

Education



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QUARTERLY





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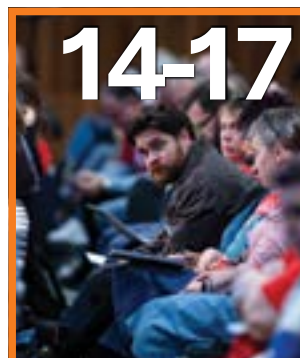
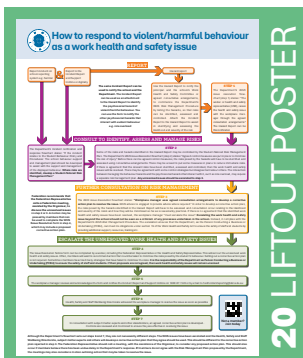
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COVER: This edition celebrates Federation's 2026 Annual Conference. We have also updated the wording of our Acknowledgement of Country. The editor, in consultation with the Aboriginal Education Officer Russell Honnery, concluded the Acknowledgement of Country should contextualise the publication, so the new wording recognises the fact that Teachers Federation House stands on Gadigal land, but also that many of the stories, materials, photos and experiences reported in the magazine come from members living on different traditional lands across the state.

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PRESIDENT WRITES

Henry Rajendra

THE MODERN PROFESSION DEMANDS MORE PREPARATION TIME

Recently, we all marked Public Education Week and, like me, I'm sure it gave you pause to reflect on the transformative nature of our work as teachers. Public education is the hothouse of democracy, inclusion and social progress within NSW, spanning everything from sport for every child, whether it's rep squads or just having a go, through to the school plays and musicals, where we witness students' confidence grow in real time. And don't forget debating, bands, carnivals and choirs — all of which is before you even consider the core curriculum.

But as we all know, none of this happens in a vacuum. There's no AI algorithm enriching, extending and empowering our kids. Every musical demands a teacher to direct it, every team requires a teacher to coach it and every gifted program has a teacher who planned and built it. Our members have become coaches, directors, mentors and event managers on top of teaching — and they take it on because they believe every child deserves the chance to flourish.

What everyone should understand in the wake of Public Education Week is that teachers do much of this in and around an already full workload — and very often in their own time. While that generosity is remarkable, it is also unsustainable.

What our teachers are short of is well understood: preparation time. It is the time used away from the class to plan the lesson that reaches the child at the back of the room, to speak with a therapist about a student whose needs have changed, to properly mark work and to adjust for tomorrow, based on what happened today. It is the time it takes to teach well.

The allocation itself tells the story. Primary teachers are still working to a preparation entitlement set in the 1980s, at around two hours a week. For our secondary colleagues, that figure has not shifted

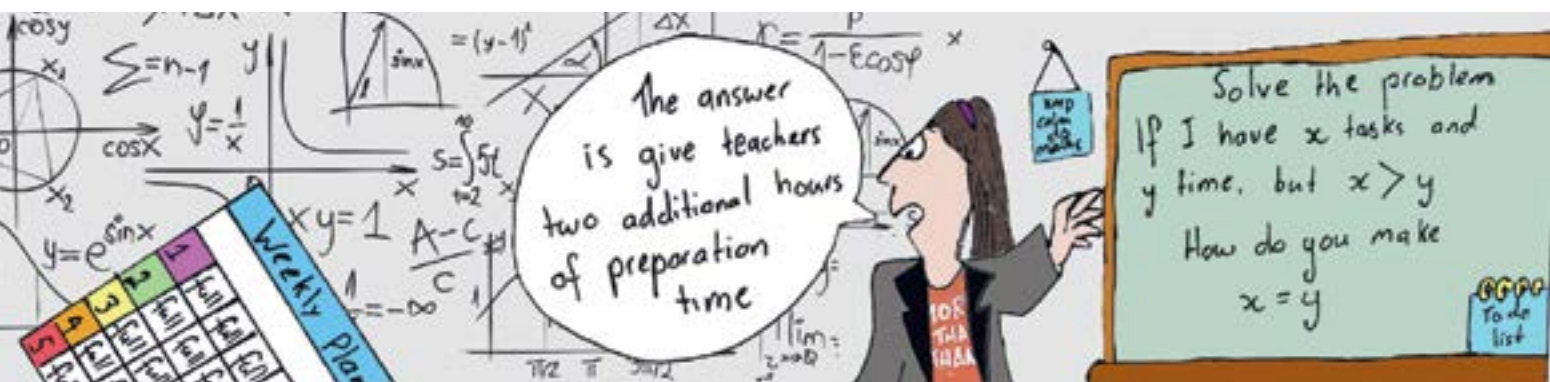
since the 1950s. Yet, everything around it has changed. The number of students with disability in our public schools has grown to more than 220,000, and most are now taught in mainstream classes. The curriculum has been regularly overhauled and the range of needs in front of every teacher has widened. Teaching demands have climbed with each passing decade, while the time set aside to meet them has stayed exactly where it was.

Five years ago, the Gallop Inquiry recommended two additional hours of preparation time a week as a matter of urgency. Teachers and families are still waiting.

The Government's own department has now made the case for us. Its recently published guide, *What Works Best 2025* names well-planned collaboration among eight practices proven to lift student learning, engagement and wellbeing. The guide is clear that this does not happen by good intentions alone: teachers have to be given the time to plan and work together — and it works best when that time is built into the week, rather than stacked on top of an already full teaching load. Preparation time is how a school builds in time for collaboration.

The Minns Government has done real work on public schools: competitive salaries, a commitment to the Gonski School Resource Standard funding and thousands of teachers made permanent. A commitment on preparation time would complete that work. An extra two hours each week is what the modern profession demands — and it is what we are pushing for, to ensure that every teacher has the time they need to keep delivering excellence for their students.

This is the case we will keep making. Our members give so much to the children of this state. It's time they were given the time.



IN BRIEF

LOCAL WIN: SCHOOL HALL TO BE REPLACED

Member campaigning for a safe workplace has been rewarded with news that a new hall will be built at Matraville Sports High School.

The Department of Education recently announced that the old hall will be demolished and planning for the new hall will begin.

When asbestos was discovered at the school hall, members took their concerns to the Director, Educational Leadership, calling for the facility to be knocked down and for a new hall to be built, but their calls were rejected.

Members committed to working together for a positive outcome sent multiple notifications to SafeWork, which led to a SafeWork inspection.

In June, the Department confirmed the hall would be knocked down, but the campaign was not yet won and members embarked on a series of actions right up until the time the rebuild was announced, including Eastern Suburbs Teachers Association and members at the school lobbying School Infrastructure NSW, SafeWork and the Education Minister. There was also a morning protest outside the school and meetings with the local MP.

Another work health and safety victory: pages 8–9

MORE SIGNATURES NEEDED

Federation is seeking the support of all members to ask parents to sign our letter calling on Education Minister Prue Car to deliver the additional preparation time teachers need and our students deserve.

The more signatures we have, the greater pressure there will be on the NSW Government to provide teachers with two extra hours of preparation time per week within school hours.

During Public Education Week, the union elevated the campaign for more preparation time, by deploying the letter on the More Than Thanks — It's Time website and encouraging members to sign it and then ask their friends, family and members of their community to sign it as well.

Community engagement is a key ingredient in the public's understanding of our campaign and the educational value to public school students.

By mid-August, we already had more than 14,000 people add their voice to the letter.

To ensure Federation's position is clear to the Government, a personalised letter has been sent to



STRONGER WORKPLACES BUILT ACROSS TAFE

More than 40 TAFE Federation Representatives and Women's Contacts have now completed delegate rights training, delivered by the ACTU.

The training, delivered at Teachers Federation House in Surry Hills, aims to equip delegates with the knowledge and practical skills needed to effectively represent members in the workplace. Sessions focused on their rights as delegates, protections under the Fair Work Act, member representation, workplace communication, consultation processes and resolving workplace issues.



Government MPs, explaining the union's demands and calling on them to advocate on behalf of teachers in their respective communities.

Five years ago, the Gallop Inquiry recommended two additional hours of preparation time a week for every teacher "as a matter of priority". Five years on, nothing has changed.

The union will not let Government MPs forget that while

in opposition, the now Education Minister Prue Car considered the findings and recommendations of the Gallop Inquiry report as the "blueprint" for addressing the concerns of the profession, referencing many times, the need to listen to and respect the profession.

Further strategies will be developed to pressure the Minister and her Government MP colleagues.

Read more about the campaign: pages 12–13

The program was developed in response to important legislative changes, fought for and won by the Australian union movement, which recognise the role of workplace delegates and strengthen their rights in the workplace.

TAFE Lead Organiser Kelly Marks said strong attendance demonstrated delegates' commitment to representing members and strengthening workplace organisation.

"The response to the training has been extremely positive, with delegates valuing both the practical workplace skills and the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the state," Kelly said.

"Delegates are often the first point of contact for members seeking support and they are recognised union leaders in their workplaces. Providing high-quality training helps ensure they are equipped with the confidence, knowledge and networks needed to advocate effectively on behalf of members."

Participants included newly-elected and experienced delegates, creating valuable opportunities to share knowledge, experiences and strategies for addressing

workplace issues. Feedback from participants highlighted the practical relevance of the training, as well as the opportunity to network with other activists and the increased confidence delegates gained in exercising their workplace rights.

Federation Representative and carpentry teacher at Ourimbah TAFE Ryan Nott said: "The training was excellent. I was really able to further understand my role and improve my communication skills as a delegate."

Women's Contact and language, literacy and numeracy teacher at Wetherill Park TAFE Abbey Walczak said she found the training very helpful and informative.

"I had a lot of fun meeting other people within Federation and I now feel more confident at work, to be able to talk to colleagues about Federation."

Participants also joined a TAFE Teachers Association Council meeting, which provided them with further insight into the union's democratic structures and decision-making processes. Plans are progressing to add more dates for Federation Representatives and Women's Contacts.



AUKUS money can be better spent

A \$368 billion-plus commitment to nuclear-powered attack submarines is the wrong use of our taxes, Federation Deputy President Natasha Watt told the Sydney hearing of the independent public inquiry examining the security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and United States (AUKUS).

“As teachers, we work daily with the consequences of underinvestment in public services,” Ms Watt told the inquiry, coordinated by the Australian Peace and Security Forum.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOT FULLY FUNDED

“Teachers in public education systems know that schools are not yet at the minimum Schooling Resource Standard reported back in 2011 as part of the Gonski review. Public schools in NSW will reach the minimum standard to 2034 — that is 23 years to fund public schools at the minimum level required.”

LACK OF ONGOING CAPITAL WORKS FUNDING

Ms Watt lamented that there is also no ongoing capital funding program for public schools.

“Our students deserve quality school buildings regardless of their location, their setting and their context,” she said. “This must always be properly

funded. Our submission calls out that there is a \$5.4 billion funding gap [in 2023, alone] between the non-government and the government sector on school infrastructure, which is an outrage.”

SKILLS CRISIS AND TAFE INFRASTRUCTURE

Federation’s TAFE Lead Organiser Kelly Marks told the AUKUS Public Inquiry panel about the “urgent and necessary” need for enough qualified TAFE teachers and industry-standard equipment for their students.

