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## Introduction: 2021 and 2022 in review



**Thank you, Chris Watt!**

**The IEU extends its thanks and deep appreciation to Chris Watt who concluded his long and distinguished career as an IEU officer on 1 July 2022.**

**Chris' many years of dedicated service, first at the NSW/ACT Branch level and then as IEU Federal Secretary, has been instrumental in building the strength, capacity and influence of our union.**

**The IEU shall forever be thankful for the commitment and passionate contribution provided by Chris over his three decades of service to our members and the union movement more broadly.**

## Federal Election: Hope for opportunity and change

On 22 May 2022, Australia elected an ALP federal government and with that came hope for opportunity and change.

For over a decade, under a coalition government, Australian workers have experienced stagnated wages, widespread labour shortages and record levels of insecure work. The union movement has been subjected to legislated attacks and overzealous regulations.

IEU members have struggled under collective bargaining legislation which disempowers employees' capacity to negotiate, and hands over control to aggressive employers determined to make no real concession.

The past coalition government had remained inactive while family and domestic violence became a national tragedy with one woman killed each week by a partner, ex-partner or family member. Women disproportionately weathered the adverse economic impact of COVID with minimal support from government. As a result, pay inequity remained unaddressed and continued to fluctuate between 15% -19% nationally.

Education unions were sidelined and ignored by the past coalition government, thus leaving education policy to be controlled, for over a decade, by actors external to the realities of schools.

As a result, education policies do not support nor reflect the realities of the profession, nor of the needs of schools and classrooms.

When teachers' knowledge and skills and the essential nature of their work are systematically excluded and dismissed, this has a direct impact on the quality of education provided to our students.

And yet, when these policies failed, the coalition government perpetuated a deficit rhetoric that blamed teachers for failures.

Our teachers, school leaders and education workers are exhausted due to workload burdens and are choosing to leave the profession in record numbers. Graduate students are not choosing to study education and a 30% decline in numbers of students entering education is being experienced. Instead of meaningful reforms that target areas of student and teacher needs and support schools to meet those needs, the past coalition government gave us a demoralised and disempowered education workforce.

The new Labor federal government has many challenges ahead but it carries a strong mandate to restore fairness to Australian workers and to society.

Already, the IEU has been active in lobbying the new federal government through member meetings with Ministers, involvement in federal government round table strategic discussions and holding a presence at the up coming Jobs and Skills Summit in September.

So as the 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament commences its work – our hope turns into strong expectations for change and opportunity.

**The following report provides an outline of the challenges and issues that the IEU has been actively addressing through 2021 and 2022.**

## A strong IEU voice to government

The election of a new federal government in 2022 has seen a welcome change to the nature of government engagement with our union as we seek to ensure a strong IEU voice on the issues that impact the working and professional lives of our members.

While the anticipated legislative and reform agenda of the new government is broad, a number of key priorities have been identified by our union to pursue:

- **Industrial relations reform:** the return to fair and balanced workplace laws.
- **A strong voice for the education profession:** teaching practitioners must be heard on critical education debates around curriculum, funding, workforce planning and initial teacher education programs.
- **Equity and inclusiveness:** the new government is to be commended on their commitment to honour *The Uluru Statement from The Heart* and our union will continue to campaign to support this long overdue change.
- **Legislated protections** to ensure non-government education employees are free from all forms of workplace discrimination must be confirmed by the new government.

### IEU meets with Jason Clare, Minister for Education



The IEU met with Jason Clare on 15 July 2022 for a wide-ranging discussion on the priority issues to address in our education system.

While many challenges lay ahead, the IEU welcomed the open and inclusive approach of the Minister and a commitment to listen to the voice of education practitioners as the reform plans are developed.

The key issues and concerns raised by IEU members across the country were delivered to the Minister:

- National teacher shortages and the various factors, both immediate and long term, contributing to the problem.
- Concerns with the status of teaching and attacks on the profession.
- The drivers of workload pressures and teacher burnout in schools and ECE.
- The influence of actors external to education, to the exclusion of teachers.
- The need for funding transparency and accountability within education.
- The current status of collective bargaining structures and coverage across the sector including differential wages and conditions.
- The need for teacher representation on bodies such as AITS to include both AEU and IEU representation.
- Strategies to improve educational opportunity for disadvantaged students.

A shared commitment to ongoing consultation and professional dialogue on education issues was confirmed by the Minister, who will also be invited to attend a future meeting of the IEU Executive.

### **IEU meets Dr Ann Aly, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Youth**



The IEU met with Dr Aly on 22 June 2022 to discuss the key issues impacting the early childhood education sector and confirmed ongoing engagement by the Minister with our union:

- The recognition of the importance of early childhood education and the critical role of qualified ECE teachers as the foundation of our early childhood system.
- Staffing issues impacting the quality delivery of early childhood programs.
- A fairer industrial relations system for pay equity.
- The need for long-term government commitment to fair funding for quality early childhood education.

## Ministerial Roundtable on Early Childhood Education, 8 August 2022

The IEU Federal Secretary Christine Cooper attended the Round Table on Early Childhood Education. It was refreshing to hear a federal government Minister value Early Childhood Education as vital to a child's learning and development. Commentary from the previous federal government often limited ECE to simply an economic mechanism to support workplace participation in the community.



This appreciation and professional respect is long overdue for ECE members.

The IEU called on the government to develop a guaranteed funding stream for the sector which would be deliver and safeguard pay and conditions equitable to those received in schools.

The sector must have access to a less adversarial mechanism to negotiate wages and conditions. The current bargaining

laws are ill suited to the sector and are failing ECE staff and employers.

