

Education



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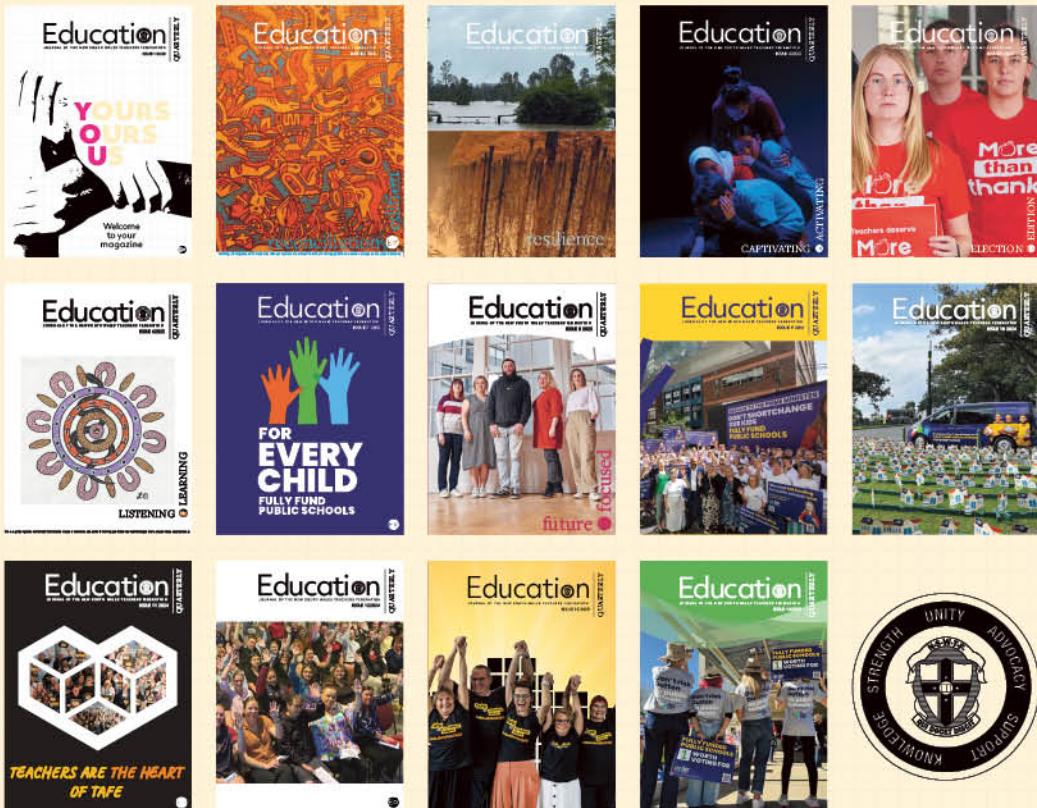


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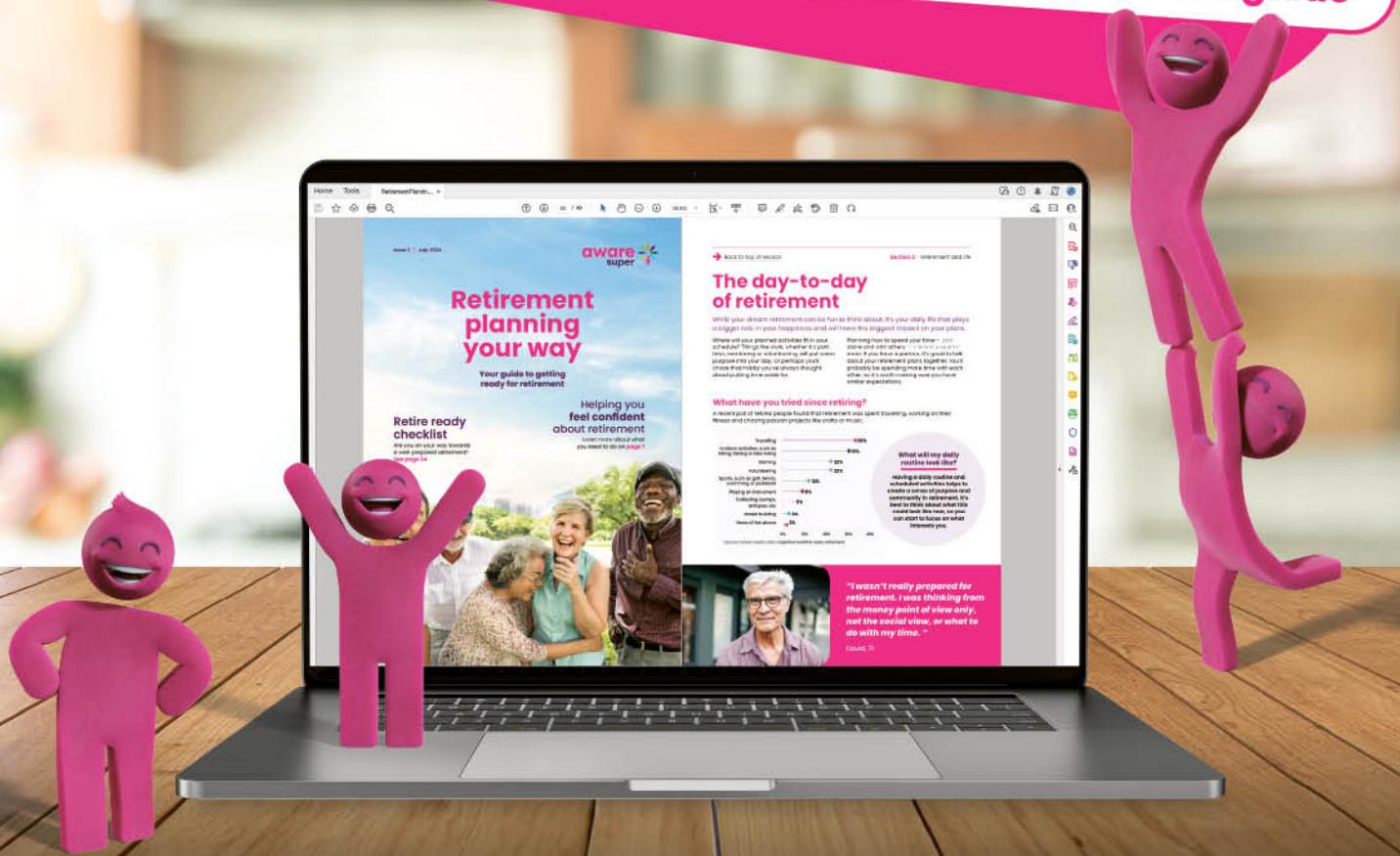
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LIFTOUT





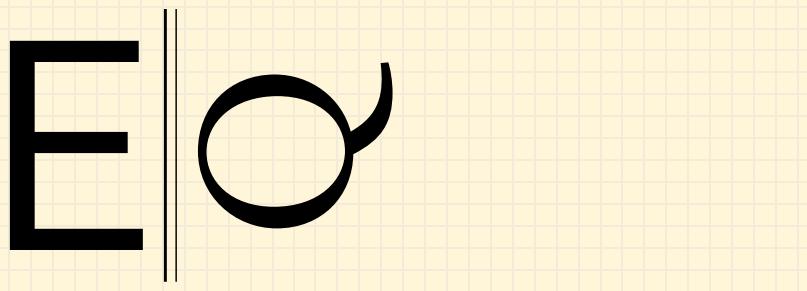
ADDITIONAL RELEASE TIME SURVEY



A few minutes now could save you two hours a week

School members, please assist with Federation's campaign for an additional two hours of release time per week by filling out this survey*.

Survey results are a powerful negotiation tool



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COVER: The choice of this beautiful image for the cover was inspired by our "Learning in a different landscape" feature (pages 8-9): "The one thing the Chatswood kids are always in awe of is how many stars they can see at night." On the cover we have the Emu in the Sky constellation, which has cultural significance across Australia.

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PRESIDENT WRITES

Henry Rajendra

The unfinished business of education reform

The latest statistics about NSW's public education system are sobering. A quarter of NSW schools are now classified as "high concentration disadvantaged" — up from 22 per cent in 2017. Nearly nine per cent of our students attend these schools, almost double the proportion from seven years ago. Meanwhile, teachers are managing a threefold increase in students with disabilities while relying on support systems that haven't been meaningfully updated since the 1950s.

Now our political leaders need the courage to complete the reform agenda that began with Gonski and was reinforced by Federation's More Than Thanks campaign.

These numbers represent real people in real classrooms. They represent the teacher who stays back every afternoon trying to differentiate lessons for 30 students with vastly different needs, using the same two hours of release time their predecessors had decades ago. They represent schools in disadvantaged communities struggling to compete for resources while the discredited Local Schools, Local Decisions policy continues to fragment our system and waste millions in funding.

We made significant progress two years ago when we negotiated substantial pay increases with the Minns Government. Those wins have had a direct, positive impact — vacancy rates have dropped from the dizzying heights we saw under the Coalition. But as we always said, wages alone were never the ultimate fix.

The composition of our classrooms has been transformed beyond recognition. Teachers today are far more skilled at identifying individual student needs and implementing the sophisticated teaching strategies required to help every child succeed. But this highly specialised, time-intensive work demands resources that match its complexity.

That's why our push for additional release time goes beyond teacher wellbeing — though that matters enormously. We need to give teachers the time they need to collaborate, plan and implement the evidence-based strategies that will close the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Secondary teachers are working with the same release time allocation they

had in the 1950s. Primary teachers haven't seen an increase in release time since the 1980s. We're asking our profession to perform 21st-century miracles with mid-20th-century resources.

Similarly, our focus on class sizes and targeted staffing for complex settings centres on making learning more effective. Growing concentrations of disadvantaged students in many schools, combined with a 300 per cent increase in students with disabilities, mean the old one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn't work.

The recent data confirms what we've been arguing for years: schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students need additional layers of teacher staffing, therapy programs and resources. This follows the needs-based approach that the original Gonski Report recommended.

The complete dismantling of Local Schools, Local Decisions is now an urgent priority that goes to the heart of rebuilding a coherent public education system that works for every child. Flexible funding must be converted into permanent staffing entitlements, centralised allocation based on genuine student need and systematic reductions in class sizes where they're needed most.

The Minns Government made a promise to wind back the Coalition's discredited devolution policy. Every day that promise remains unfulfilled is another day the system creates winners and losers based on postcode rather than need.

This is the moment to finish what Gonski started and deliver what More Than Thanks promised. We have the evidence. We have the solutions. We need the political will to implement them.

The survey on release time that we recently launched will provide additional data to support our case, but the fundamental argument is already clear. We are serious about closing achievement gaps and supporting our most vulnerable students, so we need to resource our schools and our profession properly.