“There are not enough electricians in the training pipeline to enable us to meet net-zero [greenhouse gas emission] targets and we have a shortage of TAFE teachers qualified to train the next generation,” Ms Marks said.

“Other skills shortages include nurses, plumbers, bricklayers and early childhood educators — critical skills for a functioning economy and society — that deserve the full attention of governments, not a \$368 billion disgrace that benefits nobody but the interests of the United States government and those who stand to profit.

“The AUKUS agreement is an answer to a question that nobody asked. It’s a solution to a problem that doesn’t exist — and why does that matter? It matters, not just because we believe it’s a dangerous exercise, but also because there are real challenges that citizens are facing here in NSW — the solutions to which require significant, sustained investment from governments.

“AUKUS is a distraction from the real crises: the housing crisis, the climate crisis and the skills shortage crisis.”

Ms Marks read a statement from Federation’s Aboriginal members, which included: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples in Australia are against the impositions of foreign military bases, nuclear waste, pollution and war on ceremonial lands and traditional lands and waters.”

PORT KEMBLA IS NO PLACE FOR A NUCLEAR BASE. NOT HERE, NOT ANYWHERE

In May, a “secret” NSW Government report suggested that Port Kembla had been identified as the preferred and most cost-effective east coast location for an AUKUS nuclear powered submarine base. The option of Newcastle as the location remains open.

Illawarra Teachers Association has passed a number of motions regarding AUKUS and has written to federal Cunningham MP Alison Byrnes, expressing opposition to any plans to build a proposed nuclear submarine base at Port Kembla or anywhere else.

On 8 August, Federation Deputy President Natasha Watt and Illawarra Teachers Association President Elizabeth Scott attended Newcastle Beginning Teacher Conference. As a gesture of solidarity, Elizabeth, on behalf on Illawarra TA, presented “No Place for a Nuclear Base” campaign t-shirts to executive members and Peace Contacts from several local associations. The Hunter region activists wore the t-shirts to a rally on the afternoon of 11 August, at the AUKUS Public Inquiry in Newcastle.

On 12 August, Federation members joined members of other unions and local community groups, including Wollongong Against War and Nukes, at the AUKUS Public Inquiry hearing in Wollongong. That afternoon, South Coast Labour Council Secretary Arthur Rorris took two of the Commissioners, Peter Garrett and Karina Lester, on a tour of Port Kembla. Federation members, representatives of other unions and local community members gathered opposite Port Kembla Public School and the nearby Five Islands Secondary College — both public schools are located within a kilometre of the port. The two commissioners spent some time meeting with the group, taking questions and comments.

PEACE IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS

Elizabeth told August Council: “We are battling a global power. This is everyone’s business.”

“Please make it your Teacher Association’s business: move a motion; write to your local federal member of parliament; invite a guest speaker to a meeting, for example it could be a member of an Illawarra region or Hunter region association; order some anti-AUKUS t-shirts; educate yourselves on the issue, for example look at the AUKUS Public Inquiry website and read some submissions, e.g. Natasha Watt and Kelly Marks for Federation, Arthur Rorris for the South Coast Labour Council and Sally Stephens AM (War, Militarisation and Violence Against Women).”



From top: Newcastle TA members outside the AUKUS Inquiry hearing in Newcastle; members with two AUKUS commissioners in Port Kembla; Federation Executive supports the campaign; Newcastle Beginning Teacher Conference.

Exercising collective agency delivers safer classrooms

Mary Brooksbank School is now a much safer workplace for staff and learning environment for students, due to the collective efforts of Federation members at the school.

The school supports more than 160 students from kindergarten to year 12, who have a moderate to severe intellectual disability, with many having physical disabilities and being immune-compromised.

The original buildings were constructed nearly 40 years ago, with students' special needs in mind. However, the school also has 10 demountable classrooms that are not built for purpose.

At the beginning of the year, mould was found in two of the demountables and was reported to the Department of Education and to Federation's Campbelltown Teachers Association meetings.

The classrooms were evacuated and supposedly remediated. However, the mould continued to reappear in those classrooms and worse — was reported to be in other classrooms. By June, up to nine classrooms were found to be contaminated with mould.

This forced classes to collapse, with some being held off-site at other schools and other classes held in the school's hall, library and other rooms not originally set up as classrooms. For a school for specific purpose (SSP) with a highly vulnerable student cohort, this was extremely disruptive.

On top of the health concerns associated with mould, there were a number of risks associated with the major repairs and reconstruction needed to be carried out while students were at school. This included the almost certain escalation of behaviours from students becoming dysregulated by the disruptions to their routine, having the potential to result in injuries to students and staff. This risk also significantly increased potential and reported psychosocial injury to staff.

Mary Brooksbank School Federation Representative Marlene Greenless reached out to Federation's City Organiser Guy McDermott who assisted members with work health and safety processes, including writing



motions and composing letters to NSW Department of Education Secretary Murat Dizdar and Directors Educational Leadership, to voice their concerns regarding workplace safety.

Federation members voted that the workplace was unsafe and called upon the Department to deem the school non-operational until all classrooms were inspected, recommending that immediate remediation and repairs be completed while students were not on the premises.

This escalation triggered an immediate response from the Department, including:

- a consultation meeting involving the Relieving Deputy Secretary, Relieving Executive Director, Director Educational Leadership, Director Asset Management Unit, principal, workplace representatives and Federation
- release of remediation information and commitment to provide hygienist reports and clearance certificates
- additional staffing and wellbeing support
- a dedicated on-site Asset Management Unit presence
- Department-led communication with students' families



- ongoing consultation structures involving staff representatives.

Over a few tense days, senior officers from the Department visited the school to see the issue for themselves, while school staff supervised students in the playground, refusing to teach in unsafe classrooms.

Finally, the Department met Federation members' demands. They declared the school non-operational, clearly communicating the situation to staff and the families of students.

Students and teachers occupied temporary learning spaces while many of the school's long-needed repairs were carried out.

The remediation work has since been completed and students and teachers have returned to their classrooms.

Now that members at Mary Brooksbank School have tasted what can be achieved by working together with Federation's guidance, they are keenly campaigning for permanent, fit-for-purpose infrastructure. Their actions have included making a submission to the Australian Education Union's Schools For Our Future public school infrastructure inquiry.

Build stronger skills and knowledge in work health and safety

Sign up for our Work Health and Safety in Education Workplaces course

This one-day course is for Federation members looking to build their knowledge and skills about work health and safety in their workplace.

The course provides participants with an overview of work health and safety legislation and related Department of Education policies, with a particular focus on the consultation and risk management process.

Participants also explore how to work to resolve work health and safety issues utilising health and safety structures as well as workplace organising.

Next course: 11 November

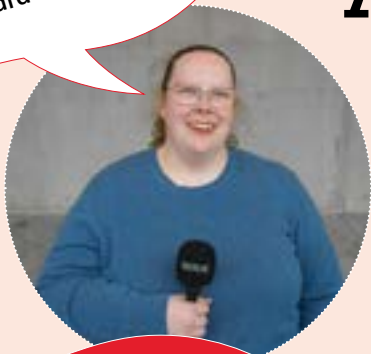


Sign up

More **than** thanks *IT'S TIME!*



More time makes more effective teachers, more effective students and a more effective education system. **Tamara Craig**



Teachers really do struggle. But with that extra two hours of relief time, it would just give them an extra breath of relief, in terms of being able to support the student as best as they possibly can and knowing that they're doing a good job in achieving that goal. **Camila Lampier**



Achieving campaign success is on us

If improving teachers' working conditions is continually deferred because there aren't enough teachers, there's a risk of entrenching the very conditions that make it harder to retain experienced teachers and attract new graduates to the profession, Federation President Henry Rajendra told Annual Conference.

Teachers are overworked and stretched beyond capacity and Federation is campaigning for:

- two hours of additional preparation time per week for all teachers
- additional preparation time for primary school executives, equivalent to their secondary executive colleagues
- increased preparation time for small school principals (minimum 50 per cent reduction in face-to-face teaching time).

"Federation remains committed to a staged and transitioned approach to achieving this game-changing, education-impacting reform," Mr Rajendra said.

"If the government is willing, we are fully committed to negotiating an implementation timeframe informed by the Department's own workforce data on the basis of improving teacher supply confidence without blowing out vacancies."

More than thanks



As a special education teacher that extra two hours of prep time would give the capacity to not only develop teaching and learning resources, but also other resources that support the child to develop living skills — whether that's behavioral, social or emotional — so they have the capacity to engage in society as best as possible, upon completion of high school.

Alexander Johnson

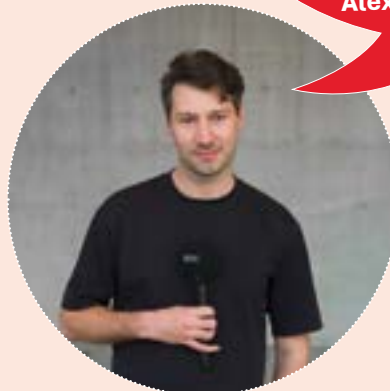
Since the historic salaries reset in October 2023, unfilled vacancies have dropped by 71 per cent and teaching degree enrolments — the key pipeline into the profession — have grown in the one year since that pay rise, by 23 per cent.

Mr Rajendra reminded members that achieving success out of the More Than Thanks — It's Time campaign was “on us”.

He said success in the campaign required an uplift in member participation in the following areas:

- schools to vote on the More Than Thanks — It's Time workplace motion, which declares collective commitment to campaign for additional preparation time for teachers
- addressing P&C meetings
- meeting with MPs “not just once, many times” and taking parents with you, as parents are critical allies in the campaign
- taking photos of each activity and emailing them to Federation at communications@nswtf.org.au, so we can share them on our social media channels, as having a strong social media presence is absolutely necessary for campaign success.

Download speaker notes for parent/carers and MP meetings



In the current state, 50 per cent of the job is at home. It really affects your family life... feeling like you're giving more to the students in front of you than to your own child at home.”

Keenan Murphy



Learn more about our More Than Thanks — It's Time campaign on our website and tell us your story



This year at Annual Conference

Elected representatives from Teachers Associations across NSW debated a range of topics affecting members' working lives.

UNION CALLS FOR ECONOMIC CHANGE

The economy, government priorities and tax system must be recalibrated to fairly reward workers, recognising them as the lead contributors to economic growth, Federation declared in the Annual Conference decision *Understanding the economic landscape of the NSW teaching profession*.

Federation pledged to work closely with the broader union movement in pursuit of a fair economy for all.

Before the debate, guest speaker McKell Institute chief economist Alison Pennington told Annual Conference that the fastest-rising costs driving total inflation were all privatised services operating outside universal public systems or were services once delivered by government for free or at very low cost: gas, electricity, medical and hospital services, water and sewerage and housing.

She proposed the longest-lasting structural fix to inflation was public provision: "Public ownership ... is the only solution that delivers ... non-profiteering, controlling inflation and lifting the living standards of the people."

