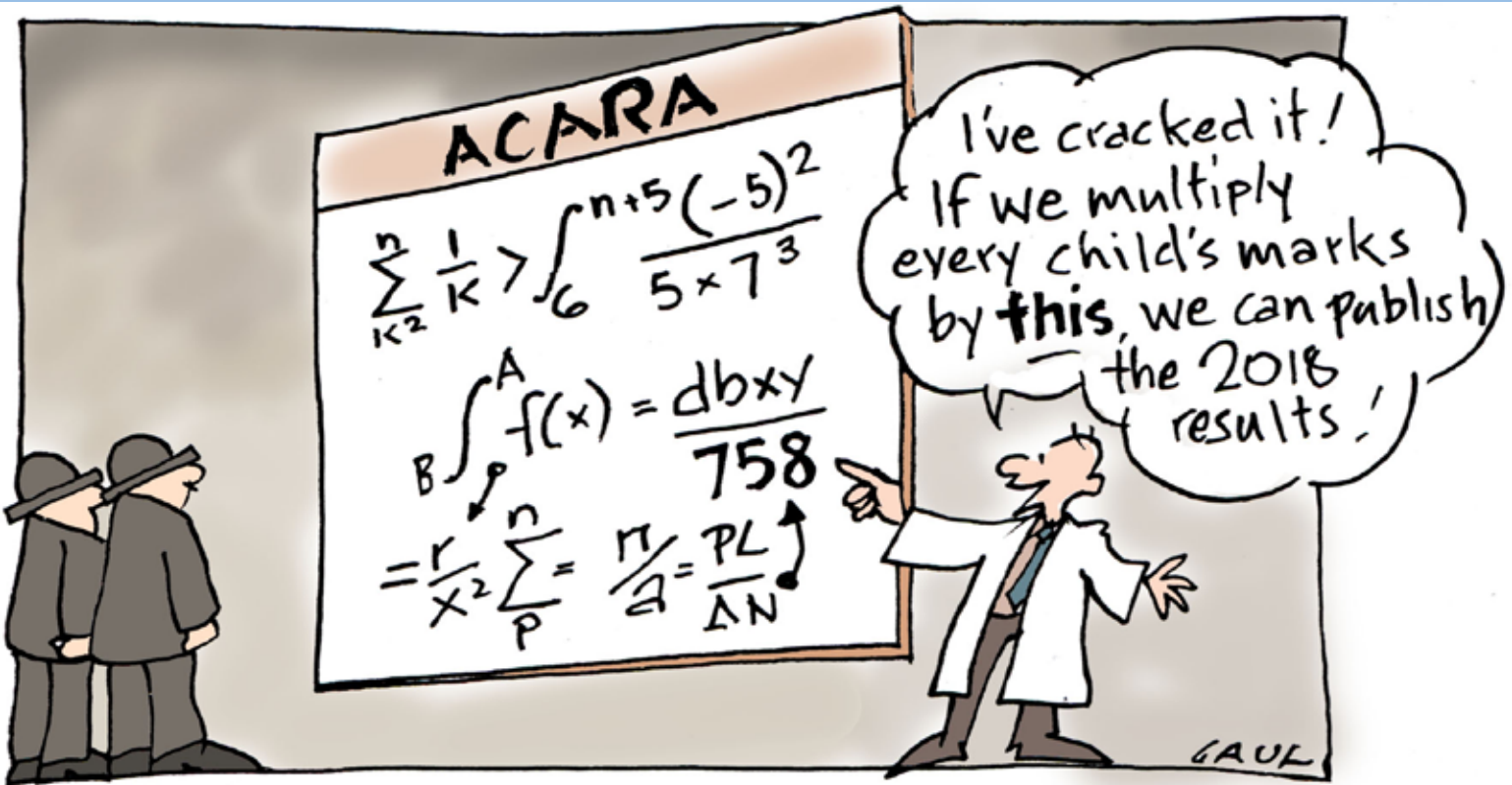




Territory Educator

The great NAPLAN debacle



Time to overhaul testing regime

Term 3 / 2018



Bob Skidmore retires



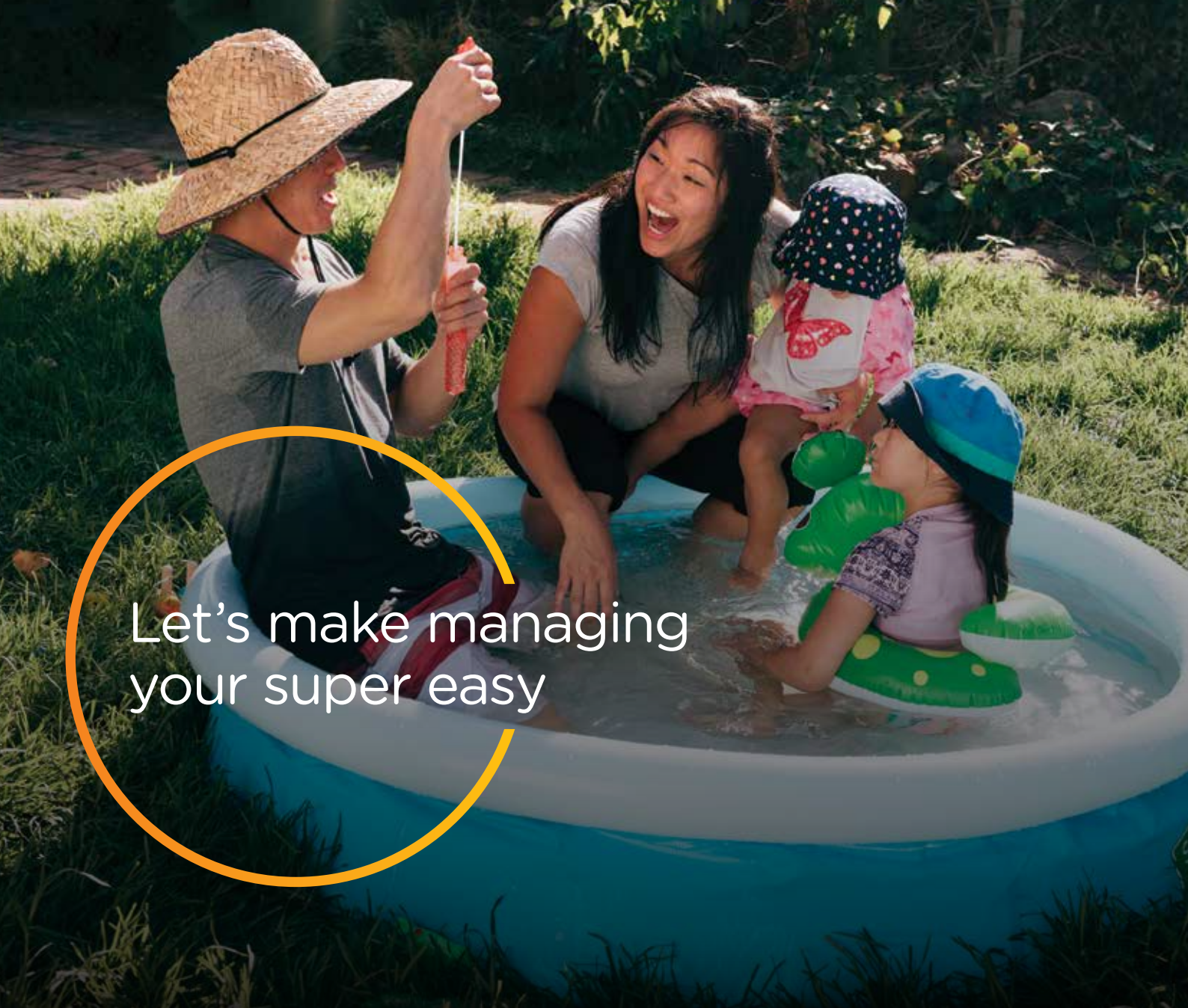
Organising remote staff



Teacher permanency



Applying for unpaid leave



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“ 2018 NAPLAN data is so flawed that it is of no practical use for teachers, students or parents. We need a full NAPLAN inquiry now. – Correna Haythorpe, AEU Federal President



Call for NAPLAN Overhaul

AEU and ACTU organisers on a recent visit to Arnhem Land

Deb Lamb, Nightcliff Middle School Rep

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Submissions and photographs to Territory Educator are always welcome and should be directed to admin@aeunt.org.au

AEU NT Branch News



Branch Executive

2018 Branch Executive members

Branch President.....	Jarvis Ryan
Branch Secretary.....	Adam Lampe
Vice President (General)....	Stephen Pelizzo (Borroloola School)
Vice President (TAFE)	Delean Holtze (Batchelor Institute)
Treasurer.....	Julie Danvers (Casuarina Senior College)
Women's Officer.....	Alyson Kavanagh
Indigenous Councillor	Cassandra Brown (Nhulunbuy Primary)
Arnhem.....	Melody O'Meara (Ramingining School) Michael Stimpson (Nhulunbuy Primary)
Alice Springs.....	Paula Thornton (Gillen Primary) Carly Phillips (Centralian Middle)
Barkly.....	Dennis Venning (Tennant Creek High)
Darwin.....	Bruce Cameron (Darwin High) Anthony Brereton (Ludmilla Primary) Barry George (Darwin Middle)
Katherine.....	Peter Corke (Katherine Education Office)
PARR.....	Glynis Hester (Bees Creek Primary) Linda Hyland (Taminmin College)

AEU NT staff

Branch President.....	Jarvis Ryan
Branch Secretary.....	Adam Lampe
Administration Manager	Kelly Whitty
Special Projects Officer.....	Mick McCarthy
Organisers	Tim Davis Frank , Alyson Kavanagh

Recognising and rewarding Nominations open for the Arthur Hamilton Award