Our union has high expectations on the new Labor government to deliver respect, security and certainty for the ECE sector and our members.

## Ministerial Roundtable on the Teacher Workforce, 12 August 2022

IEU NSWACT member Angela McDonald and IEU Federal Secretary Christine Cooper attended the Ministerial Roundtable to discuss the causes of teacher shortages and next steps in addressing these significant issues.

For the first time in over a decade, teachers and their union have been given the opportunity to address Education Ministers on the problems directing affecting them. We have been warning of work intensification, teacher burnout and teacher shortages for years. This is first time these warning have been heeded.

There are many challenges ahead, but we remain positive and hold high expectations for a new federal minister who is prepared to listen and work collaboratively with the teaching profession and our education unions.

The five priority areas identified for further development were:

1. Elevating the teaching profession
2. Improving teacher supply
3. Strengthening Initial Teacher Education
4. Maximising time to teach
5. Better understanding future teacher workforce needs.

The finalisation of a *National Action Plan on Teacher Shortages* is to occur in December 2022. This will be an essential next step in delivering real change in our schools. The IEU will part of the *Action Plan working group* which will commence work on 29 August 2022

## Hear Our Voice! Historic member action in NSW

NSW/ACT members have taken widespread action in support of their bargaining claims and the failure of Catholic employers to *hear the voice* of IEU members across NSW.

More than 18,000 IEU teacher and support staff members took a stand for better pay and conditions as the IEU NSW/ACT and NSW Teachers Federation united for a historic strike on 30 June 2022.



It was the first joint IEU-AEU industrial action in NSW since 1996 and followed earlier stop work action by IEU members in 540 Catholic schools on 29 May 2022.

The industrial action followed the failure of the NSW government to stop the decline in real wages for public sector workers or address the crisis in teaching. Government wage policy directly impacts negotiations for a new Catholic schools enterprise agreement.

The key claims in the IEU's campaign for a fair deal for teachers and support staff:

- pay teachers what they're worth
- give support staff a fair deal
- let teachers teach – cut paperwork
- allow time to plan – reduce the teaching load by two hours per week
- end staffing shortages.

IEU members will maintain their campaign and member action until the employers address their concerns - the strong and loud collective voice of members will be heard.

## A national staffing crisis: Urgent repairs needed

IEU members and our union have been warning of looming staff shortages for decades. The pandemic has just accelerated a slow burn crisis to the point we now see playing out across our schools and the early childhood education sector.



With 59% of teachers planning on leaving the profession - the warning signs have been ignored by successive governments and employers alike.

While the IEU welcomed the federal government's plan to begin tackling the issue, the government does not employ school or early childhood employees.

The employers in our sector must also take immediate action.

IEU members have been raising these issues, and solutions, for years. The problem will only be addressed by wide ranging and significant reform.

- **Retention and recruitment:** Improved pay rates, working conditions and enhanced career paths must head the list for urgent employer investment.
- **Unsustainable workloads:** This is the key cause of teacher burnout and why so many are leaving the profession. Employer demands and government policy contribute to a problem driving teachers away from the job they love.
- **Ensure teacher practitioners have a voice:** Teachers have been excluded from critical debates on professional bodies and government authorities that are instead dominated by actors external to the reality of schools.
- **Early career teachers need more support:** New teachers need increased release time, professional development and mentor programs. Offering graduate teachers permanent jobs instead of short-term contracts must become the new standard.
- **Let teachers get back to the classroom:** Respect our professional autonomy and judgement. Paperwork, red tape and an obsession with data is sucking the life out of our profession.
- **Avoid quick fix responses:** Sending unqualified teachers into classrooms without adequate preparation is foolhardy. Teaching is highly complex, rushing student teachers into schools before they are ready will only exacerbate early career burnout.
- **Fully value and respect the teaching profession:** Teacher bashing remains an ugly undercurrent of many 'quality of education' debates.

## IEU members respond to extraordinary COVID impacts: Union strength and protection



IEU members across the country continued to work under extraordinarily difficult circumstances as the health pandemic threatened the health and safety of staff and students.

COVID also caused major disruptions to education and teaching programs, staffing levels, scheduled school activities and increased work demands of employees.

While the workload and teaching challenges were numerous and complex, IEU members again demonstrated the strength of solidarity and collective power to advocate for appropriate safety standards and effective learning arrangements.

### Impacts on workload and school learning

IEU members know all too well the widespread disruptions caused in schools and early childhood centres. Significant impacts have included:

- Widespread teacher shortages and inadequate numbers of relief staff - leading to reduced school activities and workload implications for staff having to cover lessons or being denied their allocated release time.
- Combined lessons and growing class sizes – class supervision arrangements have been in turmoil in many schools, with employers moving to very large combined classes, or in some cases, no allocated teacher supervision at all.
- Expectations of hybrid teaching delivery – some employers and parents have sought a continuation of dual teaching modes for absent students (even when the absence is not COVID related).
- Crowded school calendars – delayed events, camps and excursions are being forced into the remainder of the year and already crowded school calendars.
- Cancelled or modified assessments – many school assessments and exams were cancelled, especially in the lower and middle years, due to a record number of student absences.

### Paid pandemic leave and paid vaccination leave

IEU member action has been instrumental in delivering paid pandemic leave and paid vaccination leave for employees across the sector. This additional pay security has now been accessed by tens of thousands of members impacted by the pandemic.

Access to paid pandemic leave helped protect the safety of school communities by ensuring the opportunity for members to isolate or stay home if unwell, whilst at the same time protecting the financial security of employees and their families.