Ms Pennington advocated for government investment in:

- public education — and "weaning private schools off the public teat", as growth in private education has been inflationary (secondary education averaging 5.2 per cent per year and preschool/primary education 3.9 per cent per year over 20 years)
- nationalising the childcare sector
- expanding Medicare
- public owned renewables
- public-led housing programs.

Ms Pennington also proposed:

- lifting compulsory superannuation as an alternative to interest rates
- legally capping what companies can charge
- taxing sudden, unearned profit spikes
- introducing a land wealth levy for fortunes over \$20 million.



During the debate, Federation President Henry Rajendra said: "The answer is clear: a strong public education system holds down costs for every family in this state."

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

Governments, their departments and schools must all take seriously the work to grow the agency and independence of teachers and principals, Annual Conference delegates declared in the *Teachers' work — syllabuses, pedagogy and assessment* decision.

"Teachers and principals have the right to peer-regulate and self-regulate their work," the decision states.

"Teachers and principals must be at the forefront of discussion and decisions in the core business of syllabus, pedagogy, assessment, setting educational structures and process through their union."

Deputy President Natasha Watt said: "What we need to be taking up with the Department are unnegotiated policies that interfere with or impede the professional work of teachers." Delegates agreed and the point is included in the action section of the decision.

The decision states: "Employer policies that are unnegotiated with the union interfere with teacher and principal agency and the creation of space that supports teaching work. Currently unnegotiated key educational structures and processes include, but are not limited to, the School Excellence Framework, School Excellence Plan, Department Professional Development policies and curriculum monitoring procedures."

The decision also asserts: "The systemic support required

Annual Conference 2026



to recognise, respect and elevate teacher professionalism must include prioritising increased planning time as an entitlement, ensuring teachers can coordinate and collaborate in their work and enable the democratisation of key educational structures and processes.”

Before debate began, guest speaker Professor in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney Nicole Mockler told delegates shifts that undermine teacher professionalism are not inevitable and can be contested.

“There’s enormous power in the collective and harnessing that power to transform the teaching profession into a place where teachers routinely flourish and where they’re sustained and supported at all points in their careers will also transform our capacity as a society to do our best for young people,” she said.

Co-presenter, Emeritus Professor in the School of Education at Western Sydney University Wayne Sawyer addressed the notion that standardised curriculums reduce teacher workload. He recounted a UK survey where respondents who did not use standardised curriculums reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than those who do — and there were no significant differences between their perceived workloads.

CALL FOR NATIONAL REPORTING STANDARD FOR SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Annual Conference called for a capital funding standard against which all buildings and facilities in schools can

be measured, with a focus on addressing the serious under-investment in public school capital expenditure.

“The present lack of a national reporting standard for school infrastructure hampers governments from meeting the bare minimum of rational obligations for public investment, namely the effective and efficient assignation of capital works funding to areas of greatest need, thus leading to misalignment of public funds between areas of relative advantage and disadvantage,” the *Public Schools Infrastructure National Inquiry: Schools for Our Future* decision states.

The union demands the Department of Education must provide regular, ongoing infrastructure assessments of all classrooms, buildings and learning spaces, to be undertaken by appropriately qualified professionals, to ensure that learning environments remain safe, suitable and fit for purpose.

Schools for Our Future infrastructure inquiry chair Sharan Burrow and deputy chair Maurie Mulheron addressed Annual Conference on their investigation of the importance of infrastructure, the condition and safety of public school facilities, future needs, equity, inclusion and funding. The inquiry panel will publish its report by October.

Ms Burrow said: “You can be assured, one of our priority recommendations will be the essential nature of co-design with teachers and community. There is no doubt that where principals, teachers, specialist staff, Indigenous communities, parents and allied health professionals are involved, new builds and retrofits are much more suitable for maximising the benefits and the enjoyment of schooling.”

NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

Federation updated our special education policy, which encompasses our vision for an inclusive public education system where all individuals belong and thrive.

“Federation notes that there has been past and current use of the term of ‘inclusion’ that refers to all students being educated in the general education classroom



with age-appropriate peers and without support. This is not Federation's interpretation of the term," the policy asserts. "Quality public education for every student is contingent on resources that are needs-based. The pursuit of equality and excellence in learning and social outcomes for young people with disability requires a range of specialist teachers employed in positions that are industrially protectable."

Federation calls on:

- the NSW Department of Education to make special education qualifications a mandatory requirement for all positions within special education, providing fully funded pathways for training and retraining to meet system demand
- the Department and TAFE NSW to provide adequate support and structures for teachers with a disability to engage in their work to the fullest
- TAFE NSW to:
 - increase the number of disability teacher consultants, to better meet the needs of students enrolled in courses
 - ensure appropriate support and processes are available to students with disability, to successfully enrol, engage in and complete courses while learning in an inclusive, safe environment
 - review and fund suitable professional learning for all staff, to meet the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms.

The policy welcomes the Department's centralisation of the student placement processes and the increase in provision of support classes across the state, but also states: "there is much more to be done to support the students and staff in these settings to best meet individual student need."

Federation seeks the expansion of fit-for-purpose-built schools for specific purposes across NSW to meet needs in all locations and contexts and calls on the Department to provide a greater suite of resources and supports to allow teachers to better understand and engage learners of all abilities, to ensure that inclusive practices are being suitably implemented across all settings.

UPDATED ANTI-RACISM POLICY

Challenging racism has never been more important, Annual Conference declared in the updated anti-racism policy *Anti-racism through public education: the cornerstone of social inclusion*.

Senior Vice President Michael de Wall told delegates: "Along with other public institutions, our public schools, our TAFE colleges and our related worksites must be the cornerstone of a more socially inclusive society, free of racism and other forms of discrimination."

Federation will:

- develop a range of information leaflets to assist members in challenging racism, provide advice on the implementation of Federation's anti-racism policy and provide accurate definitions and links to quality resources to counter disinformation
- develop and promote Centre for Professional Learning courses that professionally develop members in Aboriginal education, multicultural education and anti-racism education.

The union will continue to campaign for the rebuilding of systemwide programs, including targeted EAL/D support, Aboriginal student support, anti-racism education and Aboriginal and multicultural education programs.

Ahead of the debate, guest speaker Australian Human Rights Commission's Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman said: "Anti-racism needs everyone, especially our public schools. Together, we can imagine a future where every child thrives — no matter who they are or where they're from."

CORRECTIVE SERVICES

Annual Conference welcomed the reestablishment of the Corrective Services Teachers Association, following the NSW Government's Review of Educational Services in Corrections, which identified the need for additional qualified teacher positions in public prisons across NSW, including the reintroduction of Senior Correctional Education Officer roles.

WORKSITES AS THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF POWER

The critical role played by Federation Representatives, Women's Contacts and Workplace Committees in recruiting potential members and engaging them in meaningful action on local issues and the priority campaigns of the union was highlighted by Federation Senior Vice President Michael de Wall.

"In the context of our democratic decision-making forums, such sources of teacher union power are fundamental to asserting our collective professional agency, advocating for public education and making a positive difference in the lives of our students through high quality teaching and learning in the classroom," he said.

The Annual Conference decision *Strategic organising for teacher union renewal in public education* notes Federation Workplace Committees are pivotal to building union power in the workplace and must be a major focus of any capacity-building strategy. The decision also recognises the importance of Associations, Council and Conference: "Beyond the worksite, Federation's formative,

Annual Conference 2026

centralised and representative democratic structures are how members participate in and contribute to union decision-making and wider action.”

Delegates agreed that teacher union renewal demands a reaffirmation of Federation’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. “Progress towards greater union power demands that Federation structures are inclusive and representative of the wider membership,” the decision asserts. “This requires building a culture of equity and the development of an understanding of the intersection of gender, class, Aboriginality, race, culture, (dis)ability, age, sexuality and identity and how they impact on members, their students and society.”

MOTIONS FROM ASSOCIATIONS: LOCAL IDEAS DEBATED IN STATEWIDE FORUM

Over the three days of Annual Conference, delegates considered ideas for the profession that germinated in local Associations from across the state.

Motions from Associations passed by Annual Conference are titled:

- Real inclusion requires expansion of support settings and services
- Reform of the Teacher Improvement Program to guarantee procedural fairness and a robust union voice
- More support for temporary and casual teachers
- AI integration through consultation, transparency and professional learning.

TAFE CAMPAIGNING

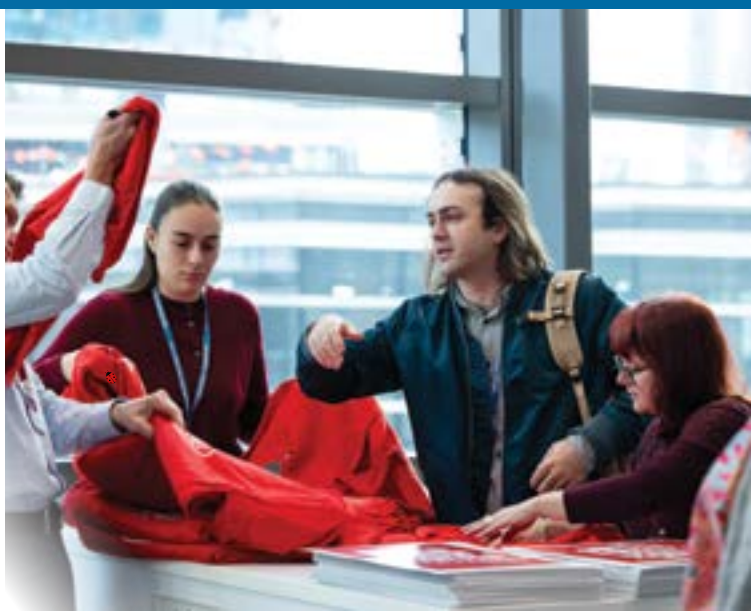
The *Rebuild with TAFE* decision declares securing a new transparent needs-based funding model for TAFE (as recommended by the 2024 NSW Vocational Education and Training Review) as the priority for the Rebuild with TAFE campaign.

The decision also asserts that a vital component of rebuilding TAFE is to ensure infrastructure funding is sufficient so that students can learn and teachers can teach in safe, modern and well-equipped facilities that reflect current industry standards.

On getting beyond the former TAFE NSW policy Smart and Skilled, Federation President Henry Rajendra said: “There’s a lot of work ahead of us — we’re talking unofficial staffing freezes, reduced course offerings, merged classes etc.”

The decision identifies the ongoing need for:

- increased funding that attracts and retains highly-qualified TAFE teachers with increased wages and improved conditions
- a concerted long-term focus on reducing the administrative burden.



For more extensive reporting on Annual Conference, scan the QR code, which will take you to coverage of day 1 and links to days 2 and 3.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Your questions answered

Q I have been allocated a ‘Meadowbank’ in term 4 as a form of cover. What is a ‘Meadowbank’ and how many can I be given?

A A ‘Meadowbank’ is a year 12 relieving period. Sub-clause 2.69 of the Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award 2024 states: “‘Year 12 Relieving Period’ means a relieving period required to be undertaken by a teacher when that school teacher has been relieved of their timetabled year 12 face-to-face teaching duties after year 12 students leave school in term 4 to sit for the HSC.”