This is your chance to celebrate an AEU member who is making an outstanding contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The Arthur Hamilton Award commemorates the achievements of Arthur Hamilton, a Palawa man who was active in promoting cross-cultural awareness, recognition of Indigenous peoples and the right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to access a high quality public education.

The winner will receive a \$1500 prize and will be flown to Melbourne to accept the Award at the annual Federal Conference of the AEU in February 2019. All nominees will receive a certificate from the AEU.

Get nominating!

Download your nomination form at:

www.aeufederal.org.au/our-work/indigenous.

Alternatively, request one from Suzanne Lowndes:

(03) 9693 1800 slowndes@aeufederal.org.au

Closing date for nominations is Friday 9 November 2018

Find out more

Visit aeufederal.org.au/our-work/indigenous

or contact AEU Federal Secretary,

Susan Hopgood: aeu@aeufederal.org.au



The 2017 Arthur Hamilton Award went to Literature Production Centre (LPC) at Yirrkala School. Winner of the 2017 Arthur Hamilton Award, Literature Production Centre (LPC) at Yirrkala School. The Award was presented by Correna Haythorpe Federal President AEU (left), to R arriwuy Marika (centre) and Yalmay Yunupiju (from the LPC team), at the 2018 AEU Federal Conference.



Canberra **farce** continues

When the dust settled after the Liberal Party's bitter infighting last month, we had a new Prime Minister. There was some hope that with Scott Morrison at the helm, this government might be able to reset some of its priorities.

But it quickly became clear that when it comes to education, this government hasn't changed. It is sticking with an approach that favours private schools and harms Australia's most disadvantaged students.

Morrison installed a new Education Minister, Dan Tehan, and made his first job repairing relations with Catholic schools. The Catholic school lobby was unhappy with the deal they got under last year's "Gonski 2.0" funding model.

Within days of Tehan's appointment, news leaked of Catholic schools being allocated an additional \$4.4 billion in funding over the next decade. This was prompted by fears among Liberal MPs in marginal seats that alienating the Catholic sector could cost them at the election.