## Is your employer providing paid vaccination leave?



IEU Branches were also successful in confirming paid vaccination leave with many employers, a vital commitment at a time when vaccine supplies were scarce and vaccination appointments difficult for members to access outside of normal work time.

IEU members are campaigning for paid pandemic leave in many collective bargaining negotiations across the country to ensure an ongoing and enforceable entitlement.

In July 2022, pressure from Australian unions was also successful in restoring the federal government's pandemic leave disaster payment that had been abolished by the previous Morrison federal government.

### **Employee vaccination mandates**

IEU members in all state and territory jurisdictions were subject to some form of vaccination requirement for education employees in 2021 and/or 2022.

A range of union representation procedures were enacted on behalf of IEU members impacted by the vaccination requirements as well as comprehensive discussions with employers to safeguard the interests of our members and ensure any employer actions were consistent with due process.

While the various government health directives relating to employee vaccinations have now expired, several non-government employers have now sought to implement their own workplace policy and union representation continues in those sectors.

### **Onsite safety precautions**

The COVID safety challenges in our schools and kindergartens represent a significant and ongoing health and safety hazard.

Once again, the strength and importance of union membership was critical to hold employers to account and ensure adequate safety precautions are in place.

The most recent **IEU Federal Executive** meeting again called for the ongoing review of COVID safety precautions by education employers across all states and territories.

IEU members, and especially our school based IEU representatives, continue to fight for best practice safety measures in their workplaces:

- Priority access to Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for education employees.
- Updated mask wearing policies and protocols for staff and students.
- Access to work from home and additional protections for medically vulnerable employees.
- Comprehensive safety assessments of school activities such as student camps, excursions, assemblies, and other large gatherings.
- Employer provision of safety equipment including masks, hand sanitiser and air purification systems.
- Limiting face-to-face staff meetings, professional development and face-to-face parent-teacher interviews.



## Education and professional issues

### NAPLAN

In June 2022, the **IEU Education Committee** met with ACARA to receive an update on the NAPLAN testing for 2022 and proposed changes for 2023.

It was reported that 2022 marked the final year of transition to online testing with schools across Australia

completing NAPLAN tests online. It

was noted that over 4 million tests had been submitted by more than 1.2 million students.



Further, the Education Ministers had agreed to move the NAPLAN testing to term one in 2023. The intent of this change was to ensure that results would be available to education authorities earlier in the year to inform school and system teaching and learning programs, and assist teachers to better assess what support students need for the coming year.

The IEU Education Committee questioned the practicalities of this decision and drew attention to the likely issues for Year 3 students, many of whom will still be seven years of age at that point of testing, and the corresponding implications for the proportion of "above stage" questions in the exam.

The committee further raised the issue of online practice tests not being available due to the earlier testing period and the impact that would have in supporting students. Teachers would not be able to prepare students in the techniques of online testing, nor assist them to develop techniques that allow them to demonstrate their knowledge.

The committee also requested professional development on adaptive testing, which is not currently available.

It was noted with some concern that in addition to NAP sample program, new annual assessments in science, civics and citizenship and digital literacy would be available as opt-in assessments for any school or system that desires it.

They will be phased in over three years, starting with science in 2024, with civics and citizenship added in 2025 and then digital literacy in 2026.

The committee questioned the processes regarding reporting. ACARA confirmed that results for opt in assessments will only be available to participating schools and systems, and not generally reported publicly. However, IEU concerns regarding further impact on workload and lack of consultation at the school/system level remains.

## **Failings of AITSL: it is not a voice for the profession**

In October 2021, the **IEU Education Committee** made submission to the AITSL discussion paper *Developing, Esteeming and Investing in Expertise: The second decade of AITSL*. The basis of this paper from AITSL was to set strategic directions for the organisation into the future.

The IEU Education Committee identified several aspects of the discussion paper that were concerning and responded to these matters.

The continued claim that AITSL was the 'voice of the profession' was challenged. It was emphasised that as AITSL was a not-for-profit company funded and owned by the federal government, the federal Education Minister represents the Commonwealth and appoints the board of directors. As such, AITSL takes its direction from the federal Education Minister (and state Education Ministers). Therefore, AITSL is not an organisation that can be a true voice of the profession as it is strongly influenced by the needs and views of the government or minister of the time.

The voice of the profession is a role already occupied by education unions

Our union emphasised that if AITSL wishes to listen to the 'voice of the profession' than it should restore union representation on the AITSL Board and relevant committees.

The IEU submission further challenged:

- The dangerous oversimplification of too many complex issues within the current discussion paper that over-estimates the nature and extent of support AITSL provides, and is able to provide, to practitioners.
- The simplistic interpretation of the problem of early childhood education teacher registration, as a failure on the part of practitioners to see value in registration.
- The gross underestimation of the demands that ITE programs make on practising teachers in terms of supervising and mentoring pre-service teachers. The failure to adequately recognise and remunerate those who take on the supervisory role requires urgent attention.
- The pejorative assumption within the discussion paper that undervalues the importance and input of education support staff on quality teaching and quality learning outcomes.

The submission further stated that improving industrial and professional frameworks should be a collaborative venture involving stakeholders such as unions and other professional associations, teacher registration authorities, initial teacher education providers and government bodies such as AITSL.

In November 2021, the IEU Education Committee met with the Chair of the AITSL Board to discuss the submission paper. The final AITSL strategic plan was released in July 2022.

## **IEU and AEU unite to call for representation on AITSL**

On 13 July 2022, joint correspondence was forwarded to Education Minister Jason Clare requesting representation of the two education unions on the AITSL board.