Clause 16.7 states: “A principal may require all teachers with year 12 classes to take, from the time year 12 students leave to sit for their HSC exams in term 4, up to 50 per cent of their timetable load of year 12 classes as year 12 relieving periods. As far as possible, periods will be allocated to a teacher in the same faculty as that of the absent teacher.”

Federation maintains that Meadowbank extras can only be used to replace teachers who are absent and should fall in the period(s) that the teacher was timetabled on a HSC class.

Members should negotiate the best implementation of the Award on Meadowbank extras with their principal. Clearly, the principal has discretion. This discretion could extend, for example, from a circumstance where no Meadowbank extras are issued prior to HSC examinations commencing, to no Meadowbank extras being issued until after the last year 12 examination has been held in the subjects taught by the teacher or

to no Meadowbank extras being issued at all.

One final point needs to be made: The general guidelines that apply to the issuing of extras do not apply to the distribution of Meadowbank extras.

Q My school has an integrated sports program. Can I be forced into taking additional teaching time instead of sport supervision?

A An integrated school sports program does not automatically mean you can be required to coach or supervise sport or have your teaching load increased.

Members working in schools with integrated sport arrangements should be familiar with their entitlements under the Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award 2024, particularly those relating to maximum teaching time, sport supervision and workload.

A common misconception is that sport supervision and teaching time can simply be combined into a single allocation of time and distributed through a timetable. However, clause 16 of the Award specifies otherwise.

In the Award:

- teaching time and sport supervision are treated as distinct components of a secondary teacher’s workload
- maximum teaching loads are defined
- specific arrangements relating to sport supervision are outlined.

Importantly, clause 16.6 provides that a teacher may be allocated alternate face-to-face teaching duties in lieu of sport supervision or to undertake sports supervision on

weekends “with the agreement of each teacher”.

If your teaching time and your sport supervision were intended to be the same thing, then there would be no need for a provision that allows for arrangements in lieu, with the agreement of the teacher concerned. Integrated sport is ultimately a timetabling model — it does not remove the Award provisions relating to teaching loads or sport supervision.

Q I have been asked to be a support person for a performance meeting. What is my role and responsibility?

A A support person’s role is to ensure that the views of the staff member asked to attend a meeting about their performance are heard, to help them focus their responses and to clarify information. The role is an important procedural fairness safeguard for the member.

A staff member asked to attend a meeting to discuss concerns about their performance or during formal meetings in an improvement program should be offered the opportunity to bring a support person to the meeting.

In this context, the support person is not an advocate.

The role of a support person is to:

- provide emotional and practical support to the staff member
- provide advice to the staff member about their rights and entitlements
- clarify the process or proceedings to the staff member, when necessary
- hold private conversations with the staff member, as needed
- take notes for the staff member, when necessary.

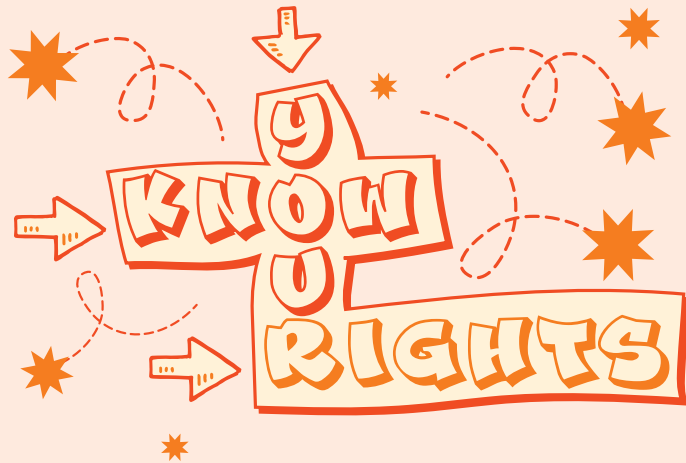
Q Federation’s new guidance for responding to harmful behaviour suggests three kinds of incident reporting. Why should I report work health and safety issues in more than one way?

A The systems for recording and acting on work health and safety (WHS) issues reported by teachers in schools each serve different purposes. The three kinds of reports ensure that your school’s records of student behaviour are maintained and can be used to support actions, that the Department of Education is informed and that the school’s WHS Hazard Register is updated.

Using all these reporting tools allows the full range of procedural and consultative measures to be more readily enacted when resolving issues or assisting with escalation, where needed. It should be noted that when making these multiple reports, the information related to the WHS issue/s doesn’t have to be modified too much — as long as the information is appropriate for each. For example, an entry into Sentral (or other recording system) detailing repeated threatening behaviour directed at a teacher, which is used to support a school’s behaviour management procedures, can also be used to report threatening behaviour as a psychosocial hazard via the online Incident Support and Hotline. The Hotline report will be triaged by the Department’s Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate staff and appropriate advice and support should be provided, but this will not always go to school-level actions. The same Incident Report can then be used as

the basis for, or as an attachment to, a WHS Hazard Report form. When completed, provide it to the principal and the school’s Health and Safety Representative (if you have one) and/or the school’s WHS Committee. Once a WHS hazard is notified at the school level, school level actions need to be taken to address the risks presented by the hazard — regardless of whether the hazard is physical, psychological or related to infrastructure or behaviour. While it can be argued that an incident of threatening behaviour should already be considered a WHS hazard at the school level, using the Department’s WHS Hazard Report form ensures that this occurs.

Individual schools do not have the resources to deal with all WHS hazards. If actions taken after hazard reporting do not reduce the risks as far as is reasonably practicable, members can escalate the matter through the Department’s *WHS Issue Resolution Procedure*. Doing this is not controversial, as it is a requirement of the Work Health and Safety Act and follows the Department’s WHS procedures, which state issue/s “must” proceed to WHS Issue Resolution if they cannot be resolved at the school level, taking the matter beyond the resources of the individual school and accessing the full resources of the Department.



REFERENCES

- Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award 2024
- Can I be forced into taking additional teaching time instead of sport supervision?
- Role of the support person in performance meetings (NSW Government)
- Procedures for addressing teacher efficiency for permanent teachers (full time and part time), executive staff and principals (TR10)

Links to the
reference
documents



Questions are answered by:

- Sam Clay, Deputy Secretary (Research, Industrial and Professional Support)
- Damian Purins, Work Health and Safety Officer
- Guy McDermott, City Organiser

Have you got any questions for us?
Email journal@nswtf.org.au.

EQUITY MATTERS

Your questions answered

Q As an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander teacher, how can I become more involved in Federation's activities?

A We offer Trade Union Training courses for school Federation Workplace Representatives throughout the year. We also offer a course for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplace Representatives — this year's training will be held in October. This course will be presented by Federation's Aboriginal Education Officer and is designed to support Federation Representatives, Women's Contacts and Workplace Committee members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. It covers the same content as the Foundations for Workplace Representatives, though participants cannot attend if they have attended this core course within the past 10 years. Please register on our website.

Training is also available for Association Aboriginal Education Contacts.

Other opportunities to become involved in Federation include Aboriginal Members Conference, Women's Conference, Anna Stewart Program, the Aboriginal Education Restrictive Committee and the Aboriginal Members Committee.



Q I am a teacher who wants to navigate transitioning at school. Where do I start?

A The Department states it is committed to supporting trans and gender diverse employees and seeks to create environments where Departmental staff can proudly bring their true selves to work. To assist employees affirming their gender, the Department has developed gender affirmation procedures.

Teachers begin their gender affirmation process at school by meeting with their principal to discuss the process. Teachers affirming their gender are not required to disclose information about their gender affirmation outside of what may be required to implement workplace changes. Additional support can be provided by the Department's Equity and Inclusion representative at youbelong@det.nsw.edu.au.

The needs of the teacher, who is affirming their gender, must be at the core of all planning and decision-making, including the decision regarding who will be involved in their affirmation process.

If issues arise, members should contact Federation's Professional

Support section on 1300 654 367 or their local Organiser.

Q I have never worked in special education. What do I need to know?

A Look at the Department of Education's Inclusive Practice in Education Scholarship to increase your skills and confidence in supporting students with additional learning needs. Reach out to your local school for specific purposes to arrange a visit; their experts can assist you with understanding the "ins and outs" of special education. Also, be open, honest and ask questions — if you don't know something, don't be afraid to ask. Be open minded and you may find yourself in a lengthy career in special education.

Q I have witnessed sexual harassment at my school. What can I do?

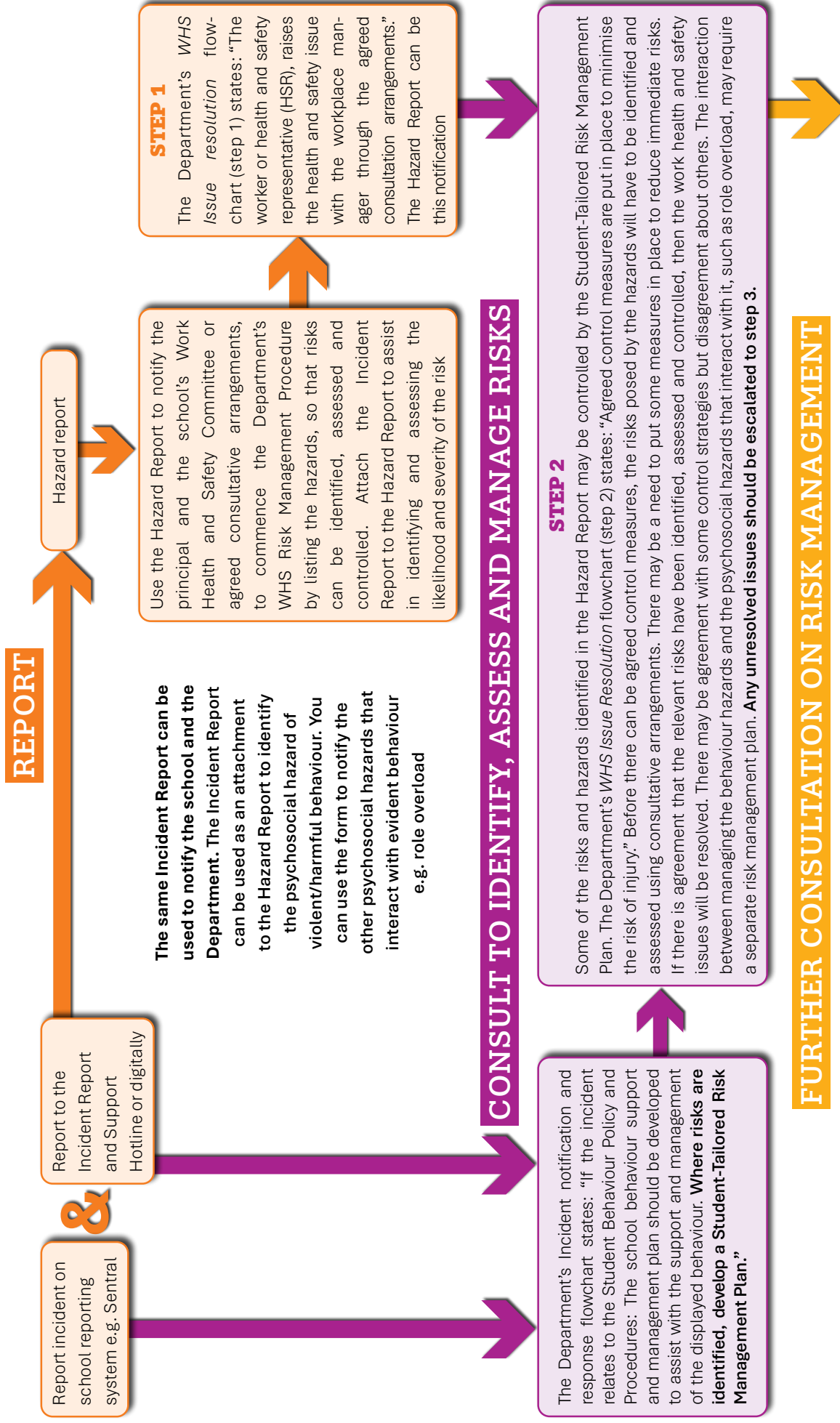
A Sexual harassment is a hazard and risk to workers' physical and psychological health and wellbeing. The Department's workplace sexual harassment prevention and response policy states workers must: "report or encourage the reporting of incidents when they have observed or have been made aware of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, occurring, even if they do not know the full circumstances."