Too bad there doesn't appear to be similar concern about how the new funding model affects children in the public school sector, which educates more than two thirds of all children in Australia (and 75% of kids in the NT).

This model caps federal spending on public schools at 20% of the minimum resourcing standard, with state and territory governments expected to make up the rest. For the NT that means our public schools will see their federal funding cut over the next decade.

States and territories are expected to sign up to this new model before the end of the year. The AEU will continue to challenge these funding arrangements through our Fair Funding Now campaign (if you haven't already done so, I urge you to sign up online as a supporter at fairfundingnow.org.au).

To make matters worse, the federal government is trying to make its funding conditional on jurisdictions agreeing to implement sweeping changes in areas such as assessment, via a binding agreement.

The National School Reform Agreement (NERA) has been negotiated behind closed doors by education bureaucrats for many months. The AEU has seen a draft of the



President Jarvis Ryan meets with new Education Minister Selena Uibo

agreement, which foreshadows major changes to curriculum and assessment, without any intention of consulting with the teaching profession or considering workload and other implications.

We expect a proposal to go before the Education Council, a meeting of all education ministers, this month. The AEU NT has called on our new Education Minister, Selena Uibo, to join with other ministers in rejecting any agreement that is based on a top down approach rather than consultation and partnership.

We do not want the NT locked into a restrictive agreement that reduces funding and contains unachievable requirements. The Territory needs to be able to find our own way, one that suits our unique characteristics and the needs of our students.

At a bare minimum, Territory public schools need to get their fair share of federal funding. We also need a genuine partnership between the federal and Territory governments on how to improve student outcomes over the long term.

I can't see any way that will happen while this federal government remains in office. The countdown to the election continues...

Still plenty to do on teacher job security

The Permanency Project has been an important step but is yet to have the desired impact, writes Jarvis Ryan

In Term 4 last year the Department of Education launched the Permanency Project for Classroom Teachers. This project was the result of extensive pressure from the AEU to reduce the excessive use of fixed period contract employment in schools.

By late last year about 46% of CTs were employed on contract. In all regions except Darwin and Palmerston, more than half of CTs were fixed period employees.

Data provided to us by the Department in May last year identified about 500 CT positions that could be filled on an ongoing (permanent) basis. The stated goal is that in an average school about 80% of teachers would be ongoing.

A year on, it's possible to draw some conclusions about the impact of the Permanency Project.

Firstly, the good news: at the time of writing, 215 teachers have been made permanent employees. That's a big win for those teachers and for their schools.

The bad news is that the overall rate of contract employment has remained stubbornly high – more than 40%. As the table shows, the number of teachers on contract has fallen. But so too has the total number of Classroom Teachers employed by the Department.

The reason for the fall in overall numbers could be that some schools are either unable to fill vacancies or retain teachers. The AEU has heard anecdotally that this is a problem in many schools.

Another issue preventing a bigger fall in the proportion of contract employment is teacher turnover, a perennial problem in the NT. Because the default mode of employment on appointment

Employment status	Nov 2017	May 2018	Change
Fixed Period	885	777	-108
Ongoing	1054	1122	68
Total	1939	1899	-40
% Fixed Period	45.7%	40.9%	

Classroom Teachers – Permanent vs Contract

has become fixed period, as permanent teachers resign they are almost always replaced by contract employees.

Senior officers of the Department have conceded that the Permanency Project has not had the desired impact. As a next step, the Chief Executive is convening a meeting of departmental officers and key stakeholders in September to identify further measures to attract and retain teachers, in line with the Education NT Strategic Plan.

The AEU views this as an important opportunity to reshape current thinking about employment practices within the Department. Quite simply, the NT is facing a teacher shortage and the incentives the Department offers will need to be expanded to attract and retain teachers.

AEU officers will continue to work with the Department on projects and initiatives to maximise permanent employment opportunities. Some of these proposals are already agreed in principle. They include:

- Offering more positions as permanent on appointment (subject to probation)
- Allowing teachers to be assessed centrally by HR as suitable for ongoing employment
- Setting up a transfer system by next year to facilitate teacher movement
- “Unattaching” teachers from their school after they have been out of their substantive position for two years

We encourage sub-branches to be proactive about discussing permanency with your principal and ensuring that opportunities are forthcoming where there is capacity. If you believe that your school has greater capacity to offer permanency and is not doing so, contact the AEU office.

School Profile: Umbakumba School

Making school **great** on Groote

The vast majority of Umbakumba School students speak Anindilyakwan and for most, the first time they encounter English in their daily lives is when they start attending school.

We have worked hard to build a strong relationship with the community through open days, Back to School marches, community BBQs, creating a school Facebook page for the sharing of information, and through implementing an open door policy, whereby families, community members and stakeholders are always welcome to come to school to join in activities or classes, bring suggestions or ideas, or just chat.

We have strengthened relationships with our neighbouring schools on the Eylandt this year through combined PD days, a group project on implementing the new Digital Technologies learning area into the curriculum, and through weekly interschool sport, held every Friday at Alyangula Area School.

Weekly sport has been a wonderful success, and very well supported by other sporting organisations including Bush Fit Mob and East Arnhem Regional Council Youth Sport and Rec officers. Not only has it been a great opportunity for our students to experience a variety of different sports each week, but it has also been an excellent way for students to build on their teamwork and strengthen their relationships with students from other schools.

We have been lucky to have some excellent engagement from different stakeholder groups in the community including Bush Fit Mob, who visit our school every Tuesday for sport; the EON Foundation, who have commenced building a school garden with our students; the Polly Farmer Foundation, who deliver an afterschool program and boarding school assistance to students; the FAST program (Families and Schools Together) which builds the capacity of a team of local community members to independently deliver a weekly program based on empowering parents to be active participants in fun and engaging learning activities with their children; and the Groote Eylandt Language Centre who have started an Anindilyakwan language program in our school, utilising the extensive knowledge of some of our community members to help deliver the program.