As education unions, the AEU and IEU members are the voice of the education profession within their relevant sectors. This voice has been ignored and sidelined under the previous coalition government. Indeed, one of their first actions following federal elections in 2013 was to remove union representation from the AITSL Board.

The correspondence emphasised that AITSL was a not-for-profit company owned by the federal government, which takes its directions from the federal Education Minister. The current governance structure of the board as listed on the AITSL website, includes representatives from the Association of the Heads of Independent Schools, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Australian Primary Principal Association, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment and one highly accomplished teacher from a remote indigenous school.

Despite the fact that broad representation from the teaching profession is significantly lacking in this board composition, AITSL continues to make the claim to be the voice of the teaching profession.

As the real voice of the education profession, the AEU and IEU seek that each union have positions on the AITSL Board, thereby bringing a more balanced view, to the board, from the teaching profession within each sector.

## **Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)**

The **IEUA Education Committee** met with AERO on 19 October 2021 to discuss AERO's *Strategic Plan and Research Agenda* that will operate from July 2021 to December 2022: The Strategic Plan addresses the following areas.

1. **Literacy and numeracy** data trends
2. **Wellbeing of children and young people** -
3. **Continuity of learning and development across ECE and schools** -
4. **Improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people** -
5. **Addressing educational disadvantage** -
6. **Supporting continuous school improvement** -
7. **Examining evidence use in ECE and schools** -

On 22 March 2022, the federal government released \$3.5 million to the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) to develop materials for classroom environments. AERO is expected to begin releasing training materials and resources later in 2022 via its website [www.edresearch.edu.au](http://www.edresearch.edu.au)

The **IEU Education Committee** continues to monitor AERO activities and a further meeting with AERO was held on 19 August 2022 to discuss their progress and work under a new federal government.

## ACECQA - National workforce strategy for early childhood education

After 18 months of consultation with the **IEU Early Childhood Consultative Group**, as a member of the co-design national workforce strategy development group, the workforce strategy for early childhood education 'Shaping Our Future' was released.

Throughout the consultations, the IEU continued to target the complex and long-standing issues of inequitable pay and conditions that impact on the attraction, development and retention of a high-quality children's education and care workforce.

The 'Shaping Our Future', ten-year workforce strategy was developed to support the recruitment, retention, sustainability and quality of the sector workforce.

The strategy includes short, medium and long-term actions across focus areas of:

- professional recognition
- attraction and attention
- leadership and capability
- wellbeing
- qualifications and career pathways
- data and evidence.

The first priority will be delivering equitable pay and conditions in the sector.

As part of the implementation and review of the strategy, the IEU Early Childhood Consultative Group will continue to be involved by providing commentary and assessment on its efficacy.



## Industrial report

### 4 yearly review – Parents and Citizens variation

In 2020 the Federation of NSW Parents and Citizens Associations applied to widen the scope of the General Staff Award to include P&C's throughout Australia. The effect of the application would be to include a (named) contractor for the first time within the scope of the award. As P&C's are principally a feature of working arrangements in government schools, and after consulting with branches, we determined not to oppose (rather than supporting) this application.

The application is opposed by both the ACT Council of P&C Associations and the SDA; both oppose it on the grounds that P&C's don't fall within the definition of the "school education industry". A decision is pending.

### Right of entry issues

Victoria Tasmania Branch organisers and officials have been refused entry to Catholic schools and the TCEO in Tasmania for refusing to show a valid Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) registration. There have been similar disputes in the Northern Territory and South Australia in the recent past. They have not been resolved by any employer admission that it is not necessary for IEU organisers to show relevant state-based child protection credentials. The Federal Office sought advice from counsel as to the likely prospects of success in an application to the Federal Court as the outcome of those proceedings may have a direct bearing on the ability of organisers in other states to gain entry to workplaces. That advice suggested that there was a reasonable prospect of success as there is no legislative H&S obligation in Tasmania to have a WWVP registration. A negotiated solution has subsequently not proven feasible and proceedings were commenced in the Court on 9 August this year.

### Rules

#### Proposed changes to eligibility rules

The **IEU Industrial Committee** has been reviewing the IEU eligibility rules for the Federal Executive to consider and approved changes in draft. Branches subsequently provided evidence of membership and representation in respect of the occupational groups sought to be covered by the variation. An application to alter our rules has been prepared based on this data. Federal Executive will need to approve the application in its final form.

#### Other rule changes

On 7 February the Commission handed down its decision approving our latest tranche of rule changes. These changes were agreed by Executive in 2020 and involved variations to r5 Objects. One element of that rule change remains. The changes were submitted in draft to the Commission prior to the application being made. The FWC

indicated that they had reservations about the form of the change sought concerning branch insolvency.

Consequent to this advice application was not made for this rule. It has now been redrafted resubmitted to the Commission for provisional approval and been approved with only minor amendments. A further application will be made for approval.

## **COVID**

Between meetings of Council branches were consulted on the question of whether to accept the FWC's invitation to apply to reinstate the schedules providing for unpaid pandemic leave into the Teachers, General Staff and Post-Secondary Awards. Branches determined not to apply for reinstatement, principally to avoid compromising existing paid pandemic leave entitlements.

## **Parliamentary inquiries**

Since the last meeting of Council we have made submissions to and appeared before three parliamentary committees convened to consider, respectively, insecure work and the three bills promulgating the major parties' religious discrimination legislation.