Witnesses to any sexual harassment should be encouraged to call out the behaviour and tell the harasser that their conduct is inappropriate and that they should stop.

If the harasser is another member of staff, the behaviour of the harasser should be reported to their supervisor or the principal.



How to respond to violent/harmful behaviour as a work health and safety issue



Federation recommends that the Federation Representative calls a Federation meeting, assisted by the Organiser, to discuss the unresolved issues in step 2 or 3. A motion may be passed by members that can be used to complete the WHS Issue Resolution form in step 4, which may include a proposed corrective action plan.

STEP 3

The WHS Issue Resolution flowchart states: “Workplace manager uses agreed consultation arrangements to develop a corrective action plan to resolve the issue. WHS advisor is engaged to provide advice where required.” In order to develop a corrective action plan, the risks posed by the hazards identified in the Hazard Report will have to be assessed and consultation occur relating to the likelihood and severity of the risk/s and how they will be minimised so far as is reasonably practical. If there is no agreement that the identified work health and safety issues have been resolved, the workplace manager “must escalate the issue”. **Escalating the work health and safety issue beyond the school should not be seen as a criticism of any processes undertaken in the school.** Instead, it complies with the Department’s WHS Risk Management Procedure. The escalation ensures that the Department, as the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU), can meet its obligations under section 19 of the Work Health and Safety Act to ensure the safety of staff and students by providing additional support, resources, training etc.

ESCALATE THE UNRESOLVED WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

STEP 4

The Issue Resolution Notice form can be completed by a worker, including the Federation Representative or the Health and Safety Representative. This will set out the unresolved work health and safety issues. Often, members will want to recommend action that could be taken to minimise the risks posed by the student’s behaviour. Setting out a corrective action plan is not required. Sometimes members have tried many strategies that have failed to minimise the risks. **It is the responsibility of the Department as Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) to ensure the safety of staff and students. If their proposals are not agreed, then work health and safety issues will remain unsolved**

STEP 5

The workplace manager reviews and acknowledges the form and notifies the Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523 or by email to hsdincidentreporting@det.edu.au

STEP 6

Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate will assist the workplace manager to resolve the issue as soon as possible

STEP 7

In consultation with subject matter experts and other stakeholders, an agreed corrective action plan is developed.
Controls are reviewed and monitored to ensure they are effective in resolving the issue



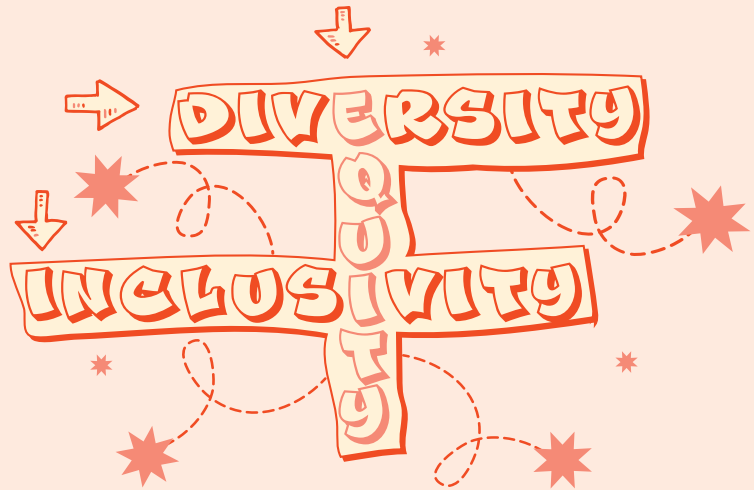
**Not a member?
Join today**

Although the Department’s flowchart sets out steps 6 and 7, they are not necessarily different steps. The WHS issues have been escalated and the Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate, subject matter experts and others will develop a corrective action plan that they agree should be used. This should be different to the corrective action plan rejected in step 3. The Federation Representative should call a meeting, with the assistance of the Organiser, to consider any proposed action plan. This should also occur if members believe there has been undue delay in the Department’s response. If members do not agree with the Risk Management Plan proposed by the Department, the meetings may also consider a motion outlining action that may be taken to resolve the issue.

If the harasser is a student or group of students, the behaviour should be reported to the principal. The Department's policies and procedures related to student behaviour expectations, as well as the Mandatory Reporter Guide, should then be utilised. If there are concerns about a widespread pattern of behaviour, then a focus on gender inequality, sexual harassment and discrimination should be addressed via the school's welfare programs and other avenues within the curriculum.



If the harasser is a parent or community member, the behaviour should be reported to a supervisor or the principal. Expectations of behaviour are covered by the School Community Charter. There are also Departmental policies and legislation, such as the Inclosed Lands Act (1901) outlined in *Unauthorised entry onto departmental premises* (Legal Issues Bulletin No. 58, 2019), which can be implemented to place restrictions on access to the school site, staff and students during hours of operation. If the behaviour continues away from school, it should be reported to the police.



Q I have witnessed sexual harassment at my TAFE college. What can I do?

A Disclosures and formal reports can be made by any member of the TAFE NSW community who observes or becomes aware of an incident of sexual assault, sex discrimination or sexual harassment involving TAFE NSW student or staff.

Complaints or formal reports of sexual assault, sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment can be made via the TAFE NSW Incident Hotline **1800 316 600**, completing a WHS Incident Report Form in the TAFE NSW portal, or by speaking with a student counsellor, manager or People and Culture Business Partner. Anyone who has been sexually assaulted or sexually harassed is encouraged to report it to police.

Staff can submit anonymous disclosures of sexual assault, sex discrimination or sexual harassment by using the online complaint form, however, this may limit TAFE NSW's ability to address the matter. Staff who make a disclosure or report of sexual assault, sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment can withdraw the disclosure or report at any stage, however, TAFE NSW may continue to investigate in relation to the disclosure or report, to ensure the safety of those involved.

REFERENCES

- Change of personal information procedures
- Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2023-26
- Inclusive Practice in Education Scholarship
- Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response policy
- Mandatory Reporter Guide
- School Community Charter
- Unauthorised entry onto departmental premises (Legal Issues Bulletin No. 58, 2019)

Links to the
reference
documents



Questions answered by
Federation's Equity Team:

- Russell Honnery, Aboriginal Education Officer
- Leeanda Smith, Women's Officer
- Mel Smith, Officer attached to LGBTIQ+ matters

Understanding disability is not just for specialist teachers

As an early career teacher, understanding disability can be tricky. With 1 in 4 students in our mainstream classrooms identifying as having a disability or learning need, the time for all teachers to build the awareness, understanding and skills needed to meet all learning needs is now.

Collaboration is key. Supporting students with disabilities is not just for the special education teacher or the learning and support team. Every teacher needs to come together to work collaboratively.

Special education and mainstream teachers working together to meet the needs of all students is beneficial for both the student and the teacher. A one-size-fits-all approach is not effective within a modern classroom setting. Teaching to diversity in all its forms, while slightly tricky to begin with, will have positive outcomes in the long-term.



Tips from teacher mentors

Tip 1: Get to know your students. Rapport and connection are the keys to supporting student engagement and learning. Beginning each day with a clean slate is vital to supporting students on their educational journey.

Tip 2: Using clear, concise visuals throughout every classroom provides consistency and understanding for all students. They allow students to know the steps in an activity, what is coming next and where they can find things. Visuals and social stories assist students with building independence and enhancing their own capacity to engage.

Tip 3: Programming for different learners can be complex. Just remember that students don't have to meet every outcome. From pre-cursors to stage level, it's about supporting the learner where they are at, enabling them to demonstrate achievement to the best of their ability.

Resource spotlight

Blueprint for Inclusion by Rebekah Poe, available from Federation's library, is a great resource for all levels of teaching experience. This is an easy-to-understand guide to help reshape your thinking when planning learning, differentiating and modifying curriculums for all learners.

"How can you make every student in your classroom thrive? Blueprint for Inclusion is your essential guide to building a more inclusive, supportive, and successful general education classroom... [This book] provides real-world solutions for integrating students with IEPs into your daily instruction..." Publisher's website.

Useful reads



Writing is more than pencil and paper

Inclusion: Rethinking Ability –
Mindset and Language



Federation events

Federation and the Centre for Professional Learning run courses and conferences to help teachers in and out of the classrooms.

- Inclusive Strategies: Teaching students with disabilities, 5 November, Newcastle
- Functional Behaviour Assessment in the classroom, 25 November, Surry Hills
- How to be an effective Learning and Support Teacher, 12 November, Surry Hills
- Rethinking Ability Conference, 3 December, Surry Hills

CPL
course
offerings



I'm a beginning teacher with a disability. How can I make sure my new school will be accommodating?

If you are seeking reasonable adjustments, contact the Department's Equity and Inclusion team at youbelong@det.nsw.edu.au or workplace.adjustments@det.nsw.edu.au. Seek a meeting with your principal or supervisor. Remember, you do not have to disclose your health needs at any time — this is your decision to make. Contact Professional Support on **1300 654 367** for Federation support and advice.



I'm a new teacher with a hidden disability and I would like to attend Federation/Centre for Professional Learning courses. How can I be sure that my needs are met?

If you're planning to attend a:

Trade Union Training course or conference, PDF and paper application forms generally have a field for dietary, accessibility, childcare or other needs. The online form has a "further details" box. If you cannot access any of these methods, reply to the receipt email you have received from tut@nswtf.org.au after you apply for a course. We will contact you if we have any further questions. On the day, there are personal emergency evacuation plans for people with physical accessibility issues to fill out. If you feel your needs may require significant planning or would like support to articulate your needs, reach out to your Organiser or Disability Officer John Skene or fill out the Accessibility Request Form, available in the Member Portal.

CPL course or conference, email cpl@nswtf.org.au in advance to outline the support you need. If you feel overwhelmed or need a break, quiet spaces are available.

Federation is part of the global Hidden Disabilities Sunflower network — an initiative to empower people with hidden disabilities. Federation staff who have been trained to recognise and understand the significance of a Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard wear a Sunflower ally lanyard, so don't be afraid to approach them.