Our FaFT program has an excellent relationship with the East Arnhem Regional Council through the use of a shared building on school grounds and all FaFT and crèche staff working collaboratively together to deliver a quality program to all children attending the service. FaFT and crèche also have a great relationship with the Top End Health Service



Parents, teachers and students at Alyarrmandumanja Umbakumba School

Outreach team and have worked collaboratively to create beautiful books about healthy lifestyle choices, with pictures drawn by FaFT mums. They also worked together to hold Umbakumba's first ever Dads and Father Figures event which brought twelve dads in to the FaFT building for a special evening of games and a healthy meal.

Over late 2017 and into 2018 we began moving away from Direct Instruction at the community's request, and into LANE and Employment Pathways curriculum frameworks. This has allowed us to become even more creative and innovative in the programs we deliver at school. Teachers have also been implementing engaging project-based learning programs including building remote control electronic cars and furniture in the boys' class and learning about creating programs and broadcasting on local radio in the girls' class.

Irene Singleton

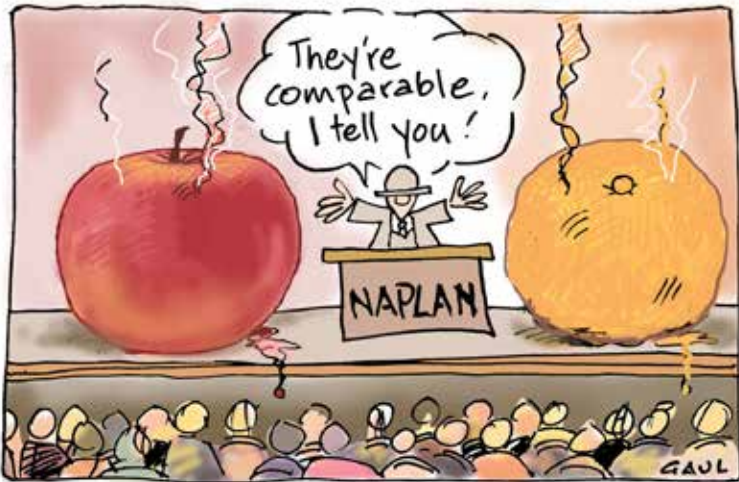
AEU NT member and Principal

Tell us about your school

Each issue the Territory Educator will highlight the work being done by our public schools. Please let us know if you'd like your school to be profiled by emailing admin@aeunt.org.au.

Online **debacle** calls NAPLAN into question

The online fiasco shows an overhaul of Australia's national testing regime is overdue, writes Jarvis Ryan



NAPLAN results were released at the end of August to immediate controversy over whether the test results were valid.

About one fifth of the million students who sat NAPLAN this year did so online. Even before the results were released, questions were asked as to whether genuine comparisons could be made between the results of students who sat the traditional pen and paper test and those who did so in the new online format.

The release of this year's NAPLAN results was delayed as ACARA and state and territory officials argued over whether the results could be compared. As it turned out, the release of the results showed that there were significant discrepancies in some parts of the test, particularly the writing section of the test.

This ran directly counter to assurances from ACARA CEO Robert Randall, who had assured parents in an open letter in May this year: "Regardless of whether your child takes NAPLAN online or on paper, the results will be comparable with those of other students and from previous years."

Not satisfied with ACARA's assurances, the AEU decided to commission our own review conducted by internationally-renowned expert Dr Les Perelman. The review was damning:

"The design and execution of the 2018 NAPLAN make it so flawed that its results are of very limited use to students, teachers, parents, and schools. Because the CAT [online] and P&P [pen and paper] tests are not comparable, posting results in the My School database would be inappropriate and misleading. In addition, comparison of 2018 results with those of prior years is, for the most part, a futile exercise.

"The CAT and P&P Tests are of unknown comparability, and because the composition of the P&P test items has been modified, any comparison of the test with prior years' results has been compromised.

"The only part of the 2018 NAPLAN suitable for longitudinal comparison is the P&P writing task, which, itself, has many defects. In sum, the 2018 NAPLAN results should be discarded."

The AEU had warned ACARA and the federal government of our concerns for months, but our warnings were ignored.

In the wake of this latest debacle, we have reiterated our calls for a full, independent review of NAPLAN. Several state ministers have made this call through the national Education Council, and our Branch leadership has called on our new Minister Selena Uibo to join this call.

We are engaged in ongoing discussions with the Minister and our Department's Chief Executive, Vicki Baylis, about the plan for the NT to transition online.

No NT students sat the online version of the test this year, however the Department has commenced "readiness trials" for approximately 45 schools to offer the online test next year.

The AEU is not opposed to the readiness trials, as they provide an opportunity for a range of schools, especially in remote settings, to demonstrate to ACARA the multiple challenges our schools face, such as bandwidth and hardware issues.

In the wake of the most recent fiasco, we would harbor grave concerns about a "dual track" approach in 2019 which would likely replicate the problems we have seen on the national stage this year.

Rather than rushing ahead to a so-called newer, better version of NAPLAN, we believe it's well past time for a considered evaluation of NAPLAN. That is the message the AEU will continue to push.



Members voted at a recent meeting of the Palmerston Regional Council to oppose the shift to NAPLAN online

Our policy on NAPLAN

In September last year our Branch Executive adopted the following stance on NAPLAN online. This position was endorsed by our Branch Conference in May this year.

The AEU NT strongly endorses the decision of the AEU Federal Executive to withdraw the AEU's support for the introduction of NAPLAN online and to lobby federal, state and territory ministers to abandon its development and implementation.

We call on the federal and NT governments to put the needs of students first and not engage any further in the rollout of NAPLAN online because it is educationally unsound and will significantly disadvantage students and schools across the Territory by:

- reinforcing existing inequity because of unequal access to computer technology (including insufficient ICT hardware and inadequate bandwidth) for students from lower socio-economic, regional and remote communities;
- inappropriately requiring children in the early years of schooling to complete online NAPLAN testing;
- further adding pressure on teachers to teach to the test, including developing and implementing NAPLAN online preparation programs addressing student ICT skills for the specific purpose of undertaking online testing;
- distorting the curriculum in early primary including students' developing of handwriting and attainment of core language and mathematical skills due to unnecessary emphasis on acquiring ICT competency in order to sit the test;
- seeking to introduce computer-based marking of students' written prose responses, and
- disrupting the educational program of schools for the duration of the two-week testing period.

