and creating nurturing environments” (back cover).

# What's hot in the library



## Thriving together: A Blueprint for Flourishing Staff and Students

BY DAVID KOLPAK. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2025

“Kolpak offers practical strategies for creating flourishing environments where both staff and students can thrive. This timely guide challenges the traditional approach to student behaviour management, instead advocating for a holistic understanding of wellbeing that encompasses mental, emotional and physical health. Grounded in positive psychology and enriched by insights from leading experts in the field, this book provides educators with actionable frameworks for embedding wellbeing into school culture. From implementing trauma-informed practices to fostering gratitude and resilience, Kolpak’s guidance is both practical and profound” (publisher website).

## **HOW TO BORROW FROM THE LIBRARY**

Contact the library to borrow resources or reserve them via the library catalogue, which can be accessed via the Federation website. A postal service is available. *Hot Topics* Guides on popular subjects and *Library Bulletins* may be found in the Member Portal.

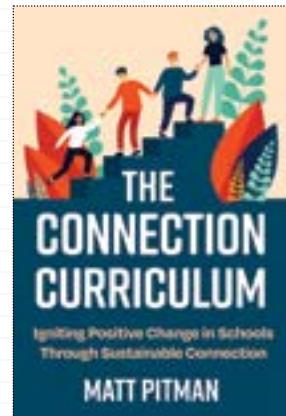
Members can also visit the library to borrow in person: Library Hours: 9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday and 10 am – 1.30 pm on Council Saturdays.



## The connection curriculum: igniting positive change in schools through sustainable connection

BY MATT PITMAN. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2024

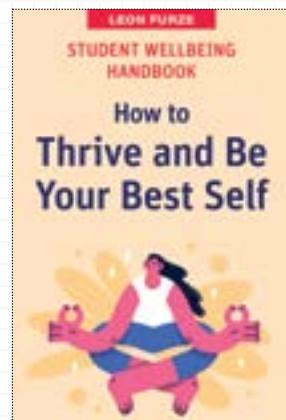
“The connection curriculum challenges the status quo in education, arguing that a lack of genuine connection is harming students and communities. Drawing on extensive research, Matt Pitman explores the essential role of connection in fostering academic achievement and student wellbeing. Through candid reflections and practical insights, educators are invited to rethink traditional approaches and embrace sustainable strategies for building whole-school connectedness” (publisher website).



## Student wellbeing handbook: how to thrive and be your best self

BY LEON FURZE. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2023

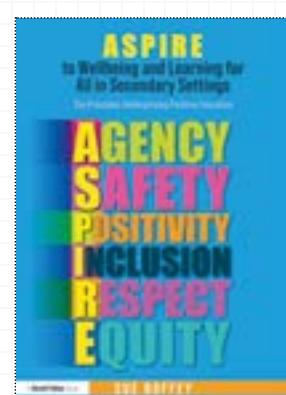
“Being a teenager can be tough. There are changes and challenges to deal with, and seemingly endless priorities competing for your attention. It can be hard to find the time and energy to take care of yourself, but it’s vital for your health and happiness to make self-care part of your daily routine ... Leon Furze unpacks the key issues impacting high school students’ mental and physical wellbeing, including mindfulness, exercise, nutrition, water, sleep, resilience, technology, bullying and emotional regulation” (back cover). For upper-primary and high school students.



## ASPIRE to wellbeing and learning for all in secondary settings: the principles underpinning positive education

BY SUE ROFFEY. LONDON; NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2024

“This truly accessible resource shows secondary school practitioners how to help make every child and young person feel like they really matter when they are in school... By using the unique evidence-based ASPIRE principles of Agency, Safety, Positivity, Inclusion, Respect and Equity in practice, this insightful book shows teachers how to redress the balance in ways that maximise a love of learning, build a positive sense of self, construct healthy relationships, foster resilience and help young people make good choices” (back cover).





### Leading from the front

Above: Federation's contingent at the International Women's Day march in Sydney  
 Left: Association Women's Contacts learn the ropes



### Skilling up

Left: Members learning at a CPL Early Career Teachers course in March



### Fighting to win

Securing full funding for public schools was a huge motivator for New Educators Network members



### Don't touch TAFE

Our TAFE members campaigned hard to secure free TAFE from Coalition threats







For the latest course  
listings, information  
and to apply



DATE	COURSE	LOCATION
25 June	Classroom Management Through Effective Teaching for Secondary and TAFE teachers	Armidale
27 June	Supporting Students with ADHD 7-10	Surry Hills
2 July	Classroom Management Through Effective Teaching	Blacktown
30 July	Teaching Peace	Surry Hills
1 August	Conversations About Texts in Secondary Schools	Blacktown
6 August	Modern Assessment Theory and Assessment Strategies for Higher Order Thinking	Surry Hills
8 August	Tell Me Your Story: Supporting EAL/D Students from K-8	Blacktown
29 August		
19 September		
12 August	Classroom Management Through Effective Teaching	Surry Hills
13 August	Aboriginal Education: Perspectives on the new syllabus K-6	Surry Hills
15 August	Supporting Students with ADHD 7-10	Online
20 August	Modern Assessment Theory and Assessment Strategies for Higher Order Thinking	Online
22 August	Women in History: Reclaiming (In)Visible Women	Surry Hills
28 August	Empowering Teachers Through the Meaningful Use of Data and Evidence	Blacktown
2 September	Classroom Management Through Effective Teaching	Canberra
5 September	Aboriginal Education: Perspectives on the new syllabus 7-12	Surry Hills
8 September	Supporting Students with ADHD K-6	Surry Hills



For the latest course  
listings, information  
and to apply



COURSE	DATE	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
Foundations for Workplace Representatives	1-2 July	Surry Hills	10 June
Foundations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identified Workplace Representatives	24-25 July	Surry Hills	30 June
Foundations for Women's Contacts	28-29 July	Surry Hills	1 May
Communication Skills for Workplace Representatives	31 July-1 August	Surry Hills	30 June
TAFE Foundations	6-8 August	Surry Hills	30 June
Association Aboriginal Education Contacts Campaigns Course	11 August	Surry Hills	30 June
Association Executive (Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers)	14-15 August	Surry Hills	24 July
Foundations for Workplace Representatives	18-19 August	Coffs Harbour	28 July
Work Health and Safety in Education Workplaces	20 August	Surry Hills	30 July
Beginning Teacher Course	21 August	Albury	7 August
<b>Women's Conference</b>	<b>Saturday 23 August</b>	<b>Surry Hills</b>	<b>Friday 1 August</b>
Foundations for Workplace Representatives	26-27 August	Surry Hills	5 August
Communication Skills for Workplace Representatives	9-10 September	Surry Hills	19 August
Foundations for Workplace Representatives	15-16 September	Surry Hills	25 August
Potential Officers	18 September	Surry Hills	28 August
Foundations for Workplace Representatives	18-19 September	Dubbo	28 August
Beginning Teacher Conference	20 September	Dubbo	5 September
Beginning Teacher Conference	20 September	Bundanoon	5 September



Tree  
Levy  
GRANT

# Green your school

APPLICATIONS  
OPEN THROUGHOUT TERM 2  
[nswtf.org.au/tree-levy](http://nswtf.org.au/tree-levy)





THE NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION AUSTRALIA  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE GADIGAL PEOPLE OF THE EORA NATION,  
THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND AND WATERS UPON  
WHICH THE NSWTF STANDS