I've just begun my teaching career and I'm still getting comfortable in my role. How do I talk about disability without accidentally saying the wrong thing?

When talking to individuals with a disability, it is generally best to use 'person-first' language, especially in the first instance. However, there are some groups or individuals who prefer 'disability-first' or 'identity-first' language. If you're in doubt, talk with the individual (or parent/carer), get to know them and ask how they would like to be spoken to.

There is a student with complex needs in my class. How do I support them?

First and foremost, make sure to read any information about the student, to better understand their needs. Speak to your supervisor or other teachers that have taught the student before. See the Tips section (previous page) and join Federation's Special Education Teachers Special Interest Group.



In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, there is no direct word for "disability."

This reflects a worldview in which difference is not defined by deficit or separation. While some languages include terms for specific impairments, these do not equate to the broader concept of disability, as it is commonly understood within Western frameworks. Instead, people with impairments are typically regarded as integral members of their communities, with their contributions, roles and identities valued alongside others. This perspective highlights an inclusive and relational approach, where individuals are not categorised or stigmatised based on their ability, but are supported and cared for as a part of the collective whole.

A shout-out to TAFE teachers in support roles

Meet some of our members working in access, equity and a range of other specialist positions, who all help to make TAFE the preeminent public provider of high quality vocational education.



Emma McDonald is an Aboriginal education engagement coordinator in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie areas.

As a proud Worimi woman living on Awabakal country, Emma and her Aboriginal Education and Student Support team work with teaching sections as the

lead in Aboriginal education.

One of the main functions of her role is to create and design courses and programs that specifically meet the needs of the Aboriginal community. “We go out and work alongside our Mob, see what their interests, their needs, their skills gaps are, then we bring that back inside the organisation,” Emma said.

“We’ll make sure that we have the right teachers selected, that the content that is being delivered is relevant to what our communities want and need. We try to ensure and maximise cultural safety as much as possible for our students.”

She recalls a young student who enrolled in the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care but didn’t have a birth certificate. With the support of the teaching section, she was able to get her birth certificate and successfully complete the course. “She ended up getting a job. She ended up getting full-time work, so she could get a car. She could go on holiday for the very first time. These kinds of courses have real transformative power and have the ability to build self-determination. We’re talking about a girl that couldn’t even get a birth certificate, to being employed full time, to be able to get a car loan, to be able to move out with her boyfriend — massive things that a lot of us take for granted. But they’re very real hurdles and obstacles for a lot of people in my Community.”



Raewyn Juteram is a senior counsellor for TAFE NSW’s

northern regions. Raewyn and her team support students who are facing challenges during their learning, ranging from personal challenges to mental health, illness or learning difficulties. They also help

current and future students identify course and career pathways.

“Our service supports students to complete their course even when things get very difficult, including being in crisis ... The senior role manages a team of counsellors across several campuses and supports them to deliver this service,” she said.

For Raewyn, the most rewarding aspect of her work is getting to see students who come from extreme disadvantage, who defy the odds to obtain their qualification.

“Sometimes, no one else knows what they have had to do to accomplish this and it is a true privilege to support them on this journey and witness it,” she said. However, such success stories don’t often get shared, even with management.

“It can be hard to convey the significance and value of our work, due to its strict confidential nature. And it is qualitative, not quantitative.”



Michelle Cole is an educational quality specialist within TAFE

NSW’s Educational Excellence Team. While Michelle is based at Penrith, she works with Agribusiness, Transport and Manufacturing teachers all around the state, to help ensure that their course delivery is as

effective as possible.

“We’re part of the picture of helping to improve the student experience and student completions. But we don’t do that in a student facing way, we do it through assisting the teachers to better meet the student need,” Michelle said.

“We directly support teachers and head teachers with a whole host of teaching and learning. We assist with their teaching and assessing capabilities [and] we can be quite responsive to specific needs within a faculty, sub-faculty or a teaching section.”

Educational quality specialists also support teachers from each faculty, in navigating and using some of the many systems and processes that TAFE NSW has in place for regulatory obligations and requirements.

“At the moment we’re running a series of sessions for teachers covering ideas and tips and very practical strategies.”



Michele Perry works as part of a team of disability teacher consultants

based at Ultimo TAFE. She works specifically with students who are neurodivergent.

She consults with students about their strengths and challenges within the learning environment, writing Reasonable Adjustment

Plans that are sent to the relevant teaching sections.

“This provides equitable learning access to courses, meets TAFE NSW’s obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act Education Standards and supports successful course completion,” Michele said.

“We also liaise and work closely with teaching sections, other TAFE NSW support services and many external stakeholders.”

“Since I started in this role I have seen a doubling, even tripling of my student caseload, including a significant increase in complexity of student need, an increase in neurodivergent students and an increase in administrative burden. The current unsustainable workload and an ageing workforce mean that a significant increase in the number of disability teacher consultant positions is urgently required across the state to meet student need.”



Paula Abood is a TAFE NSW

multicultural coordinator with statewide responsibility. Her focus is on multicultural equity and ensuring that students and communities have equitable access, participation, treatment and opportunities throughout their learning experience.

“This includes advocating for multicultural student support, funding, staffing and other resources to be allocated and distributed in an equitable and fair manner, so that diversity is not a tick box exercise, but a commitment to community, to learning, to the principle of education as a right,” she said.

Paula said that over the past decade, she has witnessed the loss of impactful approaches to program development, learning and community-centred educational engagement that is based on reciprocity.

“We still feel the loss of the Outreach section in the multicultural engagement space, because this model foregrounded community-led co-design, embedded learner support and flexibility, and produced vocational and educational pathways as well as opportunities that empowered not only the learner, but also the community. This approach embodies everything a public education provider must be, if we are to fulfil our purpose of public good.”

Calls for more positions to support access and equity

Over the years, TAFE funding cuts have reduced the number of specialist support roles across the system. However, following the 2023 NSW Vocational Education and Training Review, the NSW Government introduced a new TAFE NSW Charter, which states its commitment to increase equitable access to lifelong education and training: “To fulfill its role as a student-centred education provider, TAFE NSW will offer high-quality, accessible vocational education and training. This ensures that individual learners can achieve their educational and career goals, regardless of background or circumstances.”

Also, in 2023, the Free TAFE program was introduced — aimed at diverse learners, including job seekers, young people, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, unemployed individuals, people with disabilities and veterans. The initiative was welcomed by Federation, but it has undoubtedly increased work demands for members in these support teaching roles, without providing any additional resources.

Federation’s 2026 Annual Conference decision, Rebuild with TAFE, declared: “For too long, access and equity teachers and support staff, including TAFE NSW counsellors, have been relegated to acting as administrators of a chaotic contestable funding model. This must change.”



Thousands of Federation members are helping to support 1600 disadvantaged public school students from NSW and the ACT each year by regularly donating to Stewart House.

For 95 years, students have attended Stewart House's residential program — and Federation was there from the start, sponsoring the project after land at Curl Curl beach was provided by the Crown and Sir Frederick and Lady Stewart donated funds for the building. Federation still has a strong partnership with the charity.

During their 12-day stay, children are given opportunities to build confidence and friendships during memorable experiences like beach visits and excursions to Taronga Zoo, the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Aquarium, the Harbour Bridge, Sydney Olympic Park and NRL games.

It's not all fun and games — there's a Department of Education-run program, which includes lessons designed to enhance social skills and develop emotional resilience. There are art and craft activities, sports and lessons focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Students also receive optometric, dental and medical treatment during their stay.

While the Department of Education provides funding to run Stewart House School, all other expenses, for example the residential program, memorable experiences, administrative and residential staff, costs about \$5 million each year.

More than \$1 million of these costs are covered by the generosity of more than 6500 public school teachers and staff, who give \$5 or more from their salary each fortnight. The rest of the money comes from other fundraising endeavours, corporate donations and various grants.

HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Stewart House is one of Federation's preferred charities. We encourage you to contribute with a regular donation, either by direct debit or by payroll contribution — and help ensure that Stewart House continues beyond 100 years.



Learn more



In the spirit of solidarity

A highly sought-after poster featuring South African anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela is at the centre of a sharing arrangement between Federation and the Maritime Union of Australia.

At the core of the story is one of Federation's official charities: Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA.

**“A winner is a dreamer who never gives up”
— Nelson Mandela**

APHEDA's origins trace back to Australian nurse practitioner Helen McCue. Shocked by the state of civilian harm throughout Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, she proposed the idea of a trade union-based international humanitarian organisation to the leader of the Australian Council of Trade Union (ACTU) in 1982. In 1984, Union Aid Abroad – Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad was established as the ACTU's international aid agency.

Ever since, APHEDA has continued to strive for “stronger union and social movements, sustainable development programs, global solidarity and support in times of crisis”, providing trade union-based international humanitarianism in regions such as Palestine, Cambodia, East Timor, Vietnam and Laos.

“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.” — Nelson Mandela

APHEDA has remained committed to upholding justice, peace and development around the world. For example, APHEDA's support for efforts to end apartheid in South Africa was rewarded when a new constitution came into effect in 1994 and allowed South African citizens of all races to vote in national elections.

In light of this victory for democracy, peace and justice, then African National Congress president Nelson Mandela (who would become South Africa's first Black president) wrote a letter of thanks to APHEDA. His testimony was subsequently featured on an APHEDA poster and included this quote: “APHEDA has a long history in support of the anti-apartheid struggle. On behalf of the African National Congress we would like to express our deep appreciation for your efforts.”

**“I never lose. I either win or learn.”
— Nelson Mandela**

A framed version of the 78 x 84 cm poster, titled 10 years of linking Australian unionists to the world, 1984-1994, went up for auction at APHEDA's 40th anniversary dinner in 2024.



Former Federation president and, at the time, chair of the APHEDA board, Angelo Gavrielatos was the evening's auctioneer.

Federation General Secretary Maxine Sharkey said: “Angelo was running the auctions and sort of egging people on.”

“I kept putting my hand up to get everyone to bump up the bid...but after a while, they started dropping out.”

It was at that point that the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) entered the bidding.

“I put my hand up again and then it got ridiculous,” Maxine said.

“Great peacemakers are all people of integrity, of honesty, but humility.” — Nelson Mandela

Federation and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) started bidding fervently against each other for the right to own the poster, knowing that irrespective of whichever organisation would eventually submit the top bid, the real winner of the evening would be APHEDA.

“After a while, I walked over to [MUA Sydney Branch Secretary, Paul Keating] Keato and said, ‘Listen, how about we split it, working in cooperation — both blue and white collar unions — for the greater good of APHEDA and world peace?’”

Each union agreed to pay \$4500 for the poster, raising \$9000 for APHEDA to spend on its programs.

For the past two years, the poster has been on display in Federation's executive meeting room but has now been handed over to the MUA for the next two years.



← **Become an APHEDA member**
Join our Peace and International
Issues Special Interest Group →



Safe. Respected. Essential.

A range of serious issues faced by women teachers working in schools and TAFE were discussed at Federation's Women's Conference on 1 August.

Keynote speaker Dr Stephanie Wescott spoke about her ongoing work interrogating the manosphere, the conditions of and expectations for safety in schools and the need to address the undermining of women's expertise. Dr Wescott also suggested actions to be taken for the future.