We note that the decision to withdraw support for NAPLAN online is one element of a broader concern about the negative impacts on public education of NAPLAN. Consistent with longstanding AEU policy on the use of standardised testing in our schools, we again highlight the unacceptable impacts of NAPLAN, including:

- the narrowing of the curriculum and the loss of quality teaching time to focus on test preparation and delivery;
- the illegitimate judgement about student achievement and school performance, including league tables, based on a point in time test with unacceptably large margins of error which does not genuinely capture student learning progress;
- the inappropriateness of this test for our large Indigenous student cohort, for whom the tests represent a blunt instrument failing to take into account cultural and language barriers;
- the stress and anxiety experienced by students and school staff because of the high stakes nature of the test;
- the undermining of the professional knowledge, practice, and judgement of teachers in terms of assessing student learning and implementing teaching and learning programs that effectively support student achievement;
- the linking of NAPLAN results with the achievement of any other certification; and
- the increasing use of NAPLAN results to inform the funding of our schools.

The AEU NT Branch will continue to work with other AEU Branches and associated bodies through the AEU Federal Executive to develop and implement a range of strategies to ensure that NAPLAN online does not proceed in the context of continuing to identify the broader problems of the standardised testing regime.

Striving for **equity** for remote Indigenous staff

The AEU is committed to improving the working conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers, writes Tim Davis Frank



Alison Wunungmurra, Cynthia Wunungmurra, Dennis Wanambi and Glenda Garrawurra are assistant teachers and support staff at Gulun (Lake Evella) School

Unions have a long history of working with Indigenous Australians to help them secure rights and fair treatment.

Union members walked alongside Indigenous people during the 1965 equal pay case, the 1967 referendum, and in the Territory during the Wave Hill Walk Off.

The AEU is continuing this tradition by working with our allies in the trade union movement to raise awareness among Aboriginal people living in remote communities about their entitlements as workers and the benefits of union membership.

Schools are one of the few sources of employment opportunities for people living in remote communities. Indigenous people are typically employed in a variety of roles in schools both urban and remote – as linguists, assistant teachers, groundskeepers and bus drivers to name a few – however their employment status and conditions are often inferior to the Department's core workforce.

As a union committed to equity, the AEU has made it a priority to improve the conditions of Indigenous people working in education. This thinking informed a resolution arising from our 2018 Branch Conference:

That AEU officers meet (in person or remotely) with Aboriginal Assistant Teachers, Education Workers and Tutors in both urban and remote schools, to listen to their concerns and document their disparate roles and working conditions, with a view to running a targeted campaign to recruit them to this Union and fight for their rights to secure and equitable employment.

To this end, AEU Organisers recently visited 13 schools and workplaces across Arnhem Land to gather more information. Our team was accompanied by Lara Watson and Wayne Costelloe from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). The ACTU has set up the First Nations Workers Alliance to improve the conditions of Indigenous people forced into the CDP program (see accompanying article).

AEU NT organisers spoke with school principals and staff about a range of issues, including working conditions, school funding, employment of Indigenous teachers and administration staff, key educational outcomes and challenges, successful education delivery models and how the union can better support schools and their staff.

In addition to these conversations, principals and assistant principals were asked to complete a short survey looking at Indigenous employment in their schools.

What we found is that Indigenous Australians working in schools in Arnhem Land have different rights and entitlements depending on their mode of employment.

Many are employed in casual positions by school councils, and have no rights to holiday pay, personal leave or the other conditions as negotiated by our union under NT public sector (NTPS) enterprise agreements. They are instead governed by a basic award that is equivalent to the minimum wage.

In many of our conversations with local Indigenous staff, it was clear that there are barriers to communicating the conditions of their employment, even if it is the minimum wage award. These conversations also reveal that many local staff working



The AEU and ACTU hosted a community barbecue for Galiwin'ku residents

in schools are undertaking a vast range of jobs and that their responsibilities are often not clearly defined.

All employees we spoke to expressed desire for more certainty relating to their employment. It appears that educating Indigenous workers about their rights, perhaps in their first language, is required to help them understand their employment rights and responsibilities.

Indigenous staff also spoke to us at length about professional development opportunities and access to training for their families. With the uncertainty surrounding the Batchelor Institute and reviews of the services offered by CDU, it is not clear how training and development of Indigenous Australian employees will continue and help build community capacity.

AEU officers will present the information gathered on our recent trip to the Department of Education and the Education Minister to provide a clearer picture of Indigenous employment in remote communities. We are hopeful this work will help lead to improvements in employment practices, especially more opportunities for school council employees to be converted to NTPS conditions.



Organiser Tim Davis Frank with Wayne Costelloe from the ACTU, AEU NT Indigenous Councillor Cassandra Brown and Lara Watson, ACTU Indigenous Officer



Uniting to demand justice

The First Nations Workers Alliance (FNWA) works like a union for Indigenous people in remote areas undertaking work for the dole activities, referred to as the CDP, or Community Development Program.

CDP program participants are not treated as employees and therefore have none of the basic working entitlements that other employees enjoy. They are paid at below the award rate, have no rights to any form of leave and are not covered by workers compensation law.

Consider these statistics: those under the CDP are forced to work up to three times longer than city-based jobseekers to receive welfare payments. Since July 2015, less than 3500 Indigenous participants found full-time or part-time work lasting six months or more. CDP workers have 70 times the financial penalties imposed upon them than non-remote dole workers.

Fines for missing activities under the CDP – which covers a tiny fraction of the population – account for more than half the total penalties across the entire welfare system.