We are pursuing the unfinished business of previous reforms and completing the transformation of NSW public education into a system that truly serves every student, regardless of their background or circumstances. Our teachers and students deserve nothing less.

IN BRIEF

NEW SECTION ON OUR WEBSITE

New webpages dedicated to teachers' work, health and safety are available in the Member Portal section of Federation's website.

"This one-stop shop for our members delivers access to all new [school] Award measures with links to agreed communications and entitlements, working conditions and everything our members need to know on teachers' work, health and safety," Deputy President Amber Flohm said at Federation's August Council.

The Teachers' Work page includes information about primary and secondary release time, while the Teachers' Health page covers improved working conditions in the current Schools award related to addressing teachers' excessive workloads. Meeting times, flexible work arrangements and more school development days are among the topics addressed.

The Teachers' Safety page includes information about workers compensation, preventing workplace sexual harassment, managing psychological hazards and issue resolution procedures.

You can navigate to the relevant pages via the Campaigns section of the website or by scanning this QR code.



CLEAN-UP ON CLEANER CONTRACTING BEGINS

In good news for teachers, students and cleaners, the NSW Government plans to de-privatise 600 school cleaning jobs in the Hunter and Central Coast.

United Workers Union NSW Secretary Mel Gatfield said the Hunter de-privatisation was "great progress towards insourcing all 7000 NSW school and government cleaners".

Federation has been a supporter of the United Workers Union's campaign to transition school and TAFE cleaners to direct government employment.

"We need a system that doesn't treat [school cleaners] as outsourced outsiders," a Federation decision passed last year states.

"We must make sure that cleaning in every school, including those in high growth areas where overcrowding and the use of demountable classrooms are common, are adequately resourced and staffed."

Schools have reported significant and ongoing declines in standards since outsourcing began in 1994.

A P&C survey of parents, students, teachers and school staff found 54 per cent of respondents raised significant concerns about the cleanliness of toilets.

Some 36 per cent of respondents were concerned about the frequency and timing of cleaning, which can neglect high-traffic areas such as classrooms, canteens and corridors during peak times.

Other issues raised included unrealistic workloads and insufficient time for cleaners to complete required cleaning tasks and cleaners not being replaced when absent.

Hopefully the changes will make a significant difference to working conditions.

SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE

HIROSHIMA NEVER AGAIN

You are encouraged to write to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese urging him to commit to signing the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Federation is committed to the ongoing struggle for peace and a proud partner of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which is lobbying for Australia to sign and ratify the treaty — the first global agreement to comprehensively ban the development, possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In observance of the 80th anniversary of the United States dropping nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, ICAN's Australian director Gem Romuld addressed Council on 9 August.

"If we don't get rid of them, nuclear weapons will without a doubt be used again," she warned. "Nuclear weapons have brought nothing but terror and loss... Hiroshima and Nagasaki are an eternal warning," she said. More than half a million people were killed in the bombing or since from the impacts of radiation. New research shows two-thirds of Australians want the Government to sign and ratify the Treaty.

"Eighty years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Australians are crystal clear: our country must take action to ensure these weapons are never used again. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the global pathway forward," Romuld said.

On 2 August, Federation members attended the Hiroshima Day Committee Sydney rally and marched through the CBD, reaffirming that peace is and always will be union business.

SURVIVOR ADDRESSES THE FUTURE

On 16 August, the Japan Club of Sydney hosted an event in Federation's Surry Hills auditorium, where global peace advocate Keiko Ogura, who was eight years old when she survived the Hiroshima bombing, told of her experiences in 1945 and her advocacy ever since.



CHAMPION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Linda Burney (left) was honoured as a Champion of Public Education at Annual Conference. She played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of NSW's first Aboriginal education policy in 1982.

ACE IN OUR WORLD

“We should not repeat this evil,” Ms Ogura said. “This is our pledge... What we want is the total abolition of nuclear weapons.”

Ms Ogura told of the horrors in detail and didn’t shy away from the shocking and terrible aspects, including being told by her father not to give the injured people water, but she couldn’t help herself and two people died drinking water from her hands.

So many people were overcome with emotion.

The event ended with her “Passing the Baton” to the 200 or so students in the room with a message of hope and responsibility to secure a peaceful future.



ICAN Australian director Gem Romuld addressed August Council

Members rally for peace in Palestine

Members turned out in force for the cause of peace in August, marching in rallies demanding an end to the genocide in Gaza.

Federation flags flew proudly on the Sydney Harbour Bridge on 3 August, as more than 100,000 Sydneysiders marched over the bridge to demand sanctions on the Israeli government and an end to the forced starvation of the Gaza Strip.

Federation President Henry Rajendra addressed a vigil for peace in Palestine organised by Unions NSW on 21 August, adding Federation’s voice to the growing number of unions speaking out against the genocide. “All wars are fought against children,” Mr Rajendra said. “As a teacher union, our members educate for peace, not war.”

Members have also come out in force for the Nationwide March for Palestine on 24 August and other regional and interstate events.



Union NSW's vigil for peace



Rob Long, Michael Hepi and Mary Schmidt were bestowed Federation Life Membership at Annual Conference in July. Federation President Henry Rajendra presented them with their certificates and badges.

Learning in a different landscape

From the big city to the big sky

words *Alex McKinnon*

A student exchange program between urban and rural public schools is changing the lives of students, teachers and communities in both the city and the bush and seen schools form unlikely partnerships to give their students exposure to different walks of life.

Jodi Prentice has lived in the Central West town of Coonamble since 2010 and worked at Coonamble Public School since becoming a teacher in 2015. She oversees Coonamble Public's student exchange program, working with Chatswood Public School in Sydney's north to arrange yearly excursions for students to experience each other's schools and communities first-hand.

Coonamble Public's upcoming trip to Chatswood in September will be Jodi's third time taking part in the exchange. For students, the trip is always an eye-opener.

"The differences in schools are always so surprising for our kids," Jodi said. "At Coonamble we have one two-storey classroom block — Chatswood has vertical classrooms that go up four storeys and stairs on stairs on stairs. They do amazingly going up and down all those stairs! Chatwood's basketball court is on top of the carpark — that blows their minds."

Travelling to Chatswood each year gives Coonamble kids the chance to participate in activities and experiences they would never encounter at home. They learn how to write their names in Korean and Mandarin in Chatwood's weekly bilingual classes and learn traditional Chinese cultural dancing.

In summer, they also get to go to the beach for swimming and surfing lessons.

"Last year we went down to Manly surf school. We visited in

term 4, so it was perfect timing," Jodi said.

"Some of our students have never been to the beach, or have only ever been once or twice. Even some of those kids who don't normally like to participate in sport and swimming at our school got in and had a go."

Chatswood Public deputy principal Rani Holstein said the journey to Coonamble is just as rewarding for the Chatswood Public students, many of whom experience the bush for the first time.

"One thing the Chatswood students are always in awe of is how many stars they can see at night. In Sydney there's so much light pollution, so they can't get over how the sky looks out there," Rani said.

"The Coonamble kids told us about the emu constellation in the sky — how it changes and tells you what time of year to collect emu eggs and not harm the emu population by taking too many eggs at one time."

"Our students love how much space the Coonamble kids have — they wish our school was like that!"

Rani's passion for helping her students learn about different experiences began at Fairfield Public School, where she started her teaching career in 2014.

"Working in Fairfield, we had lots of students from different parts of the world, from Iraq and Syria and Afghanistan," she said. "Learning about their cultures and their lives before coming to Australia was a really enriching experience."

"The connection you forge with kids and the difference you make to their learning and wellbeing for the day is something really special."



The exchange program lets students from Coonamble and Chatswood learn about each other's lives and experiences

Rani has visited Coonamble twice since the program started and said she and the students learn something new every time.

"It's a really beautiful experience. There's always an immediate connection between the students," she said.

"When we arrived the first time, the Coonamble students were straight away asking our kids to join in their games of handball, asking 'what are your rules?'"

"Even though they're often from different cultural backgrounds and areas, their interests are so similar — they both love creative arts and dance, they have a deep love of sport. It's lovely to be a part of it."

Coonamble Public's student body largely comes from the area's local Aboriginal communities and they go out of their way to welcome the city kids, who take part in Gamilaroi language lessons and learn about traditional cultural practices like the making of coolamons and canoes from the bark of a local scar tree.

"Everyone in Coonamble is so welcoming and generous to us. They always have really engaging and well-thought-out experiences for our students," Rani said.

"They have yabby and fish farms, which our students would never get to see otherwise. They work with the Aboriginal Education Officer for our students to learn about cultural practices — one year they made johnny cakes on the fire, and this year they made cutting sticks and didgeridoos and learned

the cultural symbolism that goes into decorating them."

The annual trip to Chatswood is open to Coonamble Public students in years 4, 5 and 6 who meet attendance and behaviour goals.

While capacity is limited to how many kids can fit on the school bus, the explosion of interest in recent years has seen more students qualify.

"It's a real incentive for our kids to come to school every day and be safe and respectful learners," Jodi said. "We're finding that every year more and more kids are eligible — the senior kids really work towards it, and so many of them are displaying exemplary behaviour. It's a great problem to have."

Jodi and Rani agree that the exchange program has changed lives in both communities.

"We got involved to give our students an experience they wouldn't normally have, to show them that there's a big wide world out there outside the levee bank of Coonamble," Jodi said.

"The first time I went out I didn't know Coonamble at all. I love going out now," Rani said. "To see the landscape for the first time was incredible — we're driving along and there's emus running alongside the road."

"It's amazing to see our students learning from each other and branching out beyond their own experiences to get a bigger picture of the world."

"One thing the Chatswood kids are always in awe of is how many stars they can see at night"



Annual Conference looks to the future

While President Henry Rajendra celebrated Federation's achievements of the past year in his opening address at Annual Conference, discussion then shifted to the future of the profession.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Delegates voted for Federation to keep pursuing full Schooling Resource Standard funding and greater infrastructure investment for NSW public schools.



believe that a fairer society is a better society, then we owe it to ourselves to start thinking about it seriously," Dr Bruniges said.

"This is a complex societal challenge that requires creative and brave solutions."

Dr Bruniges recommended a range of policy settings including:

- a clear set of mutual obligations for the receipt of taxpayer dollars
- a new student success measurement framework
- equitable allocation of capital funds across all sectors.

"1150 private schools in Australia (40 per cent) are funded above and beyond their level of need, and a clear majority now receive greater funding from the Commonwealth and state government combined than public schools of similar size and similar location and with comparable student populations," the Annual Conference decision *Public school funding and infrastructure* states. "On current trajectories, this overfunding will continue until 2029 based on the SRS alone."