"Over the past several years, we have witnessed an extraordinary expansion of research examining online misogyny, the manosphere and its influence within schools," she said. "Across Australia and internationally, studies now document boys reproducing manosphere narratives in classrooms, deepfake image-based abuse and sexual violence, attacks on women teachers, discrimination against trans and gender-diverse educators, changing attitudes towards women and girls and interventions attempting to respond to these emerging harms."

Dr Wescott said misogyny operates as, and through, institutional logics. "It becomes embedded within policies, leadership decisions, workload allocation, disciplinary practices and organisational cultures. It is sustained, not only through spectacular incidents of abuse, but through everyday, mundane practices that appear ordinary precisely because they have become normal." She said her research consistently found significant breakdowns in practice. "Harms are frequently not reported, reporting pathways are inadequate or interrupted, incidents are minimised or reclassified and formal systems fail to produce an accurate record of boys' violence and harassment."

"Once workers speak collectively rather than individually, institutions find it much harder to dismiss them. And once we begin understanding these problems as occupational violence rather than simply an issue of student behaviour, entirely different levers become available to us. Every woman deserves to go to work without being harassed because of her gender and every girl deserves to go to school without becoming the target of misogynistic abuse. Every teacher deserves to know that if they report harm, their institution will act, because every worker has the right to a safe workplace."

University of Sydney's School of Education and Social Work Associate Professor Dr Victoria Rawlings, Western Sydney University School of Education Professor Jacqueline Ullman and the Department of Education's Renee West discussed the conference theme 'Safe. Respected. Essential' in a panel setting, hosted by Federation Deputy Secretary (Operations) Mel Smith.





Feedback from members included: “The keynote speaker and panel were very motivating.”

WORKSHOPS: SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Conference participants were spoilt for choice when it came to selecting workshops — and had the opportunity to attend two of them. Workshop titles included:

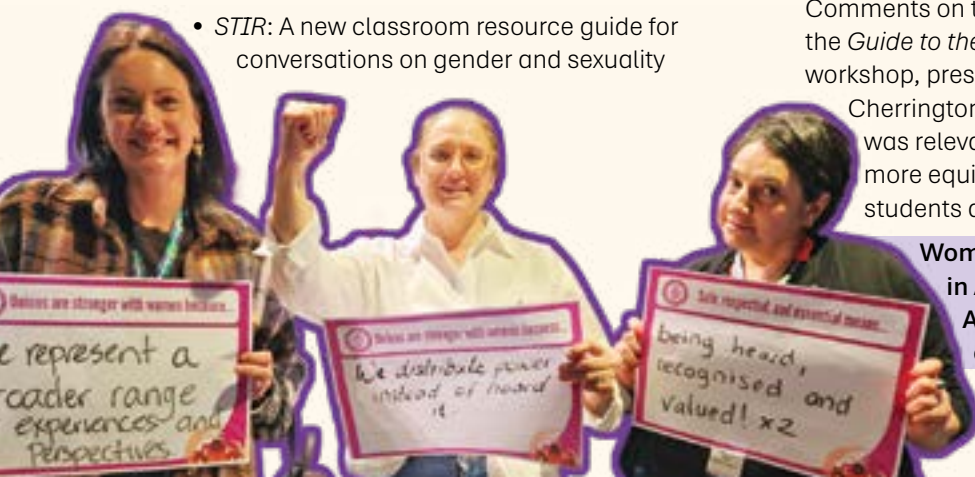
- Safe and respectful workplaces
- Dealing with misogyny in schools (suspension and WHS procedures)
- Addressing the gendered drivers of violence: Respectful relationships education in schools
- *STIR*: A new classroom resource guide for conversations on gender and sexuality

- TAFE women – know your rights and rebuilding
- From research to practice: Exploring the *Guide to the Manosphere* in school contexts
- More about those invisible women
- Strong women, strong voices: Learning from Blak activism
- Educating for change: Promoting respect for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Focus group: Priorities for research on sexism in schools

Feedback on the workshop ‘*STIR*: A new classroom resource guide for conversations on gender and sexuality’, presented by Dr Victoria Rawlings, included: “Very interactive! Definitely sharing with the rest of the school,” and “Absolutely loved this session. The activities were excellent and really challenged my thinking.”

Comments on the ‘From research to practice: Exploring the *Guide to the Manosphere* in school contexts’ workshop, presented by Natalie Hudson and Katie Cherrington, included: “Lots of information that was relevant, helpful and eye-opening!” and “I feel more equipped with knowledge on the topic to help students at school.”

Women’s Conference is held every year in August. Attend your local Teachers Association meeting to find out how you can come to the conference in 2027.



Affirming diversity in the classroom

words **Professor Jacqueline Ullman**

One of the most commonly reported reasons for teachers' and school leaders' lack of engagement with gender and sexuality diversity is their concern about parental opposition and complaints.

However, recent Australian research found 86.5 per cent of public-school parents in NSW support the introduction of gender and sexuality diversity-inclusive topics during K–12 schooling, with most wanting these introduced by the end of stages 3 or 4.

Topics like diverse romantic relationships and families, the negative impact of gender and sexuality diverse (GSD) bias-based discrimination and understanding gender diversity were viewed by parents as necessary for:

- creating a positive, safe and supportive school culture
- preparing students for living well as adults in a diverse, socially cohesive society.

Additionally, 65 per cent of public-school parents rated the “difference between biological sex and gender” as of “moderate” or “high” importance, with 19.5 per cent viewing this as “not important”.

Crucially, this research was nationally-representative, meaning these findings are our closest reflection of the attitudes and preferences of the public-school parent population. While some communities might have an overrepresentation of vocal oppositional parents, most



will have an abundance of supportive parents. However, these parents may be far less likely to contact the school with positive feedback.

It is evident that the large majority of parents want to see schools working to include GSD students, not just for the benefit of those young people, but to enhance cohesion and reduce bullying for the whole school community.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING GSD STUDENTS

There are a range of easily-accessible, online resources for teachers to support GSD students, including many offered by Federation. However, educators regularly ask for professional learning in this area, which is much more limited in availability and access.

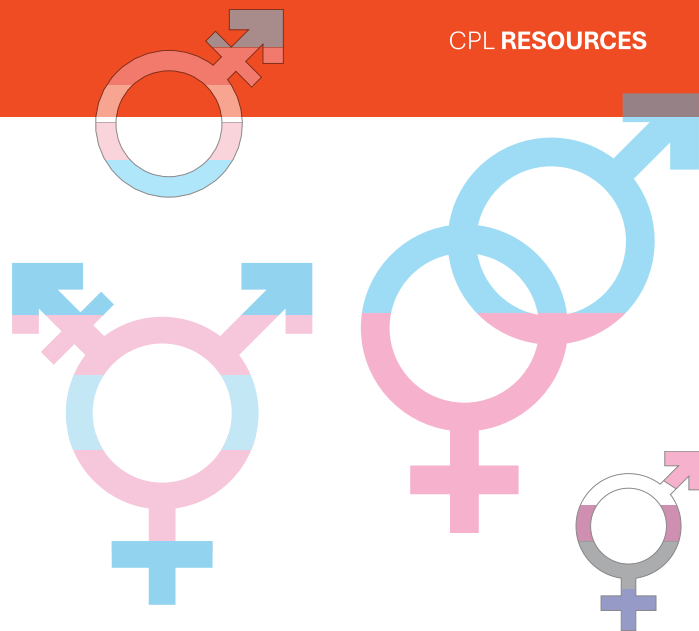
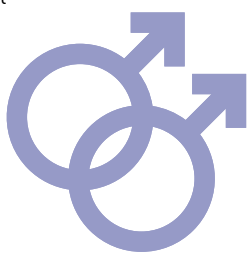
To meet this need, academic researchers in Western Sydney University's School of Education, Professor Jacqueline Ullman and Professor Tania Ferfolja designed the “Teaching to Affirm Community Diversity” online micro-credential. The 10-hour course is designed with the busy educator in mind: flexibly-available and self-paced, with asynchronous engagement with the academics.





It's also able to be used to satisfy national and NSW professional learning requirements.

The course draws from current Australian research and uses federal guidance and state-based education policy to support teachers in creating gender and sexuality diversity-inclusive environments in K-12 schools. Through five modules, all including interactive activities, teacher-learners explore legal and policy frameworks, best practice ideas and strategies for fostering student belonging, through a supportive, safe and affirming school climate for GSD students.



Drawing from empirical research conducted with parents and GSD students, the course aims to increase educators' awareness of how a positive school climate is related to GSD students' wellbeing, academic success and sense of belonging.

As with other areas of diversity and inclusivity, best-practice models for inclusivity of gender and sexuality diversity in schools advocate for whole-school approaches, bringing together both macro-level policy guidance documents and interpersonal, relational considerations for school community.

This is an edited version of "Supporting teachers to affirm classroom diversity", which first appeared in the semester 2, 2025 edition of the *Journal for Professional Learning*. Scan to view the entire article, including references.



Scan for Supporting
LGBTIQA+
communities in
schools



**The large majority of parents
want to see schools working
to include gender and
sexuality diverse students**

Join our next Online Book Club!

HELD QUARTERLY VIA ZOOM

Join like-minded teachers and connect through discussions and analysis of one of our library books

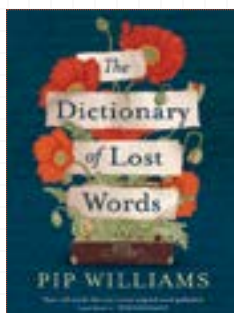


BOOK FOR DISCUSSION IN TERM 4

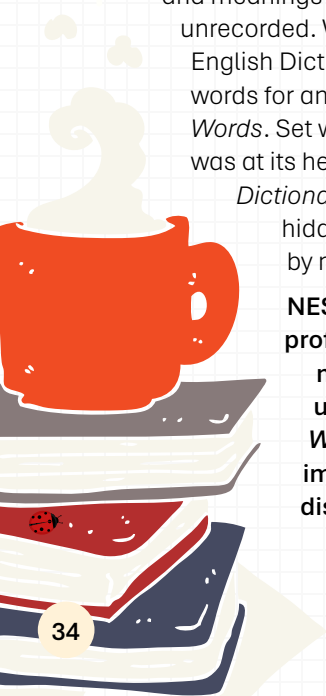
The dictionary of Lost Words

PIP WILLIAMS

"In 1901, the word 'Bondmaid' was discovered missing from the Oxford English Dictionary. This is the story of the girl who stole it. Esme is born into a world of words. Motherless and irrepressibly curious, she spends her childhood in the 'Scriptorium', a garden shed in Oxford where her father and a team of dedicated lexicographers are collecting words for the very first Oxford English Dictionary. Esme's place is beneath the sorting table, unseen and unheard. One day a slip of paper containing the word 'bondmaid' flutters to the floor. Esme rescues the slip and stashes it in an old wooden case that belongs to her friend, Lizzie, a young servant in the big house. Esme begins to collect other words from the Scriptorium that are misplaced, discarded or have been neglected by the dictionary men. They help her make sense of the world. Over time, Esme realises that some words are considered more important than others, and that words and meanings relating to women's experiences often go unrecorded. While she dedicates her life to the Oxford English Dictionary, secretly, she begins to collect words for another dictionary: *The Dictionary of Lost Words*. Set when the women's suffrage movement was at its height and the Great War loomed, *The Dictionary of Lost Words* reveals a lost narrative, hidden between the lines of a history written by men." (Publisher Simon & Schuster)



NESA allows teachers to include professional reading in their hours for maintenance of accreditation. If you use the reading of *The Dictionary of Lost Words* to enhance your pedagogy to impact on student learning progress or discuss it with your colleagues, then you can log the hours it took to read it..