## **Legislative reform**

Much of the work of the federal office since the federal election has been concerned with campaigning, with other unions, under the leadership of the ACTU, for long overdue changes to federal industrial legislation. The changes we are seeking are aimed at restoring balance to the system. That is to ensure that take home pay and conditions for members will be significantly improved from the benefits delivered by members productivity, as opposed to simply increasing the profit share of business, or in the case of IEU members, being used to purchase land and build new churches.

The principal changes we're seeking that would greatly assist IEU members are:

- pay equity for women i.e. new and better equal pay provisions and for the Commission to have regard to equity in all its decisions;
- a fairer bargaining system where we can bargain for one agreement without limits on content, with as many employers as we want, and where we have the same rights as we currently have when we bargain with an individual employer;
- a return to being able to have all disputes, including bargaining disputes, arbitrated by the Commission;
- making job security an object of the *Fair Work Act* and ending abuses of casual and fixed-term employment; and
- union delegate rights including paid training leave.

## Equity and diversity

### Uluru Statement from the Heart

The IEU has supported the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* since it was first developed by First Nations leaders at the First Nations National Constitutional Convention in 2017.



The statement was issued after the convention, and calls for First Nation recognition in the Australian Constitution and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of "agreement-making" and truth-telling between the Australian government and First Nation peoples.

The previous coalition government shamefully rejected the statement, claiming at the time that the "radical" change would not be supported by a majority of Australians.

The IEU welcomes and supports the announcement by the new federal government that they will implement the Uluru Statement in full – Voice, Treaty and Truth.

Our union is committed to work with our members, the broader community and government to ensure that an indigenous voice to parliament becomes a reality.

### IEU BOLD women



IEU women joined with other Australian women on the streets in March 2021 demanding a response to the increasing incidents of sexual assault and harassment in homes, workplaces and schools.

Our outrage was met with patronizing platitudes from Prime Minister Morrison and the coalition government.

For the next 18 months, the coalition government refused to take action on a raft of issues impacting Australian women.

No action was taken to legislate the key recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Respect@Work Report* which called for:

1. An enforceable positive duty on employers to take reasonable and proportionate steps to eliminate sexual harassment, sex discrimination and victimisation
2. An express prohibition on sexual harassment and an accessible new complaints process in the Fair Work Act
3. A new Inquiry power for the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to investigate systemic sexual harassment
4. An express prohibition on the creation of a hostile, sexist working environment
5. Confirmation that one of the objects of the Sex Discrimination Act is substantive equality
6. A new Work Health and Safety Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment at work
7. A new process to allow representative bodies, including unions to bring actions to court on behalf of people who have been sexual harassed.

This lack of action was further exemplified by the release of a draft National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children that canvassed many of the issues relating to violence against women and children yet contained no actual strategy. It was void of accountability and concrete steps, including targets, timelines and resourcing

It was not a plan.

It was another platitude.



## **Gendered violence is a global phenomenon that requires global safety measures.**

In June 2019, a ground-breaking Convention and Recommendation to eliminate violence and harassment at work was successfully negotiated and adopted overwhelmingly at the International Labour Organisation. This two-year negotiation included ACTU and other world trade unions, ILO member governments and employer organisations.

The historic ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 260 establishes for the first time, an international standard to prevent and eliminate violence and harassment at work and places obligations on governments to develop national laws prohibiting workplace violence, and on employers to take proactive steps to prevent violence and harassment.

While the Australian government voted in favour of the ILO Convention 190 and the associated Recommendation 260 to eliminate gendered violence at work, the coalition government failed to take any action to ratify the ILO Convention or even speak to Australian unions about the matter.

While the coalition government was inactive, the same could not be said of our **IEU BOLD Women Networks**, co ordinated by **IEU Women and Equity Committee**. IEU Branch networks continued to meet, reach out, educate and agitate on the steps necessary to address violence against women, in particular access to paid family and domestic violence leave, and ratification of ILO C190.



As a result, IEU Branches have been instrumental in winning paid family and domestic violence leave and as such established a base to dispute employer arguments in the national case run by the ACTU.

Furthermore, public perception on the pervasive nature of this issue was shifted.

The ALP government has committed to several gender equity reforms. These include fully legislating the 55 *Respect@Work* recommendations, \$3 Billion investment into women's safety including \$77 million on consent and respectful relationships education.

**BOLD professional development sessions** have continued via online sessions. These BOLD sessions provide an opportunity not only to speak with some amazing feminists and gain professional development on issues affecting women, but they also provide an opportunity to network with other IEU BOLD women from across the country.

Each session was co-ordinated and managed by a member of the **IEU Women and Equity Committee and their BOLD group**. The recent 2022 sessions were held prior to the election and focussed on political engagement and how women can take control.

BOLD women acknowledged that the time was right to make politicians understand that women were a great force of change.

### **And the lesson learnt from the 2022 federal election: do not ignore women.**

We knew that if we needed equality, if we needed a sustainable future, then we needed to organise for a change of government; because we were not going to get that with a Morrison led government.

### **Gender pay gap report paints bleak picture for women**

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) paints a bleak picture on the status of gender equality in the workplace. The data published recently shows that women are still earning consistently less than men in every age bracket.

The WGEA report *Wages and Ages: Mapping the Gender Pay Gap by Age*, shows the pay gap widens substantially when women turn 35 with women earning \$7.78 for every \$10 earned by their male counterparts. The disparity worsens over the next 20 years with a slight improvement once women turn 65 but it never reaches parity.

If this trend continues, millennial women in the workforce will earn just 70% of men's earnings by the time they reach age 45.

A combination of factors drive the pay gap. Many low paid jobs are in the care and education sectors dominated by women, but this accounts for about 20% of the gap.