Senior Vice President

Natasha Watt told delegates Federation wants world-class learning, sporting and cultural facilities for public schools.

Fair educational opportunities require creative, brave solutions

Our education system does not deliver the same educational opportunities and support for every child, Dr Michelle Bruniges, a former secretary of both the NSW and Commonwealth departments of education, told Annual Conference.

"Because the unfairness in our system is so embedded, it will take time to address, but if we're serious about our national self-image, if we really

"Why don't we have swimming pools in some of our remote and rural schools where students have to travel two hours to the nearest pool? Why isn't this needs-based?" Ms Watt asked.

"Why can't kids in our public system get orchestra spaces? Why don't we have amazing purpose-built sporting facilities instead of white lines on concrete? We should have all these things so we can have the democracy Australia should have."



Large-scale investment needed to dismantle LSND legacy

Education researchers Dr Anna Hogan and Dr Amanda McKay addressed Annual Conference delegates about the ruinous legacy of the former NSW Liberal-National

government's Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSND) public education policy.

Dr McKay, a senior lecturer in education at Griffith University, said LSND has resulted in schools being expected to do more with fewer resources, leaving educators to navigate complex demands without the support of a cohesive system.

"Our research has shown that teachers and school leaders around the country are working in systems that have become increasingly

fragmented and burdened by layers of compliance and administrivia that pull you away from the core of your work – teaching and learning," Dr McKay said.

To combat the disastrous legacy of LSND, Dr Hogan called on state and federal governments to "lift the public system, not just in terms of infrastructure and funding but in reimagining the purpose of schooling and the way we do it".

"We need urgent, large-scale investment from both federal and state governments to provide safe, modern, fully equipped schools," Dr Hogan said.

"This is not just about bricks and mortar. It's about enabling a full, rich curriculum that is appropriately resourced with innovative materials and technologies and guaranteeing that every child, regardless of postcode or background, can learn in a quality environment."

making it almost impossible for workers to access support for psychological injury.

Deputy President Amber Flohm said the proposed changes to workers compensation meant teachers with work-related mental health conditions would be cut off from ongoing treatment, income support and rehabilitation services.

"When a teacher suffers a broken limb on a school camp or PE lesson, workers compensation is straightforward. But under new changes being pushed by the State Government,



STAFFING AND RESOURCING

Mr Rajendra told delegates that pursuit of the staffing and resourcing enhancements necessary for rebuilding the NSW public school system needs to be a "significant flagship campaign".

"If you want to get rid of Local Schools, Local Decisions, there's only one way through this and that's to pull the money back from school bank accounts, allocate it out in terms of an expanded staffing entitlement to deliver you your release time, a reduction in class sizes and the staffing differential to acknowledge the complexities in our communities," Mr Rajendra said.

Annual Conference's *Rebuilding the NSW public education system – the reform necessary* decision calls for two additional hours of release time each week for all teachers, release time parity for primary executives with their secondary colleagues, reduced class sizes to accommodate the growing complexities within the classroom, and a sliding-scale staffing differential that looks at the complexities of our schools, such as those in rural and remote locations, those with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, or those with a high proportion of students lacking English language proficiency. "Until the NSW Government commits Gonski funding to expanding school staffing entitlements, the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy will continue to exist as a worrying feature of the NSW public school system," the decision reads.

RESPECT FOR THE PROFESSION: OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE

Delegates hit out at the NSW Government's plans to cut mental health support for essential workers, citing the rising threat of violence on the job as evidence that a safety net for psychological injuries is needed more than ever.

Under the proposed changes, people who experience bullying or harassment at work would have to navigate lengthy and expensive legal loopholes to access treatment,



Housing is a workforce issue

The sustainability of the public school workforce is under threat as housing becomes increasingly unaffordable or scarce in many locations, economist Adam Rorris and researcher Scott Eacott warn in their recent research paper, *Socio-economic analysis of teacher housing in NSW*.

The authors addressed Annual Conference, with Professor Eacott cautioning that "housing unaffordability or housing scarcity is a significant compromise to full systemic staffing".

Professor Eacott said the daily activities of 61 per cent of Australian schools (73 per cent in disadvantaged areas) are compromised by lack of staff and that staffing disruptions have a negative effect on student outcomes.

He reported some 85 per cent of local government areas (LGAs) in NSW have a median housing sale value that is unaffordable for a top of the scale teacher.

The paper states that 90 per cent of teaching positions in Sydney – the equivalent of more than 50,000 full-time equivalent positions – are in LGAs where housing is unaffordable on a teacher's salary.

"Even renting is becoming more difficult, with low vacancy rates throughout the state compromising the ability of teachers to find a situationally appropriate home within commuting distance of school," the report states.

Mr Rorris urged Federation and the broader union movement to become more involved in the effort to combat the housing crisis.

"Your union has a long history of engaging in issues and struggles that begin of the now... but with a vision for the future. Housing is exactly one of those issues, which calls for such action to alleviate the immediate problems we face now," he said.

"There is a profound pathway here that will change the way we can deliver housing in this country, by bringing into play a not-for-profit housing sector that can provide for you, for your kids, for your fellow younger kids who can't get into this market right now – a pathway to secure high quality housing that will have intergenerational benefits for everyone."

Above: Economist Adam Rorris and researcher Scott Eacott told Annual Conference that Federation can help solve Australia's housing crisis

if that same teacher develops anxiety, depression or PTSD from sustained workplace harassment or violence, the system fails them. This double standard is unconscionable," she said.

"NSW teachers deserve safety at work and a safety net when they're harmed. The question is whether the NSW Government will listen and act. Our teachers — and our students — deserve better."

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Federation will explore partnering with a community housing provider to trial building affordable housing for teachers and encourage industry super investment in affordable housing.

Annual Conference's *Housing for teachers* decision states the union will "explore the immediate possibility of piloting a partnership with a large (tier 1) community housing provider for the provision of delivering affordable large-scale housing in one location projected to experience teacher shortages linked to housing shortage". Noting that "housing for teachers is unaffordable in Australia", Federation will also "pursue with Aware Super a strengthening of its investments with community housing providers that are active and looking to expand their portfolio of affordable housing for teachers and other essential workers" and explore the concept of a "just social wage compact" to make housing affordability a priority of both governments and the union movement.

Ms Watt pointed delegates to a decision of Federation's Council in May that found "accessible and affordable housing for teachers and their families in the public education system must now be considered part of a just social wage".

The decision also commits Federation to "pursue working conditions for all teachers that ensure economic security", including "policy and campaigns that utilise gender impact assessments to ensure teachers have housing security and access to affordable housing".

Annual Conference noted the gendered impact of rising socio-economic inequality, with the ongoing gender pay gap, unpaid caring responsibilities and extended parental leave periods leaving many women more vulnerable to housing insecurity and homelessness.

CURRICULUM AND WORKLOAD

Annual Conference's *More than explicit teaching: curriculum and workload* decision calls on the Department and schools to strip back compliance requirements to statutory minimums and eliminate "layers of unnecessary bureaucracy".

"It remains stubbornly the case that it is taking longer to document a lesson than to teach it," Ms Flohm told Annual Conference.

A Federation survey of 13,000 teachers reveals teachers are spending most of their non-teaching time on administrative tasks such as programming compliance and data collection and entry. Meanwhile, the work that teachers identify as having the greatest impact on students — professional learning, engaging with parents and carers and collaborating with colleagues on curriculum development — is relegated to minimal time allocations.

Ms Flohm said teachers are doing the "wrong work" at the expense of intrinsic motivation and reward and it's taking them from the work they value — teaching and learning with their students.

“Teachers don’t want to be delivery agents for someone else’s materials,” she said. “They want time to do the creative, intellectual work of adapting learning to the students in front of them and their specific needs.”

REBUILDING TAFE

Annual Conference committed Federation to campaign to “rebuild the ability of TAFE to attract and retain the best teachers” after more than 10 years of neglect.

“Federation members’ campaign to Rebuild TAFE in NSW has seen TAFE emerging from more than a decade of damage inflicted by the contestable funding model,” Annual Conference’s *Rebuilding TAFE* decision states. “For too long Smart and Skilled hollowed out our public TAFE system, undermining secure employment, diminishing course offerings and prioritising cost-cutting over quality education.”

In 2024, Federation won a commitment from the Albanese and Minns Governments to fund a five year National Skills Agreement, pouring \$12.6 billion into revitalising TAFE in line with national priorities like gender equality, Closing the Gap, the transition to net zero, care sector support, sovereign capability and digital workforce development.

But Federation Vice President Sharryn Usher told delegates there was still more work to do.

“The attempt to run TAFE as a business means classes are still being cancelled in regional centres as 15 centres are deemed ‘not viable’,” Ms Usher said.

“We want to enshrine in legislation that contestable funding will never, ever again threaten our TAFE teachers, students and communities.”

The decision also commits Federation to “negotiate a new, fit-for-purpose statewide staffing agreement” for public VET teachers, “demand equitable resourcing across all [TAFE] campuses”, partner with Aboriginal communities to deliver culturally responsive VET education and develop a ‘Never Again’ campaign “to ensure that NSW TAFE is never again subjected to a contestable funding model, or privatisation by stealth”.

“That’s about knowing your history,” Mr Rajendra told Annual Conference. “We have to own that. We can’t go back to what happened in the past.”

Delegates put forward, debated and voted on motions that will drive Federation’s course into the future





Flexible work boosts morale

Teachers are enjoying greater work-life balance thanks to new Award provisions

New flexible work arrangements in the recent Schools Award are giving teachers more freedom to balance work and family, expanding their late-career working options and easing workload burdens.

That's the testimony from Federation members who've opted to take part-time employment while they juggle family, work and care responsibilities.

The rise of part-time work has been decades in the making. In 1967, fewer than 10 per cent of Australians in the workforce worked part-time compared to almost one in three workers now.

An ageing workforce means more people are looking to gradually scale down their work commitments before retirement, while more people are balancing their paid work with caring responsibilities.

The flexible work provisions in the new Award allow teachers to arrange a part-time or job-sharing arrangement to better manage major life milestones like pregnancy, parenthood or preparing for retirement. They're also available for teachers who have caring responsibilities, have a disability or are experiencing domestic or family violence.

Jenny Long teaches History and Human Society and its Environment at Sir Joseph

Banks High School in Revesby. She came to teaching in 2007 after a career in the public service and quickly became

involved in Federation at a local level, now serving as a Federation Representative.

Last year, Jenny applied to reduce her working week to four days so she could care for a family member. Now that flexible work provisions are established in the Award, it will be easier for her to continue her part-time arrangement.