Women who win: Celebrating courage, conviction and change

BY ANTOINETTE LATTOUF. SOUTHBANK, VIC: PENGUIN BOOKS, 2026

"Journalist and human rights advocate Antoinette Lattouf takes us on a gripping journey through women who defied expectations and shattered cultural and legal barriers — usually while being cast aside and asked to calm down ... Some names you'll recognise, others you'll wish you'd known sooner. Threaded throughout is Lattouf's landmark victory — one woman, armed with ethical resolve, taking on Australia's most powerful media institution. In doing so, she sparked a global conversation on power, prejudice and the price of integrity in the press. *Women who win* is a fierce, unflinching celebration of grit, guts and glorious defiance. These women didn't just show up — they came to rewrite the rules and never asked for permission." (publisher)



A study skills survival guide for neurodivergent learners: A pick-and-mix of study skills strategies for ADHD, autistic, dyslexic and dyspraxic learners

BY JULIA CHILDS; ILLUSTRATED BY JULES SCHEELE. LONDON: JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS, 2025

"When it comes to studying, one size does not fit all — especially if you're neurodivergent. How we approach learning and what works can vary widely depending on if we're ADHD, AuDHD, Autistic, Dyslexic, Dyspraxic... and maybe some of those profiles overlap. So where do you begin? ... With a pick 'n' mix of strategies and templates, tailored not only on your neurotype but also potential overlaps in profiles with other neurotypes, you'll be guided to try out the strategies most likely to work for you and your brain based on your skills and how you experience the world." (back cover)



The kids' guide: Anti-racism

BY ARIKE OKE AND SCOTT GARRETT. LONDON: FRANKLIN WATTS, 2022

Audience: Students aged from 9 years
"Being anti-racist means being active against racism. This book gives some tips about how to be anti-racist in a positive and safe way. This book can help you spot racism and stop it in its tracks ... This sensitively written guide will help children to understand more about racism and how to stop it." (publisher)



What's hot in the library

This is not a sad book (but it's OK to feel sad): A guide to grief, loss and getting through hard times

BY ELIZABETH VERCOE WITH KERRY ABROMOWSKI. ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRACE FRARACCIO. BUNURONG/BOON WURRUNG COUNTRY; SOUTH MELBOURNE, VIC: AFFIRM PRESS, 2024

Audience: Secondary school students.

"*This is not a sad book* is truly not a sad book! It's actually a practical, compassionate guide full of strategies and ideas to support yourself or someone else through grief, loss and hard times. In some parts you might even find yourself smiling. Most importantly of all, the stories, tips and advice in these pages are a reminder that even in our darkest hours, there is a way through." (back cover)



Not one more teacher lost: How we can save the profession

BY BRAD GAYNOR. ABINGDON, OXON; NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2026

"Drawing on real stories from the frontline, compelling research and decades of leadership insight, [the author] exposes the teacher workforce crisis with honesty, compassion and practical urgency. Structured in three clear parts — understanding the crisis, taking immediate action and building long-term solutions — it offers powerful insights and practical tools to restore the purpose, sustainability and dignity of teaching ... Written for teachers, school leaders and system decision makers alike, this book is a blueprint. Whether you've worked in education for three years or 30, it speaks to your experience, your fatigue and your hope. Because saving the profession starts by listening to the people who know it best." (publisher)



Discipline

BY RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH. ST LUCIA, QLD: UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS, 2025

"Sydney, May 2021. Ashraf is an academic whose career and personal life are in freefall. Hannah is a young journalist struggling to honour the voices of her community. When a year 12 student from a local Islamic college is arrested for protesting a university's ties to an Israeli weapons manufacturer, Ashraf sees an opportunity to exploit his personal connection to the situation for professional redemption. Meanwhile Hannah, who is juggling the demands of new



motherhood and family trauma, fights racism in the newsroom. As Israel's bombardment of Gaza intensifies into the final weeks of Ramadan, Ashraf and Hannah must reckon with their choices, values and places in their communities. Will they be prepared to make sacrifices in the pursuit of what is right?" (back cover)

The structured literacy playbook: Preplanned lessons for building phonics and fluency skills

BY MELISSA ORKIN, SARAH GANNON AND ALEXANDRIA OSBURN. LONDON: DK LEARNING, 2025

"*The structured literacy playbook* is an innovative and essential resource for building critical decoding, fluency and comprehension skills for young readers ... Designed with educators in mind, the playbook includes essential strategies and helpful preplanned lessons. Each chapter features a 'Game Plan', or lesson based on a Structured Literacy framework. The chapters are sequenced to move pupils from foundational decoding to automatic recognition of multisyllabic words, while enhancing literacy skills. Each chapter includes suggestions for accompanying decodable texts, which complement a variety of phonics programmes." (back cover) Teachers can access additional lesson materials and videos through QR codes.

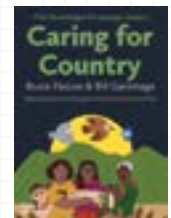


Caring for Country

BY BRUCE PASCOE AND BILL GAMMAGE; ADAPTED BY JASMIN MCGAUGHEY; ILLUSTRATED BY SAVI ROSS. WURUNDJERI COUNTRY; CREMORNE, VIC: THAMES & HUDSON AUSTRALIA, 2025

Audience: Ages 8-12 years

"What do you need to know to prosper as a people for 65,000 years or more? Join writer and farmer Bruce Pascoe and historian Bill Gammage as they generously share their knowledge about the amazing way that First Nations people cared for Australia and how closely humans have been connected with nature for tens of thousands of years. From the careful use of fire to sustainable hunting and farming, there is so much we can learn about how to make sure we have a beautiful country today and for the future." (back cover) 2026 CBCA Notable Book for Eve Pownall Award.



HOW TO BORROW FROM THE LIBRARY

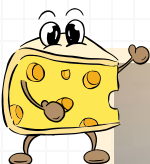
Contact the library to borrow resources or reserve them via the library catalogue, which can be accessed via the Federation website. A postal service is available. Hot Topics Guides on popular subjects and Library Bulletins may be found in the Member Portal.

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.





CPL



The Implementing Aboriginal education K-12 course, held in the Centre for Professional Learning's new facilities, supported teachers to implement Aboriginal education within the new syllabuses.

BEGINNING TEACHER CONFERENCE



Members attending the Beginning Teacher Conference at Newcastle learned about accreditation, planning, programming and differentiation, classroom management and Aboriginal education.

HISTORYCORNER



Can you spot yourself from this 1988 Day of Outrage rally in the Domain on Public Education Day? **Do you have a photo from the archives to share?** Send us your photos and information to journal@nswtf.org.au or scan the QR code. One lucky person will have their photo featured next edition!



RETIRED TA CELEBRATES CENTENARY





PROJECT OFFICERS



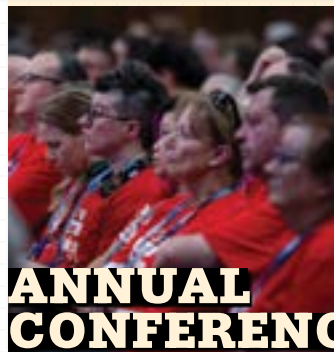
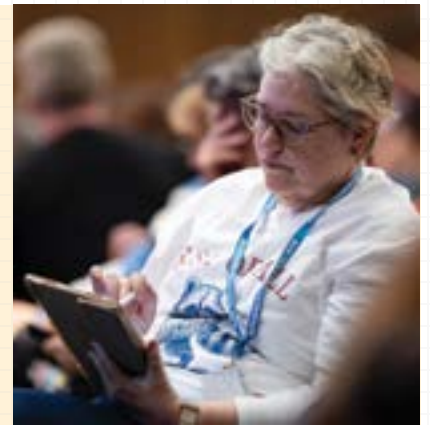
Tim Butler and Clair Kinder welcome members to the Newcastle Beginning Teacher Conference and Paul Ams packs membership kits for potential TAFE members.



Say
Cheeeese!



A special lunch and the launch of *NSW Retired Teachers Association Chronicle V: 1986–2026* marked the 100th anniversary of the Retired Teachers Association.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE





For the latest course listings, information and to apply



COURSE	DATE	LOCATION
Women in History: Reclaiming (In)Visible Women	11 September	Surry Hills
Music K-6 The New Syllabus — Making it Work in Your School	15 September	Surry Hills
Classroom Management Through Effective Teaching	16 September	Surry Hills
Leading Assessment Practice in Schools	14 and 27 October	Online via Zoom
Ethical Leadership	22-23 October and 27 November	Surry Hills
Teaching Peace — Integrating Peace Studies into the Syllabuses	26 October	Surry Hills
Supporting Students with ADHD K-6	28 October	Surry Hills
Assessment: The Judicious Use of Data and Evidence	30 October	Surry Hills
Supporting Students with ADHD 7-10	3 November	Surry Hills
Classroom Management through Effective Teaching	4 November	Newcastle
Inclusive Strategies	5 November	Newcastle
Assessing Higher Order Thinking	11 November	Blacktown
How to be an effective Learning and Support Teacher	12 November	Surry Hills
Aboriginal Education in the Classroom	17 November	Surry Hills
Supporting Students with ADHD K-6	18 November	Online via Zoom
Functional Behavioural Assessment in the Classroom	25 November	Surry Hills
Rethinking Ability: Special Education Conference	3 December	Surry Hills



**TRADE
UNION
TRAINING**

For the latest course listings, information and to apply



COURSE	DATE	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
Beginning Teacher Course	16 October	Lismore	25 September
Foundations for Workplace Representatives (Online)	19-20 October	Online via Zoom	25 September
Beginning Teacher Course	21 October	Penrith	25 September
New Activist Conference	24 October	Surry Hills	25 September
Foundations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identified Workplace Representatives	27-28 October	Surry Hills	25 September
Association Women's Contact Course — Part 2	30 October	Surry Hills	25 September
Communication Skills for Workplace Representatives	2-3 November	Surry Hills	12 October
Work, Health and Safety in Education Workplaces	11 November	Surry Hills	21 October



A photograph of a male teacher with curly hair and glasses, wearing a maroon sweater over a collared shirt and a blue lanyard. He is leaning forward, looking at two young students, a girl and a boy, who are also looking down at something out of frame. The background is a blurred classroom setting.

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NSW Teachers Federation acknowledges the Gadigal people, the traditional owners of the land and waters upon which *Education Quarterly* is written and designed. Federation extends this acknowledgement to all traditional owners of all lands and waters in which *Education Quarterly* is printed, delivered, read and shared.