Unions are giving a voice to Indigenous people under the CDP through the FNWA, a new organisation campaigning to end the CDP and replace it with a program that works for Indigenous people rather than oppressing them.

The AEU NT recently affiliated with FNWA and invited FNWA organisers to join our team on our recent Arnhem Land visit.

Visit fnwa.org.au to find out more including how you can support the Alliance.



Ramingining students, winners of the Arnhem Sports Shield, take a break in the shade



Mathias Gaykamangu (right) leading the way with his great sportsmanship

Remote students making **giant** strides

The Arnhem Sports carnival is a unique opportunity for students from across the region to showcase skills and sportsmanship, writes Metui Tongatua

Student athletes from Arnhem region schools gathered in Maningrida earlier this term to challenge for the Arnhem Sports Shield, and bragging rights for the next 12 months.

Arnhem Sports is an annual event created many years ago by Indigenous educators in Community Education Centres throughout Arnhem as a way for students to compete with one another.

The event, which has a different host school each year, was held in Maningrida this year and featured Maningrida, Yurrwi, Ramingining and for the first time, Warruwi, which combined with Gulun (Lake Evella), itself returning to the Arnhem Sports arena after many years' absence.

Students participated in various track and field events as well as volleyball and basketball. While talent (along with strong attendance and positive behaviour) brought everyone to Arnhem Sports, it was the sportsmanship shown throughout the week that kept everyone watching.

Each and every team official and school should be congratulated on the excellence shown in terms of sportsmanship – it was a beautiful thing to be a part of.

A highlight of mine, along with many others, was the conduct of Mathias Gaykamangu (u/14), who had dominated each of his events, including the 100m in which he ran in under 12 seconds (11.17s). That was until the 200m.

For this event, he chose to run next to his competitor for the whole race, ensuring a tied finish, in what was described as one of the “best things ever seen” by several onlookers. When asked why he did what he did, Mathias said, “I was worried for him because he was smaller” (see the accompanying photo!). It was a beautiful thing to see, and made me so proud to be his coach and teacher.

The final day of the competition saw the presentation ceremony. The first announcement was the selections for the NT Championships for the Arnhem Team. Two Maningrida students, four Yurrwi students and a whopping 14 Ramingining students were chosen to represent the Arnhem team.

I feel fortunate to be coaching the Arnhem team at the State Champs this month along with colleagues Atnas Maeko, Jonelle Heacock, Anthony Watterson and Abby Caldwell.

The final award presented was the Arnhem Sports shield, which went to Ramingining, who just beat out Yurrwi for first place. The sportsmanship continued after the announcement, with the extremely excited Ramingining students electing to shake their competitors' hands before getting the trophy.

Overall the event was fantastic, and in my opinion, the best-run Arnhem Sports in my time involved. The students had an absolute blast!

Congratulations are due to Jo Killmister and the Maningrida staff who have set a high standard. And as always, thanks Brandon Bull and the team at School Sport NT, whose continued support of these remote students has provided them a pathway that they may not have thought existed before.

'Permanency means I can plan for my future'

We've asked some members to share their stories about why permanency matters to them.

The Permanency Project initiative was designed to retain teachers in all parts of the Northern Territory by offering secure employment. To date 215 teachers have been offered ongoing employment since Term 4 last year.



When my son graduated I went back to contract teaching in 2014. I was teaching for four years before I was offered permanency at Walungurru School in 2017. Also known as Kintore, this is a small community about 500km west of Alice Springs.



*Jenny O'Reilly,
Tennant Creek High School*

How long had you been on contract prior to receiving your offer of permanency?

I had been on a contract since the start of 2015.

How did you find the processes involved in gaining your permanency?

Really straightforward – thanks to my principal for facilitating the process and the staff members who supported my application.

What does it mean to you to have security of employment?

I love the community I live in and want to be part of it long-term. I've made connections with people around the town over the past few years and this week I have got many hugs and congratulations as I've shared the news of my permanent appointment. So, in a way it really feels like I can make this place my home and plan for my future financially too, which is very important to me.



*Amanda Pehi,
Walungurru School*

How long had you been on contract prior to receiving your offer of permanency?

I started my teaching career in the Territory back in 2009. I taught for four years on contract and in 2012 I stopped contract work and did relief teaching for a few years while my son went to high school.

How did you find the processes involved in gaining your permanency?

My understanding from what I was told by my previous bosses is that the Department had stopped giving out permanency and teachers who held permanent positions in the school still held their positions whether they moved back interstate or overseas. I know the union was fighting for this and this may be the reason I now have my position.

My process was simple: my current principal told me that there was a permanent position coming up and that I should apply for it. I applied for the position and a few weeks later was told I was successful. I would like to thank my current principal Gaby Bennett for giving me this opportunity.

What does it mean to you to have security of employment?

This is what a lot of us educators seek. I think if more permanent positions were on offer we wouldn't see such a high turnover in community schools. We need stability for not only us and our families but for our children in these communities.

For me personally as a single mother this is a huge relief as two of my children are moving overseas and this way I know I will still be able to support them, as well as supporting my youngest who is on his journey to become an educator in the Northern Territory.

Tell us about your story

We'd like to feature more stories of teachers becoming more permanent and what it means to them. If you'd like to be featured, email us: admin@aeunt.org.au.

Membership fees proposal



We are making some tweaks to simplify our member fee structure. Feedback from members is sought before final changes are approved.

Our Branch Executive and annual Conference both recently endorsed a proposal to make some changes to categories of membership and the calculation of membership fees from the beginning of 2019.

These are minor changes that are not designed to increase union revenue, but rather to: (1) reduce the number of membership categories to make it easier administratively to collect and adjust membership fees; and (2) ensure that membership fees are set at a fair and reasonable level based on a member's typical financial circumstances.

Before the Branch Executive gives final approval to any changes, the proposal is being circulated to members for feedback. You are welcome to contact the union office with any queries or concerns.

For the vast majority of members – teachers and VET lecturers – there will be no change. Your fees will continue to be pegged at 0.88% of your gross annual salary.