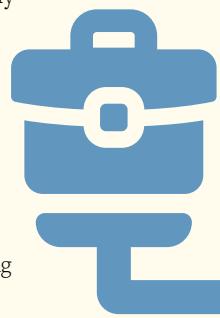
"It used to be that requests like mine really depended on the attitude of the principal," Jenny said. "We were lucky to have had principals who were accommodating of people who wanted to keep teaching but for whom the drain of teaching full-time was becoming a bit too much."

"Those people have been able to keep working and contribute for longer. Otherwise, they might have ended up leaving the profession altogether."

As Jenny works towards retirement, the new Award provisions will make it easier for her to gradually scale down from full-time teaching.

"A great thing about the new Award provisions is that, for teachers who are over 55, the principal must have a good reason to say 'no' to a request to go part-time," she said.

Making it easier for teachers over 55 to go part-time will also have beneficial effects for their colleagues. Rather than scrambling to replace a teacher who abruptly quits or retires due to burnout or unexpected life circumstances, schools and teachers can now





Left to right: Teachers Jenny Long, Barney Rocks and Lisa Galvin Waight are all enjoying greater work-life balance thanks to the new flexible work provisions.

plan a smooth transition months or years in advance.

“It helps teachers manage their workloads and futures in a planned way. I’m going to indicate that I want to continue working four days a week next year, which means my classes can be planned and timetabled with that in mind,” Jenny said. “If it’s part of the school’s planning cycle, it just makes it easier for everyone — for the teachers, the students and the school.”

For Jenny, being able to go part-time on a planned and consistent basis has also helped outside the classroom.

“It’s made my home life a lot easier — my partner is retired, so we have a lot more time together,” she said.

As a Fed Rep, one of Jenny’s priorities is mentoring younger teachers to become more active in her local Association before she retires. Flexible work is letting her help those younger teachers prepare to take on more of a leadership role and become the next generation of Federation activists.

“Being able to reduce my days lets me work with other people at school so they’re prepared to step up once I retire — both for my classes and in my role as Fed Rep,” Jenny said. “It means the younger teachers are supported to take over.”

Barney Rocks, who teaches at Bomaderry High School in Shoalhaven, has also enjoyed the benefits of a flexible work schedule by taking part-time parental leave.

“For the rest of the year I’m taking two days a week off,” Barney said. “That makes it far more equitable between us and gives me a better balance between being a teacher and being able to look after my family. That leads me to being a better person when I arrive back at work, which will ultimately lead to better outcomes for students.”

Lisa Galvin Waight is a teacher at Jewells Primary School in Lake Macquarie. While she’s still classed as permanent full-time, Lisa’s been working four days a week for the past few years to help with raising her young children.

While her boss was supportive, Lisa has seen the stress that the prospect of negotiating with their employer to go part-time has caused many teachers.

“I know first-hand that before these provisions came in, everyone had to fight or argue or go into those nervous discussions to apply for part-time — especially women,” she said. “I’ve seen many people get refused, and I actually know several people who’ve left the profession because of it. Had these provisions been there, they might have been able to stay. It’s making such a difference for teachers on the ground.”

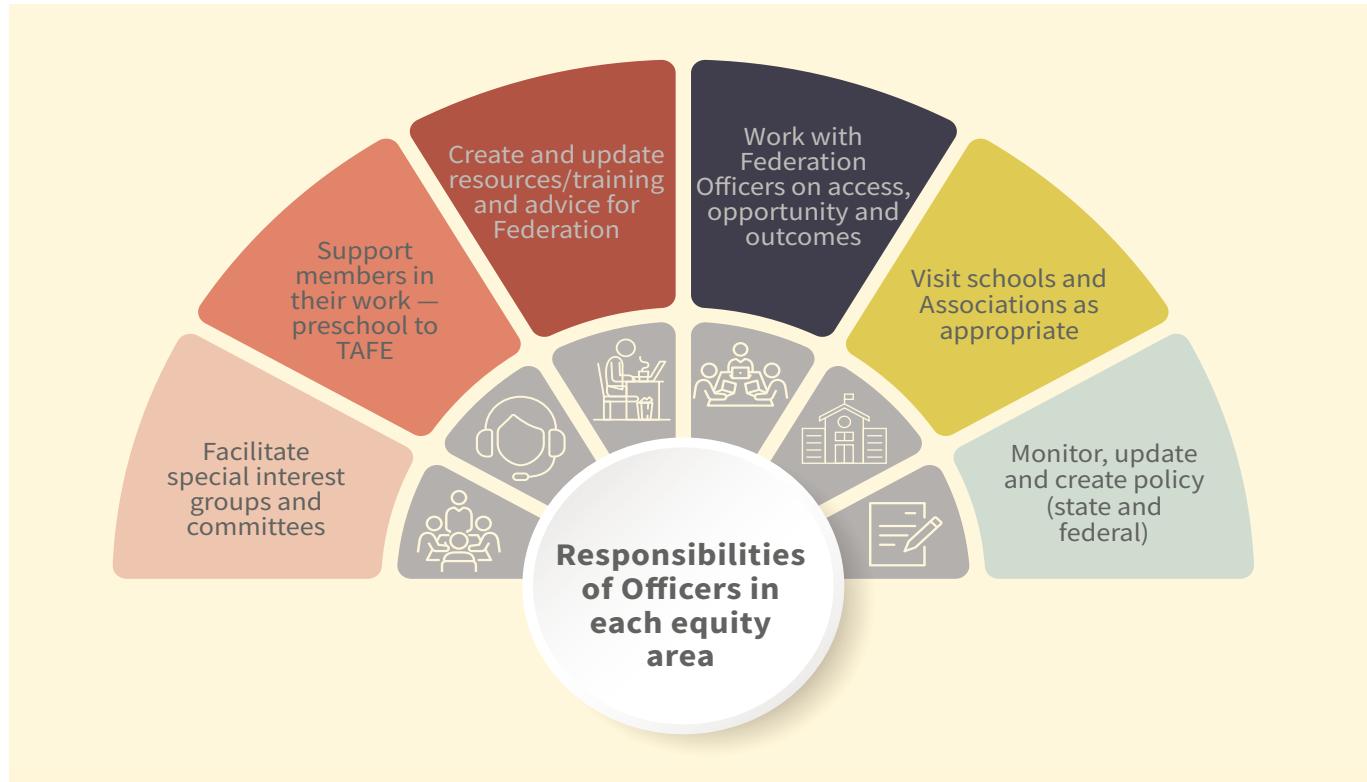
The new Award provisions making it easier to fill relieving roles in higher duties on a part-time or jobshare basis have also had a positive effect. Lisa was able to apply to work in a relieving assistant principal position for four days a week, with a second person acting in the role on Fridays.

“Ordinarily that would have gone to someone full time, but because I knew I had that flexibility I went for it. Things like that are great because it’s not just an opportunity for one person, it’s an opportunity for two.”



**AWARD
IMPLEMENTATION
RESOURCE**





Equity matters at Federation

The union has a long history and strong stance on supporting members and public education across areas of equity — from preschool to TAFE — ensuring both teachers and students feel a sense of belonging and value in what they do.

Federation's Equity Team works closely with Officers and staff in all other areas of the union to support their work in meeting member needs. With a wider state and federal focus, the team meets with representatives from other union bodies and NSW Department of Education teams (within their respective focus areas) and supports the Presidential Officers with the latest information.

Below are examples of topics, issues or concerns that the Equity Team help members with:

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

- Is my school entitled to an Aboriginal Education Officer?
- How do I connect with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group?
- What are the protocols around an Acknowledgment of Country and a Welcome to Country?
- We'd like to teach local language; how do we do this by following proper process?

WOMEN

- What are my entitlements for parental leave?

- Gender-based discrimination in the workplace
- What is the Anna Stewart Program and how to participate
- Professional learning targeted at supporting women in schools

DISABILITY

- What programming and documentation is required in schools for students with disability?
- What funding is my school able to access to support students with disability?
- What's involved in the Access Request process?
- I'm a teacher with disability; how can I access workplace adjustments?

MULTICULTURAL

- What funding is my school entitled to in supporting newly arrived migrants?
- I'm an English as an additional language/dialect teacher and have been asked to collapse my program regularly. What can I do?

LGBTIQA+

- Supporting students to set up a Gender and Sexuality Alliance at your school
- My rights in the workplace as a teacher who identifies as LGBTIQA+

Creating safe spaces in workplaces allows for greater engagement and involvement

- Can we hold pride events at school?
- How do we engage in Department of Education gender affirmation procedures for staff?

The different areas of equity within a school context are supported, encouraged, spoken about and managed in many ways. The effectiveness of programs, initiatives and systems are highly dependent on the school culture and community involvement.

The 'How do I rate my school when it comes to handling matters of equity?' tool (see below) can be used as a personal reflection activity and can facilitate discussions in small groups, team or staff meetings. Creating safe spaces in workplaces for individuals to feel seen and cared for allows for greater engagement and involvement. This is the case for both children and adults.

LEARN MORE

Courses and conferences are a great way to connect with other members and the work that takes place within Federation. Lots of courses are related specifically to our equity areas, as well as many others.

Our member Knowledge Centre in the Member Portal holds a catalogue of information for you to access. This can be your first access point to broadening your understanding and can assist you in workplace conversations or issues.

Federation's library offers great resources and curated *Hot Topics* leaflets for simple reference to relevant topics, especially within our equity areas. These are regularly updated. If you know of some fantastic resources for teachers, please share them with the friendly library team.

Number of years I have been teaching:

How do I rate my school when it comes to handling matters of Equity?

Aboriginal +
Torres Strait
Islander

Disability

LGBTIQA+

Multicultural

Women

Scan the QR code to download this resource

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are another forum where members come together to provide advice to Federation concerning policies in their interest areas. If you have passion in a topic covered by a SIG you are welcome and encouraged to join. Just scan the QR code (see right) and fill out the online web form to be added to the list.

John Skene, Disability Officer, on behalf of the Equity Team





DISABILITY DAY

RECOGNITION

WORLD BRAILLE DAY

4 January

The date Louis Braille, the man who invented the braille alphabet, was born. World Braille Day celebrates the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realisation of human rights for blind and visually impaired people.

INTERNATIONAL WHEELCHAIR DAY

1 March

On International Wheelchair Day, it's important to understand, acknowledge and respect people who require a wheelchair. As a society, we need to recognise and advocate for those around us to ensure that our schools and communities are accessible to all.

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

2 April

On World Autism Awareness Day, it's important to raise awareness and foster acceptance and inclusion of autism. More than 205,000 Australians are autistic and 1 in 4 Australians have a family member on the autism spectrum.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SIGN LANGUAGES

23 September

Each year, 23 September marks a special day to celebrate, protect and support the diverse cultures and linguistic identities of deaf people and sign language users across the world.