Discrimination is a key factor, along with women spending more time off work to care for children and family. Better paid jobs and management roles are largely limited to full-time, but fewer than half of all working women work full-time.

Being able to work part-time is often not a genuine choice. Despite efforts in collective bargaining, many employers continue to refuse part-time or job-share options.

Employers must do better supporting women who need flexible work. This must apply to both classroom and promotional positions.

The new Labor government has committed to lead a national push to help close the gender pay gap and increase pay for women workers by:

- Empowering the Fair Work Commission to order pay increases for workers in low paid, female dominated industries.
- Legislating so large companies will have to report their gender pay gap publicly.
- Prohibiting pay secrecy clauses and allow workers to talk about their pay.
- Taking action on gender pay in the Public Service which will assist other sectors.

## We won! Paid family and domestic violence leave is now law

After a decade of union campaigns for 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave, the Labor government has now enshrined the right of access for all workers.



No one should ever have to choose between their pay and safety. By enshrining the leave into the National Employment Standards, the government has ensured that nearly every worker will receive this entitlement if needed. This includes casual and part-time workers.

This is a huge win. It means an extra 8 million workers across Australia have access to paid family and domestic violence leave. This can give workers the time, support and job security they need to escape and recover from an abusive relationship.

This win would not have happened without IEU member action and commitment to the campaign for paid family and domestic violence leave.

## Workplace Gender Equality Agency review

On 21 October 2021, the IEU joined with ACTU affiliates to make a submission to a 'targeted review' of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* to consider whether the Workplace Gender Equality Agency has appropriate powers to:

*"...promote and improve gender equality in Australian workplaces, support employers to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workplace, and to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender in relation to employment matters."*

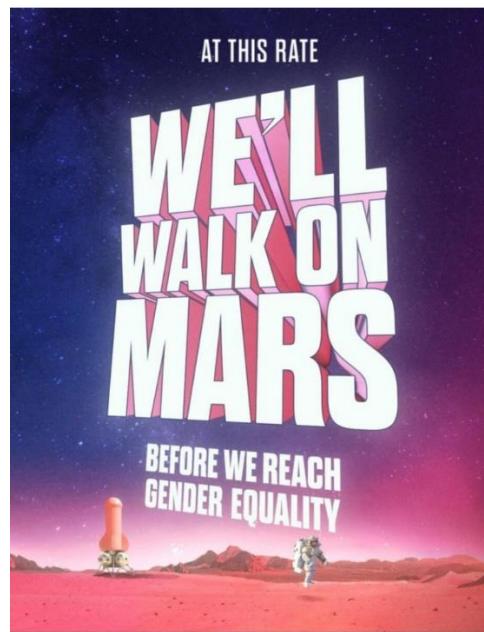
Submissions were due by 24 November 2021, with a report to be provided to the federal coalition government before the end of 2021.

The **IEU Women and Equity Committee** provided information and feedback to the ACTU regarding:

- A lack of consultation by non-government employers about workplace gender equality issues.
- A tokenistic human resource 'tick a box' attitude evident from some employers.
- Apparent lack of follow up by WGEA to employers who state for years that a policy is 'under development'.
- A lack of resourcing for WGEA to engage and follow up with employers (and unions) about reports and their accuracy.

In the ACTU submission, concern was expressed that the timeframes for this review were far too short to enable adequate consideration and consultation on the nature and scope of this entrenched problem, or the role that WGEA should play in addressing it.

Once again, the previous federal government paid lip service to equity matters by rushing an important review such as this one into WGEA.



## Organising and campaigning activities

### Collective bargaining campaigns and IEU member action

All IEU Branches have either been engaged in bargaining campaigns or are heading into new sector bargaining negotiations in coming months.



While specific member claims differ between Branches and between sectors, issues of unsustainable workloads and fair pay increases are common across all negotiations.

IEU members will continue to campaign and take action in support of their legitimate bargaining claims.

Improved pay outcomes and new measures to tackle workload concerns are critical to the success of our sector and the provision of high-quality education in our classrooms.

### Organisers' workshop 2022: *Organising for Engagement*

The **IEU Organising and Campaigning Committee** is conducting the 2022 Organiser workshop in Sydney from 17 November 2022 to 18 November 2022.

The workshop had unfortunately been postponed in 2020 and again in 2021 given COVID interruptions and travel difficulties for many branches.

The 2022 workshop has been designed to provide practical support and organising tools for branch organisers. Sessions will be particularly relevant to new organisers, given the large number of recent organiser appointments in several branches.

The workshop will include sessions on:

- Presentations from other unions on successful organising and bargaining campaigns and an assessment of how such strategies might be adopted within an IEU context.
- Case studies from each branch exploring current recruitment and retention challenges, with a complimentary study of possible solutions.
- Best practice organising tools and tactics that can be incorporated into an Organiser's regular work program.
- A particular focus on how we can better engage early career teachers.
- A case study presentation on the organising work that underpinned the historic stop work action by the NSW Branch in 2022.
- A review of successful online organising activities that have emerged during pandemic interruptions to school visits and onsite organising.

## IEU participation in historic ACTU member delegations, August 2022

The IEU played a key role in the ACTU worker delegations and lobbying program – the largest member lobbying event ever undertaken by the ACTU. Affiliates shared member stories with federal government politicians during two days of back-to back meetings.

The purpose of the discussions was to consider changes needed to federal laws and, in particular, to highlight the changes that IEU members need to the collective bargaining system in order to restore a fair bargaining process in our schools and kindergartens.