Proposed Fee Structure

Teachers, VET lecturers and senior administrators

For NTPS teachers (including senior teachers and principals), TAFE members and any members covered by the NTPS General Agreement at A05 level or above, fees will continue to be set at 0.88% of gross annual salary. All membership fees will be capped at a maximum equivalent to ST5 level.

School support staff

For eligible school and classroom support staff (A02-A04), fees will be pegged at 0.88% of the gross salary of an A03 increment 1 employee (current annual fees would be \$552 based on salary of \$62,773).

Assistant teachers

For NTPS Assistant Teachers, fees will be pegged at 0.44% of an AT1 salary (current annual fees would be \$205 based on salary of \$46,606).

Relief teachers

For Relief Teachers, fees will be pegged at one quarter of a CT9 salary (current annual fees would be \$220 based on CT9 salary of \$100,104).

School Council employees

For eligible staff employed by School Councils (ISAs, casual ATs), annual membership shall be set at \$100.

Associate members

For Associate members (members on unpaid leave, and those members who have resigned or retired and wish to remain an association with the AEU), fees will be set at 10% of the level of a CT9 (current fees would be \$88). Associate members shall enjoy all the same rights as financial members except the right to vote and hold elected positions.

Student members

Student members shall continue to be entitled to Associate membership at no cost.

Pro rata fees

Members employed part-time will continue to be able to pay fees at a fractional rate in line with their employment (e.g. fees to be paid at 50% of the full rate for a member working 0.5).

Paid and unpaid leave

Members on extended paid leave (e.g. study leave, long service leave and parental leave) shall be expected to continue to pay fees at the normal rate. If the leave is at half pay, payments shall be reduced to half the ordinary rate. Members on extended unpaid leave shall be entitled to Associate membership, ensuring they continue to be eligible for assistance from the union office.

Feedback

Feedback from members on the proposed amendments is welcome and must be directed to the Secretary, Adam Lampe, by 19 October 2018.

It's about time: new CDU enterprise agreement

Delaying tactics in bargaining saved the university a lot of money, but VET members will soon see pay increases, writes Adam Lampe

Twenty months after its current enterprise agreement expired on 31 December 2016, Charles Darwin University has finally reached a new agreement with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the AEU NT.

Why did it take so long? And, is the new agreement any good? The answer to the second question provides a beginning of an answer to the first.

The new agreement would have been terrific if it had been reached 12 months ago. The pay increases, outlined below, would have been implemented earlier, and employees would not have had to wait over a year and a half for a pay rise (CDU employees' last increase was a \$600 lump sum payment on 1 October 2016).

The current offer keeps CDU workers in the upper half of salaries in the national university sector. Yet, having delayed negotiations for a year, the University saved itself hundreds of thousands of dollars in salary increases.

For the whole of 2017, whatever bargaining meetings occurred during that time, the employer was not genuinely trying to reach an agreement. In other words, it was not bargaining in good faith.

Unfortunately, under current industrial legislation, an employer cannot be leveraged into bargaining based on the good faith principle. In fact, there is little employees can do under the Fair Work Act to force an employer to the bargaining table.

Employers such as universities eventually get around to negotiating EAs in order to be competitive within their sector. If, for example, CDU only offered Award pay and conditions, the minimum legal pay and conditions for the sector, it would have few people willing to be employed under such conditions.

The university finally got serious about reaching an agreement about six months ago, but it has saved itself a pile of money due to its delaying tactics.

As it stands, AEU NT members in CDU's VET sector have done relatively well out of the new agreement. The NTEU,



Some long-delayed Christmas cheer for CDU staff at last

to its credit, sacrificed increases for higher-paid members so that lower income workers could get a better deal.

The other big win for VET lecturers is the introduction of contingency ongoing employment, which will replace much of the fixed period employment rife in VET and allow for greater job security for VET staff.

New CDU pay increases

This Agreement provides for the following salary increases, which will be paid in the first available pay period on or after the following:

	9 Aug 2018*	1 Sept 2019	1 Sept 2020	1 June 2021
Professional Level 1-9	2.26%	1.5%	2.15%	2.5%
Professional Level 10	1.76%	1.25%	1.7%	2.4%
Academic Level A and B	2.26%	1.5%	2.15%	2.5%
Academic Level C	1.76%	1.25%	1.7%	2.4%
Academic D and E	1%	0.75%	0.75%	1.5%

* 9 August 2018 increase is payable upon successful employee vote.

Applying for **unpaid** leave

At some point in your career you may need to apply for unpaid leave. It's important to understand how the process works.

Can I access special leave without pay (SLWOP)?

Leave without pay is available to permanent employees, however it is not an entitlement and is provided at the discretion of the employer. Employees normally require at least five years of service with the Department of Education to have an extended SLWOP application approved considered. For school-based employees SLWOP will normally be granted for a term, a semester or a school year. In such instances, the leave will include the period of school closure immediately following the term, semester or school year.

What if I have less than five years' service?

Employees with less than five years' service may apply for SLWOP on compassionate grounds, however supporting documentation is usually required. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, employees must have used all appropriate available leave credits (e.g. recreation leave, long service leave and special remote study leave) prior to applying for SLWOP.

Can I access any other entitlements whilst on SLWOP?