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WEEKS OF SIGNIFICANCE

CO-HOSTED BY NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

21 March

World Down Syndrome Day, it's important to celebrate, understand and support those with Down Syndrome to have a voice across the globe. The date – the first day of the third month – was chosen to represent the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome, which causes Down Syndrome.



PURPLE DAY – FOR EPILEPSY

26 March

More than 250,000 people in Australia live with epilepsy. For many, it is something they will have for their entire lives. Schools must acknowledge and educate their community to know epilepsy is not something to be feared and people who experience it should be supported.

DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH

July

Disability Pride Month happens every July to celebrate people with disability and encourage self-acceptance and the embracing of all disabilities.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

3 December

International Day of People with Disability is a United Nations Day, observed internationally. It aims to promote community awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability. International Day of People with Disability is an opportunity to be part of creating an inclusive and diverse community for the 5.5 million people with disability in Australia.

WORLD DEAF DAY

First Sunday in September is World Deaf Day to raise awareness about the achievements of the Deaf community. It's a chance to celebrate the Deaf community's rich culture, unique language and the importance of inclusion in society.

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

10 October

World Mental Health Day is an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma.

YARNING IN PROGRESS

Yarning circle

RUSSELL HONNERY Aboriginal Education Officer

Federation held our first Foundation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Members Workplace Representatives course on 24 and 25 July.

This Trade Union Training course was designed and facilitated to ensure participants were in a culturally safe learning environment while still covering the role of Workplace Representatives.

The course included Acknowledgement of Country and yarning circle check-in and check-outs over both days.

Sessions covered:

- information about being a Workplace Representative (Federation Representative, Women's Contact and Committee member)
- an update on priority campaigns, presented by Federation President Henry Rajendra
- membership and recruitment
- workplace issues, presented with Federation's Women's Officer Leeanda Smith
- the role of Research, Industrial and Professional Support, presented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Federation Councillor and Relief Officer Nancy Penfold
- addressing workplace issues
- running an effective Federation meeting
- looking at developing a Workplace Action Plan, with the assistance of Inner City Organiser Andrew Viller.

COURSE FEEDBACK

Some of the feedback from attendees included:

- "Today was a great opportunity to hear from highly knowledgeable union officers and Organisers, while discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics relevant to us."
- "It's important to be able to learn in a culturally safe, culturally appropriate environment."
- "Absolutely well-structured, presented and engaging. Culturally appropriate, relevant engaging for discussions, activities, encouraging sharing."
- "I really enjoyed connecting with other mob. I felt safe and this helped me to be able to participate to a greater extent."

It was great seeing and working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to develop their skills for their roles on Federation Workplace Committees in schools.

It was a great first course and I look forward to more of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members stepping up in roles within their schools and running another course next year.

Below: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplace Representatives



WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Ageism in the workplace

Australians are increasingly working later in life: the 2023 *NSW Public Service Workforce Profile* report states the average age in the teaching service is 42 years. Non-casual employees aged 45–54 are 23.4 per cent of the workforce and those aged 55–64 make up 14.9 per cent. The average retirement age of public sector employees has steadily risen from 62 in 2014 to 65 in 2023. As a result, they report there are now five generations working side by side.

Older workers contribute significant value to the workplace in the form of industry experience and expertise, strategic thinking, the ability to mentor younger workers and loyalty. Sadly, age discrimination still presents a significant barrier to meaningful participation in the workforce.

Research published by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in 2015 identified behaviours that clearly represent age discrimination, including the intent to 'manage out' older workers despite their performance and expertise. The AHRC reported that in 2016–17 more than 58 per cent of age discrimination complaints were related to work. The culture and managerial practices of a workplace were significant factors in the complaints. The AHRC stated that it was fundamental to shift the stereotypes and misconceptions around older workers.

Age discrimination is against the law. Anti-Discrimination NSW defines age discrimination as when you have been treated less favourably than someone else because of your age. Indirect discrimination — when there is a rule or requirement that is the same for everyone but unfairly affects people of a particular age or age group and is not reasonable in the circumstances — is also against the law.

Numerous studies in the past decade identified that ageism occurs earlier for women than men. In addition to managing peri-menopause many women are part of the 'sandwich generation', juggling caring responsibilities for children and parents while continuing to work.

A 2021 position statement by the European Menopause and Andropause Society called for workplaces to be more supportive to improve women's wellbeing and their ability to remain in work. They emphatically stated that women should not be discriminated against, marginalised or dismissed because of menopausal symptoms and noted that in many instances menopause discrimination is compounded by age discrimination.

If you are subjected to or witness discrimination, do not allow the situation to continue. Tell the person the behaviour is inappropriate and must stop. More information can be found in Information Leaflets TR6, TR7 and TR8, available from the Knowledge Centre within the Member Portal. You can also contact Professional Support for assistance.

Member Portal's Knowledge Centre



WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Continue fighting to protect and advance women's rights, Dr Anne Summers urges

Women's lives have significantly changed since the 1970s but they haven't changed enough, feminist activist Dr Anne Summers told delegates at Federation's Women's Conference on 23 August.

This year's conference celebrated 50 years of Federation's Women's Program and the 50th anniversary since the publication of Dr Summers' book *Damned Whores and God's Police*.

Reflecting on this year's theme, '50 Years of Fierce', Dr Summers began by discussing the treatment of women at the beginning of her feminist career.

"It seems almost unbelievable today, but until the late 1970s it was perfectly legal for women to be treated as inferiors," she told the audience, recounting how jobs were once classified by gender and routinely excluded women.

"Things changed, big and small. A small example: the signs on the toilet doors in Federal Parliament had to be repainted [to signify] women or men, instead of senators or members."

Today, Dr Summers is a Professor of Domestic and Family Violence at the University of Technology Sydney. Her work uncovers the hidden economic, financial and emotional costs faced by women who have experienced domestic violence.

Women who have experienced domestic violence face an unemployment gap of 5.3 per cent compared to women who have never experienced partner abuse, according to her research.

Highlighting the ongoing marginalisation, discrimination and abuse faced by women, Dr Summers called for feminist activists to practice vigilance and continue fighting to protect and advance women's rights.

Delegates were exceptionally inspired and moved by the speech, giving her a standing ovation.

"Dr Summers' speech was just phenomenal. It's really given me more depth and more insight and, of course, fierceness and more drive to really look into women's positions in the workplace, in society, in the world," Jahana Girot of Forbes North Public School said afterwards.

Our teacher activists reflected further on '50 Years of Fierce' during a panel chaired by Gail Shelston, including Siobhan Callan, Darelle Duncan, Joan Lemaire, Michelle Rosicky and Charline Emzin-Boyd.

A second panel focused on the future of teaching and women's roles in the profession. This panel, chaired by Katinka Kastner, consisted of Azka Afzal, Simrit Atwal, Trang Dao, Jessie Eather and Alice Leung.



Delegates were given the opportunity to attend a range of workshops, which included:

- Using Department of Education resources to support LGBTIQA+ community members in school settings
- Organising for complex need and equity
- Supporting schools to address complex student behaviour including sexual harassment
- Leading and controlling your Personal Development Plan
- You've been asked to attend a meeting with an executive teacher/principal... What next?
- You too can be President (of your Association)
- More about those Invisible Women
- Strong women, strong voices: Learning from Blak activism
- Suspension and expulsion implementation procedures
- Assisting executive teachers to lead difficult conversations
- All about my membership; connecting with colleagues to increase awareness of member benefits
- TAFE women – knowing your rights and Rebuilding TAFE.

The conference was a big success, with members sharing knowledge and experience and leaving feeling empowered and confident.

More photos



Courtney Hardwick





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RETHINKING ABILITY

Suggestions to help with getting reasonable workplace adjustments

JOHN SKENE Disability Officer

The NSW Department of Education's website states "we are committed to creating a workplace that is diverse, inclusive and reflective of the community".

It highlights their support and commitment to people with a disability entering or continuing in the workforce, including through the Department's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021–2025 and its workplace adjustments procedure and adjustments for individual needs guidelines.

However, some members report resistance in their workplaces to giving them the support they need.

WHAT TO ASK

Here are some questions to assist you in seeking necessary and/or suitable accommodations in your work:

- What has your allied health professional and/or team suggested?
- Do you have a formal work arrangement plan in place?
- Do you have embedded review processes and/or consultation?
- Have you raised your work accommodations with your principal?
- What will the adjustments look like? How will they support you in your work?
- Have the appropriate workload and conditions been considered for you?
- What types of infrastructure modifications are required to allow you to engage in your work?

This list is not exhaustive. However, it gives scope for you to work with when planning out changes to work arrangements to help you be successful in your job.

MORE SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

To seek advice from the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Team, email youbelong@det.nsw.edu.au.

The Department's Disability Employee Network is for employees with lived experience of disability and those with an interest in shaping the Department to become an employer of choice for people with disability.

Check out the Global Accessibility Awareness Day Learning Café where teachers who identify with a disability answered questions around the "You Can't Ask That" concept.

More information about the NSW Government's commitment to workplace adjustments for individual needs can be found at iworkfor.nsw.gov.au.

FEDERATION ASSISTANCE

If you require assistance when a request is not being listened to or you are not being properly supported in your workplace, speak to your Federation Representative, Women's Contact or a Workplace Committee member to see how they can assist.

If further advice or support is needed reach out to your Workplace Organiser or call Professional Support on **1300 654 367**. Federation is here to help.

Note: It is a personal choice to indicate that you have a disability to your employer.

TAFE TALK



Participants in Trade Union Training's TAFE Foundations course

TAFE must address dysfunctional systems

KYLIE FLETCHER, GABI HARDING AND CHRISTINE ALLSOPP

Students' education and skills should become TAFE NSW's main focus when contestable funding ends in 2026 and the system has a more predictable annual budget.

This focus will require teachers being given more time to teach — and can be made possible with a reduction in administrative workload.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Teachers and head teachers are frustrated by the time needed to reconcile student refunds and outstanding fees in the dysfunctional TAFE enrolment system and the double-handling required by the student record management system, EBS.

- Examples from TAFE Teachers Association delegates include:
- head teachers are required to provide student data to their supervisors in Progress and Completion Pulse Check meetings that is easily accessible to management in the systems. Team leaders provide head teachers with an Excel spreadsheet which they build. Head teachers are then required to screenshot the data and paste it into a PowerPoint presentation to present back to management.
 - Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) teachers enter student attendance in the AMEP spreadsheet before AMEP staff copy it into their own system. Teachers also enter attendance into

EBS. Teachers enter both AMEP and non-AMEP results into EBS as well as into separate spreadsheets for different sections and levels.