Thank you to our Branches who supported the process, in particular the QNT Branch and NSW/ACT Branch for their support of Jo-Anne Desailly (QLD Catholic school teacher) and Janene Rox (Early Childhood Teacher/Director) to participate in the lobbying teams.



Janene and Jo delivered their firsthand experiences to fifteen government MPs and Senators about the problems with the bargaining system in our sector, and why IEU members need the return of fair and balanced laws.

There is no more powerful story than that delivered directly by our members, and Jo and Janene were amazing advocates on behalf of all IEU members. They provided a contemporary snapshot of an Australian union member in 2022 – predominantly female from a highly skilled profession.

Thank you Jo and Janene!

## **The private business seeking to sell membership in our schools**

The last 12 months has seen an expansion of the private business selling membership into all states and territories as they rebranded themselves 'Red Unions'. Launched in QLD in 2019, the business sought to capitalise on vaccine mandates in education and other industries such as health, police and transport.

Employees have rightly dismissed this new business model as a politically motivated disruptor that weakens real union power.

IEU members know that a union is much more than an office staffed by a lawyer and bankrolled by a few business people.

Our clear union difference: IEU vs a private business	IEU	Private business
The right to represent the industrial interests of all teachers, school officers and services staff in our sector.	✓	✗
Recognised as the default bargaining representative for members and covered by our collective agreements.	✓	✗
An automatic legal right under the <i>Fair Work Act</i> to represent you in workplace disputes, including at industrial tribunals and in the courts.	✓	✗
Representative rights on school and sector consultative committees.	✓	✗
A voice on professional and educational bodies such as QCT and QCAA.	✓	✗
Full legal union recognition under <i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act</i> .	✓	✗
Right of entry to visit worksites to hold discussions with staff.	✓	✗
Formal recognition of Reps in schools and paid union training leave.	✓	✗
Private businesses selling membership simply cannot claim the same industrial rights or equivalent legal recognition as the IEU.		

A recent decision by the QIRC held that the same business for nurses is not a trade union. Legislative change is underway in Qld to ensure that no organisation or company can misrepresent themselves as a union to employees or in dealings with employers.

Our union will also be raising our concerns with the new federal government about these groups who falsely claim to be unions in the federal jurisdiction.

As always, the most effective response to those seeking to undermine our collective strength will come from our activists and committed members – your powerful stories about the real meaning and purpose of union will make the difference.

## All IEU members deserve a workplace free from discrimination

IEU members must be provided with workplaces free from discrimination and which promote and protect the right to equality.

After much lobbying from the IEU, community groups and other unions, the *Religious Discrimination Bill* introduced by the previous LNP federal government was withdrawn from parliament in February 2022.

The bill would have expanded the special privileges afforded to religious organisations to discriminate against employees due to a personal attribute, treatment that would be deemed unlawful and discriminatory anywhere else in our community.



While the bill was withdrawn, IEU members are still experiencing discrimination at work due to the exemptions already provided to religious employers. An employee's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or pregnancy should never be used as a basis for an employer to 'lawfully discriminate'.

Our union is currently lobbying and campaigning to amend existing anti-discrimination legislation in order to ensure greater protections for our members in faith-based schools.

We need new federal legislation that:

- Protects all employees from discrimination, and that properly gives effect to Australia's international undertakings in respect of human rights.
- Consolidates existing federal legislation to provide for discrimination protections as part of a single, broad-based, federal human rights regimen.
- Introduces a positive duty on organisations to eliminate discrimination.
- Empowers the Fair Work Commission to deal with discrimination disputes by providing a free and impartial resolution service.
- Removes the special exemptions that allow religious institutions to discriminate.
- Provides clearer parameters for the use of any 'employee preference' requirements by employers as they relate to the religion of an employee working in a faith-based school.

The opportunity now exists for a new federal government to bring balance and equality to all workplaces and ensure employees are protected from discrimination regardless of their occupation.

## International solidarity and action

### Tonga volcanic eruption



On 15 January 2022, the Hunga Tonga submarine volcano erupted 60 kilometres north of Tongatapu, Tonga's main island. The eruption, which registered as hundreds of times more powerful than the first atomic bomb, triggered a tsunami that swept over Tonga's low-lying islands and reached Fiji, Vanuatu and many other areas along the Pacific rim.

Volcanic ash spread to the main Island of Tongatapu. Buildings, roads, airports, vegetation and food crops were covered with ash and debris. Tsunami waves swept over the small low lying islands. The tsunami waves destroyed everything in their path.

Tragically, four deaths were reported.

Most of the land area was covered by ash and debris, and power outages became a common occurrence. Most drinking water became polluted, with Tongans having relied on expensive bottled water for more than two months.

International communications and access to internet was interrupted due to extensive damage to undersea cables. Thus leaving the country isolated from the rest of the world and its own outlying islands.

In addition to this disaster, the country had to deal with its first-ever COVID-19 outbreak after getting its first cases from aid workers delivering humanitarian supplies.

The Friendly Island Teacher Association (FITA) offices were badly damaged, and the union was unable to make contact with its members to assess damage and their needs.

The **Council of Pacific Education** made immediate and initial financial contribution to help (FITA) purchase the supplies. With this support, FITA was able to return to providing services to its members.

However, more was required and the international union community of Education International joined together in solidarity to raise the necessary funds.

In February 2022, the **IEU Federal Executive** passed resolutions of solidarity to FITA and supported the donation of \$3000 to ensure much needed support to FITA members.