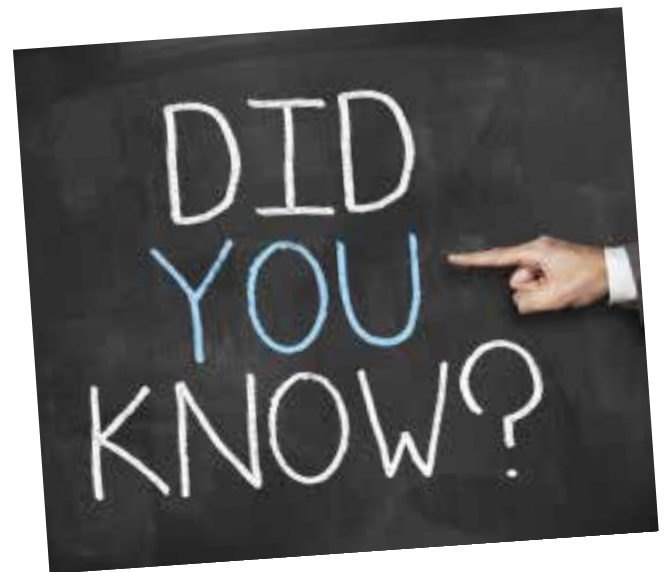
Employees are not permitted to access accrued entitlements or any conditions of service, except in the case of school-based employees who can only utilise their accrued recreation leave and stand-down during the December/January school holidays. SLWOP will be broken to accommodate these entitlements.

Is SLWOP counted as service?

No – it does not count as service for any purpose, meaning employees do not accrue any other forms of leave whilst on unpaid leave.

What about stand down periods?

Taking SLWOP adjacent to a stand down period or public holiday may also affect your entitlement to be paid for that period. Contact the AEU office to check carefully before lodging your application – we have had cases of members being unpaid for four weeks because they took a single day of unpaid leave adjacent to a stand down period.



Can I undertake other work while on leave?

The NTPS Code of Conduct requires all NT public servants to seek approval from their Chief Executive to undertake work with another employer. If this is why you are seeking leave, you should state this on your application. The Department will not approve applications for SLWOP to work in the non-government school sector.

What if I want to return to work early?

Returning to work prior to the date stated on your original application is entirely at the discretion and convenience of the Department. For school-based employees, this would normally be at the beginning of a term, semester or school year. For this reason, you should be careful about applying for an extended period of unpaid leave, as you may not be able to return sooner if your circumstances change.

How do I apply for SLWOP?

You will first need to discuss the need for leave with your manager or principal. Where possible, this should be done at least three months before the leave is intended to be taken, or as soon as possible if applying on compassionate grounds. Depending on the length of the period of leave being applied for, approval will also be required by senior managers within DoE.

What is considered when approving SLWOP?

Multiple factors will be considered when approving an application. Typically, so-called business need is balanced against employee wellbeing. Applications made on compassionate grounds are the most likely to be successful.

Sub-branch Rep Profile:

Deb Lamb, Nightcliff Middle School

Deb is a proud union rep, having been in the role in both NT and WA. Deb moved to the NT in 2011 and joined the AEU NT. She teaches year 9 at Nightcliff Middle School and has also taught at the VET sector.

How do you view your role of sub-branch president?

I have very strong views about integrity and fairness in the teaching profession and in our public schools, so for me, union membership not only protects our rights at work, but allows teachers to harness the power of collective bargaining to campaign for improved workplace conditions, job security and fair pay. I see my role as sub-branch president as two-fold; firstly, to support teachers through information sharing and feeding back information from conference and regional council meetings and secondly, to be supportive of teachers' concerns and accessing support from the AEU NT office.

What aspects of being a sub-branch president do you like?

I am incredibly lucky at Nightcliff Middle School. Almost all of our leadership team, teachers and support staff are union members, and this means any issues are dealt with in a really supportive and timely manner.



What tips do you have for new sub-branch presidents?

Support neophyte and new teachers to understand the protections the union offers members, especially in relation to permanency and teacher responsibility guidelines. Ask for advice and support from existing members at your school if you need help, most people are willing to give you a hand, especially if you are new to the role. Also, access support from your regional council and the AEU NT team. They are there to help and are always willing to answer questions and will go the extra mile for members.



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Upskilling our sub-branch reps

Sub-branches are key to improving our working conditions in schools. Training for the dedicated people that take on union roles in schools will ensure they have the skills to help colleagues in their schools with the day to day industrial issues that arise.



Sub-branch rep training in Darwin

AEU NT Organisers Tim Davis Frank and Alyson Kavanagh recently ran training sessions in Darwin and Alice Springs. On the agenda were discussions

around the role of a workplace rep, the legal protection for people in that role, assisting your colleagues and how to run effective sub-branch meetings.

Our reps also looked at the main documents that form the basis of our working conditions. To enforce our rights, it is important to know what they are and where to find them. Reps then used these documents to plan the next steps for their sub-branches.

Feedback from our reps that attended is that they found the information relevant and would recommend this day to their colleagues.

We intend to hold further training courses in all regions of the Territory. Please check your emails for further announcements.

Union elections on now

Elections are currently taking place for several positions on the AEU NT's Branch Executive.

Members are encouraged to participate in our union's democratic process by voting. Postal ballots will be conducted for the following positions. The candidates' names are listed in alphabetical order:

PRESIDENT

Bernie Gleeson
Jarvis Ryan

VICE-PRESIDENT (TAFE)*

Ian Britton
Delean Holtze

** Only TAFE Division members vote for this position.*

TREASURER

Julie Danvers
Michael Stimpson

For the following positions, only one person nominated:

VICE-PRESIDENT (GENERAL)

Stephen Pelizzo

INDIGENOUS COUNCILLOR

Cassandra Brown

No nominations were received for the Women's Officer position or the Katherine Executive Councillor vacancy. The AEU will seek permission to hold another election for the position of Women's Officer. For the Katherine position we will, subject to approval by the Registered Organisations Commission, fill the vacancy via appointment by the Katherine AEU Regional Council.

Voting

These elections are conducted via postal ballot, with voting opening on Friday 14 September and closing at 5pm on Monday 15 October. All eligible members will have postal ballots sent to their nominated postal address.

Candidate statements

The AEC has ruled that the AEU NT Branch is not allowed to make candidate statements available to members for these elections. Members may, however, be contacted by individual candidates during the course of the election, as candidates are permitted to request a copy of the voter roll and use the information provided for the purposes of contacting members.

Returning Officer

Queries about these elections should be directed to the AEC Returning Officer Tim Gordon on (07) 3049 2159 or via ipswich@aec.gov.au.



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*Subject to Employer policy.