- in the joint TAFE Vocational Education Training (TVET) Schools program, teachers are forced to enter attendances and student notes into two student management systems: EBS and the Department of Education's TVET management system, RASP.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

TAFE Teachers Association is calling for:

- a streamlined enrolment system
- an end to the monthly missing marks reports
- an end to the ever-growing e-checklists
- an end to the monthly census date for student voucher funding — no longer required with the end of contestable funding
- an end to the double-handling of student data
- a simple process to obtain a student list
- a simple roll book or register and process to record attendances and absences.

Annual Conference's Rebuilding TAFE decision called for systematic reform to reduce administrative burden, restore teacher autonomy and ensure systems serve teaching and learning not compliance.

Kylie Fletcher, Gabi Harding and Christine Allsopp are TAFE Teachers Association Councillors

Gabi Harding (left) and Fed Rep Lorna Glear (right) address Annual Conference



MULTICULTURAL MATTERS

What sort of world do we want to see?

MANDY WELLS Multicultural Officer/Organiser

War, persecution, famine, environmental disasters and a woefully inadequate world response has millions living in poverty and struggling to survive or escape further harm.

Ongoing conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Myanmar are testing global resolve and causing the greatest increase to population displacement the world has ever seen.

The number of displaced people and refugees continues to increase and all too often they are denied basic human rights, demonised by media, detained illegally and further traumatised. Humanitarian aid programs are being cut or access to them illegally denied at a time when they are needed most.

Indigenous peoples across the world who continue to seek cultural respect and safety are also being denied their rights, often seeing their issues becoming politically weaponised.

Children and civilians have become the greatest casualties in conflict — and they should never be a target. Seeking asylum and protection is a human right and governments are failing to act in ways that prioritise human rights as being the inalienable rights deserved by all.

Every child deserves peace, safety, food, shelter, love and access to education. Yet more are being traumatised by war and conflict, with direct impacts on life and educational outcomes without appropriate support.

Advocating for peace and pursuing appropriate policies that support all children enrolled in our public schools remains important union business.

In the past year Federation has worked to secure improvements to multicultural education policies that support the 39 per cent of NSW public school students who speak a language other than English at home. These include strengthened policies for English Language Proficiency funding, improvements to the number of dual qualified teachers holding English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) staffing positions, greater access to scholarship programs to enhance numbers of qualified EAL/D teachers, increased funding and support for Anti-Racism Contact Officers in schools and the achievement of more permanent TAFE teacher positions and fee-free TAFE placements.

Continued advocacy for the creation of a federal Human Rights Framework and campaigning alongside other unions and affiliated organisations for an end to war, detention and offshore processing remain significant objectives. We must see government policies that allow all who are seeking refuge the right to settle safely, with dignity and equitable access to support and education.

It is time for us all to ask: "What sort of world do we want to see?"

In holding a place of privilege, we must use our voice as one to be the change we want everyone to see. Federation remains on the right side of history in its policy positions and will remain committed to achieving a fairer, more sustainable, socially cohesive and inclusive society.

A CASUAL WORD

Frequently asked questions

ANTHONY BRERETON City Organiser

Why is it important for me to keep a record of casual and temporary teaching service?

The number of days you teach impacts on your salary progression. If the Department of Education's records are incorrect this could lead to a casual teacher being underpaid. If you find inconsistencies with the Department's records, contact Federation for advice on **1300 654 367**.

Federation understands that it can be difficult at times to secure regular employment. Recognising this, teachers who have secured less than 20 days of employment over the year may be entitled to a refund of their membership fees.

How do I apply for Approval to Teach as a casual or temporary teacher?

To work as a casual, temporary, or permanent teacher, you must:

1. Have a valid Working with Children Check. Apply at kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au.

2. Apply at educationstandards.nsw.edu.au for NESA

Accreditation. If you've previously been registered in another state, you may qualify for Mutual Recognition. In certain circumstances there are provisions that enable returning teachers to be immediately accredited at Proficient Teacher.

3. Apply for Approval to Teach from the NSW Department of Education at teach.nsw.edu.au.

Can the principal refuse to appoint me as a temporary teacher?

No. The principal is required to engage you as a temporary teacher if the period of the engagement is four weeks or more full time, or one to four days per week part time, for two terms or more. Remember to check with your principal to update if your working arrangement changes from casual to temporary. This ensures you will receive your appropriate pay and entitlements.

Do multiple part days per week count as temporary employment?

Yes. Temporary teachers must be engaged for at least one full day (0.2 full-time equivalent, meaning one discrete day) per week. A casual engagement is at a minimum of two hours per day, or half or full days. Being employed for five days a week for four weeks constitutes a temporary engagement.

I am a casual/temporary teacher who applied for a vacant permanent position via advertisement. Am I able to lodge an appeal against a local selection appointment?

Casual/temporary teachers are external to the NSW Teaching Service and are not eligible to appeal against the appointment of either an internal (existing permanent teacher) or another external applicant.

A casual or temporary teacher can, however, write a formal complaint, which Federation can assist you with.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Filling executive vacancies

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

One of the numerous significant improvements for Federation members in the 2024–2029 Staffing Agreement was the re-establishment of service transfers for deputy principals, head teachers and assistant principals from the start of term 3, 2024.

As a result, the first step for filling executive vacancies now consists of the following mechanisms in priority order:

- section 51A (non-compassionate) or part 4A appointment required under the Teaching Service Act 1980
- incentive transfer
- approved section 51A transfer (compassionate)
- nominated transfer
- priority transfer of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander executive teacher or executive teacher from a special education setting
- service transfer
- a permanent executive teacher appointed to an equivalent above centrally-identified position role.

Where a school has not been able to access a local choice recruitment option for the preceding five vacancies (of all classifications), the school is permitted to access local choice for the next vacancy only. Otherwise, a vacant executive position will be matched to a transfer applicant via the mechanisms outlined above prior to local choice occurring.

Eligibility criteria for the existing priority executive transfers have not changed. As a result, executive service transfers are only actioned in circumstances where there is no match for the more highly prioritised transfers. Executive service transfer applicants are now being matched to vacant positions that would have previously been filled through local choice, including the predominant pathway of merit selection.

The provisions relating to executive service transfers generally mirror those for classroom teachers, including capacity for deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers to specify individual schools and/or staffing areas in their application. The minimum service requirement to be eligible for an executive service transfer is four years in the teacher's current executive role at their current school.

The calculation of transfer points for executive service transfers is on the basis of full points for all appointments at their current level and half points for all service at lower executive levels and as a classroom teacher.

Principals, deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers are also able to regress to lower executive levels and to classroom teacher roles through executive service transfers and teacher service transfers, noting that regression to a classroom teacher position only requires three years of service in their current permanent principal or executive position.

Noting the prioritisation of placement via service transfer when compared to merit selection and other local choice options, deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers who are looking to move to other schools are strongly encouraged to make a service transfer application at the earliest opportunity.

EARLY CAREER INSIGHTS

Get more involved in your union

KATINKA KASTNER Membership and Training Officer

Did you know that Federation is stronger when members like you actively engage with the decision-making processes of the union and federal, state and local campaigns?

The first step to getting involved is within your workplace by introducing yourself to your Federation Representative (Fed Rep) and Women's Contact. Be sure to participate in workplace Federation meetings, where you and fellow members can discuss issues affecting your work, community and students as well as move, amend and vote on motions that inform the direction of your workplace.

Another way to get involved is by attending your local Association meetings. These usually happen twice a term and are attended by Federation members in your local area. The meetings are forums to share information with colleagues, discuss local issues and put forward solutions and motions to influence Federation's policies and direction. You can check which Association you are in by speaking to your Fed Rep, through Federation emails or giving us a call. To find the time and location of your next Association meeting, check the events calendar on Federation's website. Each Association has one or multiple elected Councilors who represent their Association at state Council and Annual Conference.

Federation's Council meets eight times per year at Federation House in Surry Hills. This is where factors influencing the profession are discussed and decisions made that inform the direction of union policies. Members can attend Council if they are a Councillor, a proxy for a Councillor or as a non-voting observer. If you're interested in attending Council, speak to the elected representatives at your Association or your Organiser.

If you live in a country area and would like to experience Council, you can apply to attend as an observer through the New Activist Country Observer Program or Country Women's Observer Program. The application form is available via the Member Portal on our website.

Federation's New Activist Conference is aimed at teachers who are interested in building activism skills and engaging with union campaigns and activities. This year's conference will be held on Saturday 1 November in Surry Hills. Information is available on our website. Each Association is funded to send one member — however, they can move a motion to fund additional delegates. Speak with your Organiser or elected Association position holders to apply.

Stay informed by talking to other members and through Federation communications and social media.



Equality drives excellence

Words *Michael Sciffer*

The segregation of NSW students between public and private schools is a fundamental fracture in our society. The separation of learning opportunities by school sectors is hindering disadvantaged students' learning outcomes and damaging social cohesion.

Research shows that the largest school-level predictor of academic outcomes is the average socioeconomic status (SES) of a school and so the concentration of disadvantaged students into disadvantaged schools multiplies barriers to learning. The most effective intervention the NSW public education system can make for the learning of disadvantaged students is to win back middle- and high-income families. This will require restoration of the traditional focus of NSW public education: excellence for all students.

The NSW public education system needs to convince these families that the highest quality and richest learning outcomes are only achievable in the local public school. This requires a shift of emphasis in the focus, work and language of the NSW Department of Education, principals and classroom teachers.

NSW public schools must be where the overwhelming majority of academic, cultural, sporting and social excellence is achieved by children and young people. This would restore the confidence of families in NSW public education, rebuild enrolments and lift the outcomes of disadvantaged students.

As a start, teachers, principals and the Department should focus on achieving the highest academic outcomes for the

students in our schools. New funding resources should be directed towards academic excellence and not basic skills and welfare. For example:

- phonics is not enough — every child should be creating high-quality texts
- anger management is not enough — every child should be an active citizen of their school and community.

The re-labelling of English and Mathematics as literacy and numeracy in low SES public primary schools diminishes opportunity and drives away middle-income families. Instead, public education must prioritise a collective commitment to high academic expectations and outcomes for all students.

The needs of disadvantaged students can only be addressed in public schools that have the full confidence of their communities and enrol children from all parts of society. Such confidence requires safe and orderly learning environments, high academic expectations of all students and the full range of opportunities in the arts, sports and culture. Critically, the Department needs to systemically support initiatives to guarantee excellence for all students and maximise enrolment flows across transitions from preschool to kindergarten and from year 6 to 7.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESIDUALISATION

From 1996 to 2024 public primary school enrolment share declined from 73.9 per cent to 67.2 per cent while public secondary school enrolment share declined from 67.9 per cent to 55.9 per cent.