## Council of Pacific Education

### The impact of COVID on Pacific Island Countries (PICs)

The COVID19 global pandemic has seriously, severely and adversely disrupted the Pacific's well-being, its people lives, education system, health system and the economy. In financial terms it will cost the region trillions of dollars to repair countries.

Already among the most remote countries, Pacific Island nations saw their vital economic links collapsed with the evaporation of tourism, severe disruptions to international trade, and a reduction in remittances. For these countries, the COVID-19 pandemic may cut deeper than even some of the worst cyclones from past years.

### Vaccination coverage

Majority of PICs were expected to be fully vaccinated by 2022. Rising vaccination rates will help most Pacific economies recover from the effects of the pandemic by allowing the safe opening of borders and enabling a return to positive economic growth. Wider vaccination coverage permits progressive border reopening which is expected to boost trade and tourism, particularly in the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Vanuatu. Though the countries remain vulnerable and renewed outbreaks have slowed economic recovery.

### Reopening and rebuilding for a resilient recovery

Debt sustainability risks have risen as border closures and pauses in international tourism have resulted in wide government financing needs amid ongoing economic declines. With collapsing government revenues and increased spending needs to support health and countercyclical measures, public debt is seen to rise by more than 30 percentage points of GDP in the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Palau.

### Overlapping crisis

The pandemic combined with natural disasters and climate change, accelerated economic ruins that was already battered, bruised and struggling to get up and move on.

The existing gender inequalities are exacerbated during the pandemic and its economic catastrophe resulting in women and girls facing even higher rates of violence, sexual abuse and control from their husbands, partners and families, and violation of fundamental human rights.



**COPE Women's Network** webinar was held on 20 November 2020 indicated that women teachers in the region have been facing extraordinary challenges that have generated diverse approaches, experiences, reactions and responses. It was also noted that teachers, particularly women, have learnt that they are adaptable, flexible, resilient and courageous. Now they are exhausted by moving around from face-to-face learning and remote learning and trying to balance workload and family commitments as they have extra responsibilities while working from home.

The protection of human rights under new normal is a big challenge particularly in Fiji where human rights has been a contentious issue for a long time. Civil and political rights are being pushed aside and, in some cases, racism, social media hate speeches are being allowed to flourish.

### **Education retention and loss**

To make matters worse, this pandemic has threatened not just health, safety, livelihoods, and economic growth but caused school closure and unprecedented disruption of education in the Pacific region.



Governments temporarily closed schools and educational institutions to contain the spread of the pandemic, a decision that has impacted both student and teachers. Pandemic has exacerbated challenges and existing inequalities, but it has also shown new opportunities given the shift in learning from school to home.

Transition to online learning due to COVID-19 has revealed significant gaps in capacity among teachers and education administrators to manage the adoption of alternatives to physical schooling in all the countries of the Pacific, children in rural and remote schools have been missed.



### **Union activities**

With the support from COPE DC partners (AEU, IEUA, NZEI & NZPPTA) as well as EI, COPE organised regional and national capacity building workshops/activities for teacher women activists, young educators and trade union leaders in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tonga, Cook Islands and Fiji from 2019-2022.

COPE expanded its support to members during the 2 year pandemic, including:

1. Organising national and regional workshops
2. Organising and developing training materials
3. Research support
4. Union renewal initiatives drives and campaigns
5. Building capacity: union accounts and finance
6. Women empowerment program and research
7. Youth empowerment program and research
8. Natural disaster mitigation and solidarity action
9. EI/COPE resolutions
10. Dealing with union disputes.



In addition, there has been support provided jointly with Education International:

- Fiji: FTU/FTA – School Feeding Program to schools in the Coral Coast where majority of the parents lost their job due to COVID19.
- KUT: COVID19 response project funded by EI.
- SINTA (Solomon Is): COVID19 response project funded by EI.

There is a lot of work to repair our sister education unions across the Pacific.

**At the meeting of COPE Executive held in Nadi from 29 July 2022 – 2 August 2022, the following recommendations were endorsed.**

1. *Given the rising challenges in the Pacific region, provision of ongoing support to the affiliates of the Pacific Island Countries through COPE is recommended.*
2. *That the COPE Executives play a bigger role in the work of the region by reviewing the needs of the region; particularly those relating to trade union renewal and climate justice.*



## IEU Governance

The **IEU Federal Executive** continued to meet during the last 12 months using a combination of online and in-person meetings.

A considerable amount of the deliberations and work of the Federal Executive revolves around compliance requirements, good governance and financial management.

Executive Meeting agenda included the key areas of responsibilities and leadership of our federal union. Standing agenda items include:

- IEU financial reports and accounts
- Governance and employment matters pertaining to the Federal Office
- Reports from IEU Branches on significant disputes, wage outcomes, professional issues and sector negotiations
- Industrial relations reports and matters pertaining to IEU rules
- Reports from committees (Education, Industrial, Organising, Women and Equity)
- ACTU activities and campaigns relevant to our union
- International activities and solidarity actions
- Submissions to government, authorities, and professional bodies

### Thank you, Lyn Caton!



Lyn Caton's period of secondment from the NSW/ACT Branch to the Federal Office concluded on 15 July 2022.

The IEU notes with thanks and appreciation the significant contribution that Lyn provided to the operation of our union during her period of secondment. Your work supporting our committees, industrial and professional campaigns and the work of our various Branches was outstanding.

Thank you Lyn. Your relentless energy and drive are deeply appreciated!

### Federal office relocation

The federal office is in the process of relocating in conjunction with the new NSW/ACT Branch office in Deakin (ACT).

Storage facilities have been leased for the federal office files and equipment pending the finalisation of the refurbished NSW/ACT office.