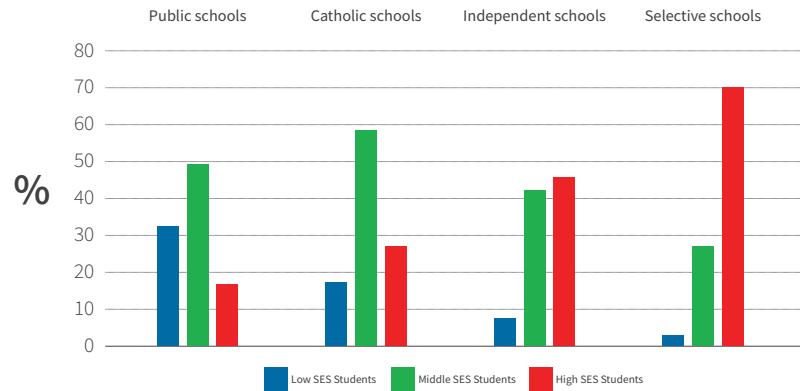


Figure 1. The 2019 socioeconomic profile of Australian secondary schools

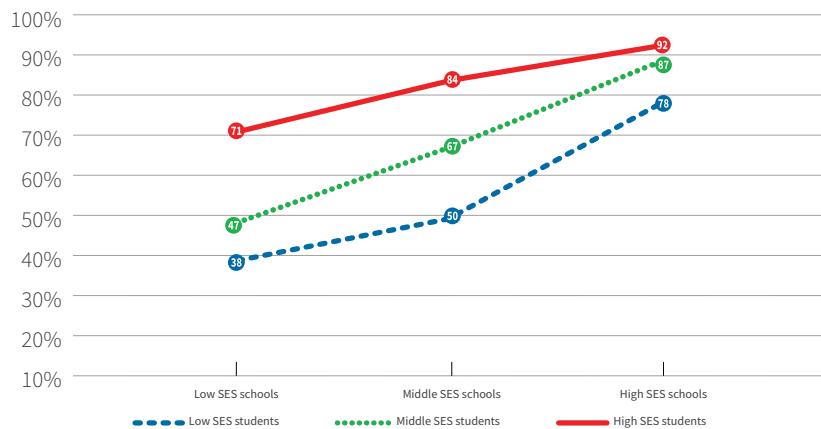


Figure 2. Proportion of grade 9 students achieving all National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy benchmarks by family and school socioeconomic status in 2017

SEGREGATION OF LOW SES STUDENTS

School sectors have distinct enrolment profiles. At the national level, the public system over-enrols low SES students, Catholic schools over-enrol middle SES students, independent schools over-enrol high SES students and selective schools enormously over-enrol high SES students (figure 1).

The Australian schooling system is among the most segregated of OECD countries and has become more so over time. Research using the Programme for International Student Assessment has found that between 2000 and 2018 the Australian secondary school system moved from 11th to seventh in school segregation. Thus, low SES students are

becoming more isolated from their peers in Australia due to the increasing residualisation of public schools.

Figure 2 shows the SES of a student's family and their school predicts academic achievement. By year 9 a low SES student in a low SES school is half as likely to achieve minimum academic benchmarks than the same type of student in a high SES school. This is because up to 30 per cent of learning at school is explained by the socioeconomic composition of its students.

This is a synopsis of Michael Sciffer's Eric Pearson report, *NSW Public education: a reflection on socioeconomic school segregation*. See page 35 for details on 2026 Eric Pearson Study Grant applications.

Federation's commitment

"Public education is the only system that provides a universal standard of academic excellence to all children and young people in NSW. It is inclusive and respectful of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, identities and abilities. It educates for the social and individual good. It is ordered and settled.

"Government must be held accountable to its citizens to guarantee the leadership and pre-eminence of the public education system. It must receive strong bipartisan support from

all governments and be actively protected from market driven ideologies in perpetuity.

"Federation will develop a generational campaign to re-establish the leadership and pre-eminence of public education in NSW. Federation will engage a broad coalition of experts, specialists and organisations across the local, national and global public education movement to support the campaign."

(The Public Education System — Equality, Excellence, Equity Annual Conference decision, 2024)



Learning environment turned inside out

ED

words *Mark Werner, Judith Wilks and Angela Turner*

A distinct learning environment and place-based, authentic learning experiences delivered significant growth in the understanding of climate change and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural, language and scientific knowledge for a cohort of year 7 students at Macksville High School.

The students were taught in a learning environment called 'The Hub', consisting of an open learning space for up to 50 students in a conjoined classroom, three teachers covering English, Mathematics and Science and Geography/History, and one student learning support officer. Teachers developed a series of cross-curricular, collaborative learning programs and resources about climate change that included units of work related to identity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and sciences. Previously, subjects were taught in silos and there were very few interdisciplinary options.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM JUST STREETS AWAY

As part of the teaching program, students engaged in a highly relevant case study at Dawkins Park Reserve, within walking distance for most of the schools involved.

The reserve features a windmill that was in the process of being installed to improve water quality in the reserve's pond. Conceptual ideas were in progress for an outdoor learning

centre, the result of a collaboration between Southern Cross University and Nambucca Valley Council in 2021.

There's a walking trail around the pond and students were given the opportunity to develop signage ideas about the wildlife, water quality and safety aspects. Students learnt about climate change's impact on the local environment. They were exposed to hands-on activities such as collecting microorganisms, identifying flora and fauna, observing bird migration patterns, testing the water and using maps, photos and light microscopes to analyse their water samples.

The Nambucca Valley Council website for Dawkins Park covers local birds and wildlife information. Further resources share Gumbaynggirr knowledge, stories and songlines.

On the same website there is a stage 3 unit of work (teaching program) developed between teachers and one of Southern Cross University's research staff members. This can be adapted to suit stage 4-5 students regardless of region.

CULTURAL IMMERSION EXCURSION

A cultural immersion excursion supported the year 7 unit of work called 'Identity'. The day started with a Welcome to Country in Bowraville, delivered by a local knowledge and language holder who shared the history and narrative of his town and community.

Students and teachers were met by traditional owners,

elders and knowledge holders at Nambucca Heads, who shared narratives, culture and experiences. A smoking ceremony and the re-creation of a local Dreaming narrative (using the students as actors and participants) enriched the students' and teachers' understanding of local Aboriginal culture and identity.

At Scotts Head, cultural protocols were observed and students and teachers learnt more about the Gumbaynggirr creation narratives regarding how the sea was created and how waves were made. This was followed by the playing of traditional Indigenous games on the beach and reflection on the history, purpose and relevance of these activities.

TEACHER BENEFITS

These events stimulated teachers' interest, enjoyment and excitement in teaching climate change. Like their students, they were fascinated. They were co-inquirers with their students because they too were making deeper connections between the different scales of climate change.

Teachers' learning design and programming benefitted. They found it easier to link teaching about climate change with the Australian Curriculum's Sustainability priority area.

Their feelings about self-efficacy in teaching climate change also improved.

They envisioned Dawkins Park Reserve becoming a centrepiece for future learning about the impacts of climate change at the local level, as it offered great affordance in terms of teaching, learning and benchmarking about key concepts in geography such as place, space, environment, interconnection, scale and change.

BOOST IN STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Teachers observed students' interest, passion, enjoyment and engagement in learning about climate change. They also noticed their students were reflecting far more deeply about their responsibilities in relation to climate change.

Students were excited about seeing things in real life. They related that they loved learning outside the classroom. They enjoyed learning through their senses — listening, seeing, smelling, touching and feeling — and in so doing they felt more connected to the environment. They were more able to make connections between the local and the global manifestations of climate change, the interactions between plants and animals and the seasonal influences relating to climate change. Teachers observed students to be more curious, interested and engaged.

Teachers could see students getting 'hooked in' to their learning at Dawkins Park Reserve. They were not having to deal with behaviour issues because the setting catered for a wide variety of learners and all students were engaged.

At school, teachers noticed student enthusiasm for what they had done at the park. Students were motivated to venture hypotheses, do their own research and give class presentations on what they had found out.

Teachers relayed that the experience at the reserve enabled students to link their learning about climate change to a place with which they were familiar and in so doing enrich their knowledge and understanding.

THE ROLE OF THE YEAR 7 HUB

As beneficial as it was to take the students to outdoor learning settings, it was only possible to examine climate change to this depth because of the affordances of the Hub.

The Hub enabled the cohort to be taught as an entity, as opposed to separate classes, by a core group of teachers with a focus on student wellbeing. This model provided students with continuity and consistency during what is often a difficult transition from primary to secondary school.

The synergy generated through the combined efforts of highly trained professionals created momentum and enthusiasm within the learning environment. The collaboration facilitated an even deeper mutual regard for colleagues' professionalism, their discipline and content-specific knowledge. Sharing a teaching space between colleagues and freely exchanging ideas and feedback empowered and invigorated teaching.

Realities such as COVID-19 and the accompanying lockdowns, the extended periods of learning from home, teacher shortages, time constraints and the prolonged flooding in the region causing major disruptions to everyday life were all factors that conspired against the continuance of the Hub. However, links between the participating teachers remain strong and therefore the possibility for cross curriculum project-based learning still exists.

Mark Werner is Daureb and part of the Ulag Clan which is a clan of the Zagareb Tribe of Mer in the Torres Strait. He is a secondary trained teacher and holds a Masters in Indigenous Languages.

Dr Judith Wilks is Adjunct Associate Professor at Southern Cross University, Faculty of Education and Adjunct Associate Professor of the Nulungu Research Institute of the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Dr Angela Turner is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer/Researcher at Southern Cross University.

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.





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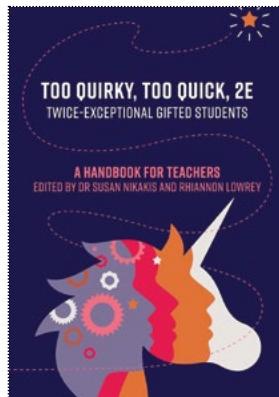
Call **1300 728 488**
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Locations

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Wollongong, NSW

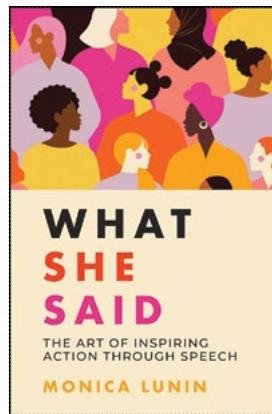
Melbourne, VIC
Adelaide, SA
Health Hub – Brisbane, QLD



Too quirky, too quick, 2E: twice-exceptional gifted students

EDITED BY SUSAN NIKAKIS AND RHIANNON LOWREY. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2025

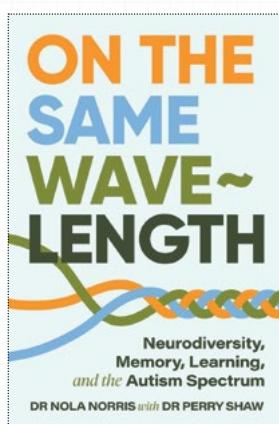
This book “brings together leading experts in gifted education to unravel the complex world of twice-exceptional (2e) students — remarkable learners who possess both giftedness and learning difficulties. This authoritative volume challenges traditional educational paradigms, offering fresh insights into how 2e students navigate the dual realms of giftedness and neurodiversity ... This book champions a strengths-based approach to education, moving beyond conventional assessment methods to create inclusive learning environments” (back cover).



What she said: the art of inspiring action through speech

BY MONICA LUNIN. MILTON, QLD: JOHN WILEY & SONS AUSTRALIA, 2022

“Monica Lunin has curated and analysed 40 of the greatest speeches made by strong and empowering women from all around the world. From Queen Elizabeth I to Maya Angelou, Greta Thunberg, Julia Gillard and Michelle Obama, [this book] shows not only what was said but also how the speech worked and why it was effective. In this insightful exploration of female wit, persuasion and leadership, you’ll find a biography of the speaker and a breakdown of the qualities that made each speech so remarkable” (back cover).

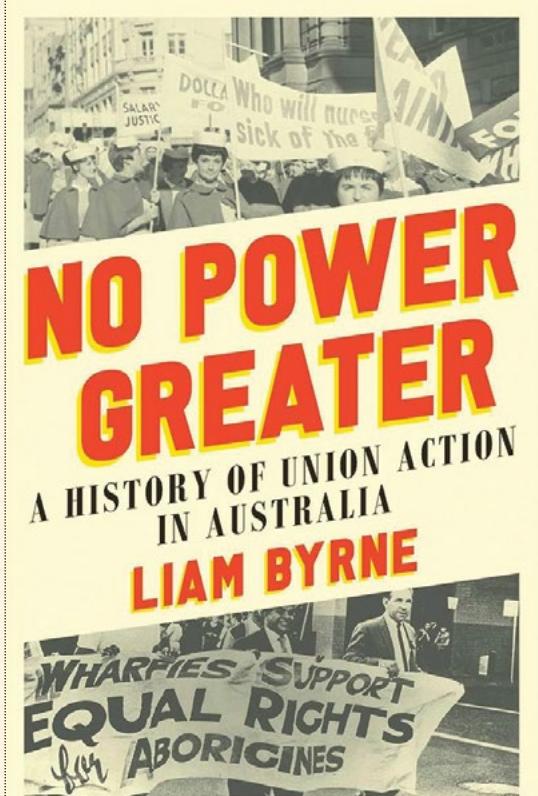


On the same wavelength: neurodiversity, memory, learning, and the autistic spectrum

BY NOLA NORRIS WITH PERRY SHAW. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2025

“Drawing from extensive research and firsthand accounts, [this book] introduces the innovative Thinking, Memory, and Learning Framework, empowering teachers to become cross-cultural interpreters between neurotypical and neurodivergent minds. Through a unique blend of neuroscience, psychology, and lived experience, this book challenges traditional teaching approaches and offers practical insights for creating hospitable learning environments that honour cognitive diversity” (back cover).

What's hot in the library



No power greater: a history of union action in Australia

BY LIAM BYRNE. CARLTON, VIC: MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2025

The author "seeks to illuminate what unionism means, exploring why successive generations of working people organised unions and nurtured them for future generations. Foregrounding the pioneering efforts of women workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, culturally and linguistically diverse workers, and LGBTIQA+ workers as central to the union story today, Byrne uses case studies of worker action and struggle to better understand the lived reality of unionism" (back cover). Includes an account of the Warilla High School dispute of 1976.

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.

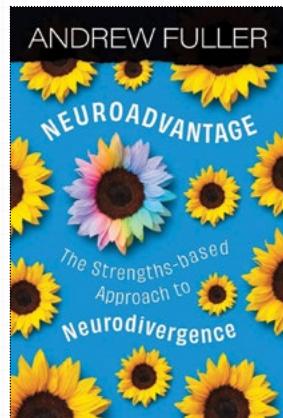
Members can also visit the library to borrow in person: Library Hours: 9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday and 10 am – 1.30 pm on Council Saturdays.



Neuroadvantage: the strengths-based approach to neurodivergence

BY ANDREW FULLER. MELBOURNE: AMBA PRESS, 2025

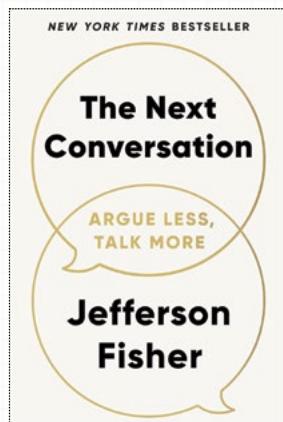
"With evidence-based strategies drawn from thousands of real-world cases, you'll learn how to convert challenges in attention, sensory processing, reading, writing and emotional regulation into powerful advantages that school systems often miss. Written for parents and educators of neurodivergent children ... Perfect for families seeking positive approaches to ADHD, autism, dyslexia and other neurodevelopmental variations" (back cover).



The next conversation: argue less, talk more

BY JEFFERSON FISHER. LONDON: PENGUIN LIFE, 2025

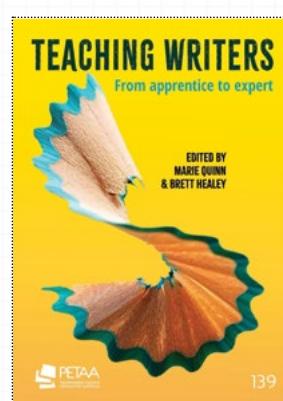
"Trial lawyer Jefferson Fisher has gained millions of followers online through short, simple, practical videos teaching people how to argue less and talk more. And now, in his first book, he offers a tried-and-true framework that will show you how to transform your life and your relationships. His down-to-earth teachings and actionable strategies have helped countless people navigate life's toughest situations. You will learn why you should never 'win' an argument, how to set boundaries and frame conversations, why saying less is often more and how to overcome conflict with connection" (back cover).



Teaching writers: from apprentice to expert

EDITED BY MARIE QUINN AND BRETT HEALEY. NEWTOWN, NSW: PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHING ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA, 2025

"Structured across three practical sections focusing on teacher knowledge, the writing program and pedagogical skills, [this book] offers clear, adaptable frameworks for classroom practice. Grounded in classroom practicalities and backed by robust research, it supports educators to design writing instruction that is explicit, engaging and purposeful. This approach helps students grow as writers who can express academic, civic and personal ideas with clarity, creativity and confidence – and have their voices heard in meaningful and authentic ways" (back cover).



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025



Six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members opened Annual Conference with an Acknowledgement of Country in language



The proud recipients of the 2025 Future Teachers and TAFE Teacher scholarship



Annual Conference was three days of debate, ideas and planning for the future



See more photos by scanning the QR code





The Teaching Peace course was one of Centre for Professional Learning's July highlights



Learning the ropes

From top: Trade Union Training TAFE Foundations (above), Association Aboriginal Education Contacts (below) and Association Executive (bottom) courses



Mel Doughty participated in Federation's two-week Anna Stewart Program earlier this term, learning about the different sections of the union and attending August Council



Project Officers Jack Brooks and Sinead O'Hara have been visiting schools, where they have been recruiting new Federation members and therefore increasing the union's strength



For the latest course
listings, information
and to apply



DATE	COURSE	LOCATION
2 September	Classroom management through effective teaching	Canberra
4 September	Classroom management through effective teaching	Surry Hills
5 September	Conversations about texts in secondary schools	Surry Hills
8 September	Supporting students with ADHD K-6	Surry Hills
10 September 24 September	Leading assessment practice in schools (2 day course)	Blacktown
17 September	Music K-6, the new syllabus: Making it work in your school	Surry Hills
19 September	Developing vocabulary for writing imaginative and persuasive texts K-6	Surry Hills
22 October 29 October	Leading assessment practice in schools (2 day course)	Online
24 October 12 November	Ethical leadership (2 day course)	Surry Hills
30 October	Inclusive strategies: Teaching students with disabilities in mainstream classes	Surry Hills
31 October 14 November 28 November	Tell me your story: Supporting EAL/D students from K-8 (3 day course)	Surry Hills
3 November	Rethinking Ability: Special Education Conference	Surry Hills
5 November	Modern assessment theory and assessment strategies for higher order thinking	Blacktown
7 November	Women and leadership: Examining skills, capacity and context	Canberra
10 November	Supporting students with ADHD in 7-10	Online
17 November	Supporting students with ADHD K-6	Online
2 December	Functional behaviour assessment in the classroom	Surry Hills



For the latest course
listings, information
and to apply



COURSE	DATE	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
Beginning Teacher Conference	20 September	Dubbo	5 September
Beginning Teacher Conference	20 September	Bundanoon	5 September
Association Executive (Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers)	22-23 September	Surry Hills	1 September
TAFE — Know your Rights at Work — Casual Conversion	24 September	Grafton	3 September
TAFE — Know your Rights at Work — Casual Conversion	25 September	Penrith	4 September
Foundations for Workplace Representatives	16-17 October	Surry Hills	22 September
Beginning Teacher Course	17 October	Blacktown	26 September
Foundations for Connected Communities Workplace Representatives	20-21 October	Surry Hills	29 September
New Activist Conference	1 November	Surry Hills	26 September
Relief Officer Training	10-12 November	Surry Hills	20 October
Work, Health and Safety in Education Workplaces	12 November	Surry Hills	22 October
Association Peace Contacts Campaigns Course	1 December	Surry Hills	10 November



Eric Pearson Study Grant 2026

Do you have a passion for education research?
Do you want to study a topic that could be relevant to advancing
Federation's work or the interests of our members?

APPLY FOR THE 2026 ERIC PEARSON STUDY GRANT NOW.

Successful applicants will be given **up to \$23,000 for travel, accommodation and expenses** associated with their area of study.

Topics for consideration could include:

- equity issues
- privatisation of education
- restructuring and reorganisation of education
- teaching standards.

The recipient will:

- provide a written report to Federation, documenting the results of their study, for use by the union
- give an oral report to Annual Conference
- contribute article/s, as appropriate, to *Education Quarterly*.

Examples of past reports are available from the Member Portal on our website at nswtf.org.au.

Applications close 13 October.

See full details here:





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