

# Territory Educator



**Teacher salary increases finally here**




**Hard work pays off**

**Special membership offer inside!**

**Sign up as a new member before the end of the year and pay nothing until Term 1 2019!**

See page 4 for details





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Visiting schools across the Territory  
is growing our union



Federal Women's Conference Delegates  
Jenny Young and Natalee Forder



Buthan school students standing on  
the new tables that were made from  
recycled doors by senior years girls

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should be directed to [admin@aeunt.org.au](mailto:admin@aeunt.org.au)*





# AEU NT Branch News



Branch Executive

## 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

## 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)  
Barry George (Darwin Middle)  
**Katherine**..... Candace Loane (Minyerri School)  
**PARR**..... Glynis Hester (Bees Creek Primary)  
Linda Hyland (Taminmin College)



## The AEC has released a declaration of results for our 2018 Branch Executive elections.

The following candidates were elected:

**President** – Jarvis Ryan  
**Vice-President** (General) – Stephen Pelizzo  
**Vice-President** (TAFE) – Delean Holtze  
**Treasurer** – Julie Danvers  
**Indigenous Councillor** – Cassandra Brown

The term of office for these positions is two years, commencing in January 2019. Further vacancies for the positions of Women's Officer and Executive Regional Councillor for the Darwin and Katherine regions will be advertised and filled in due course.

Some members have enquired about why the Branch office did not publish candidate statements for these elections. The reason is that the Australian Electoral Commission, which conducted the election, ruled that the Branch publishing these statements was not allowed, as our Rules are silent on the issue.

Our Branch Executive has resolved that a rule change proposal will be put to next year's Conference to ensure that in future the Branch will be able to publish candidate statements.



## Annual Conference 2019

Branch Executive has determined that next year's Branch Conference will be held on the May Day weekend (4-5 May) at the Knott's Crossing Resort in Katherine. We are looking forward to the first Conference gathering in Katherine since 2011.

Katherine is one of our fastest growing regions, recently obtaining a second Executive councillor position.

**Registrations for the 2019 Conference will open early next year and close on Friday 22 March.**

# Hard work **pays** off

**By the time you read this my hope is that, if you're one of our teaching members, your pay packet will feel a little heavier as salary increases and up to a year's worth of back pay finally reach your bank account.**

Hopefully there will be some extra spending money for Christmas presents or a well-deserved holiday over the break.

This year the AEU has successfully concluded bargaining for the vast bulk of employees under our coverage: teachers and ATs, school support staff covered under the NTPS General Agreement and VET lecturers at CDU. We are trying to get things moving at Batchelor, where staff have not had a pay rise in more than two years.

I know sometimes educators can be embarrassed to talk about salaries. A common refrain is that we do it for love not money.

Whilst money's not everything, it really does matter. So do working conditions.

I'm proud to be able to say our classroom teachers are the best paid in the country. For one thing, we absolutely need to ensure our salaries and working conditions are nationally competitive if we are to attract and retain teachers.

Furthermore, I think the job our teachers do is as tough as anywhere, with factors such as heat, remoteness and a highly complex and disadvantaged student cohort to contend with.

A few months back I was asked by a journalist why our teachers should be the best paid in the country when our student results are the worst.

So often we hear this narrative of failure when it comes to the Northern Territory. In my view it is a paralysing viewpoint that provides no way forward.

Better to recognise that our students are not starting from the same point as their interstate peers and face many more obstacles to success.



To that end, our education department has declared that our ambition is for the NT to be Australia's most improving system.

A recent report from the Grattan Institute contained heartening findings. Grattan researchers analysed NAPLAN data and found that NT students are making more progress in years 3 and 5 than the national average. "This result suggests their schools are not, on average, doing a bad job. Rather, they are doing a tough job reasonably well," the report states.

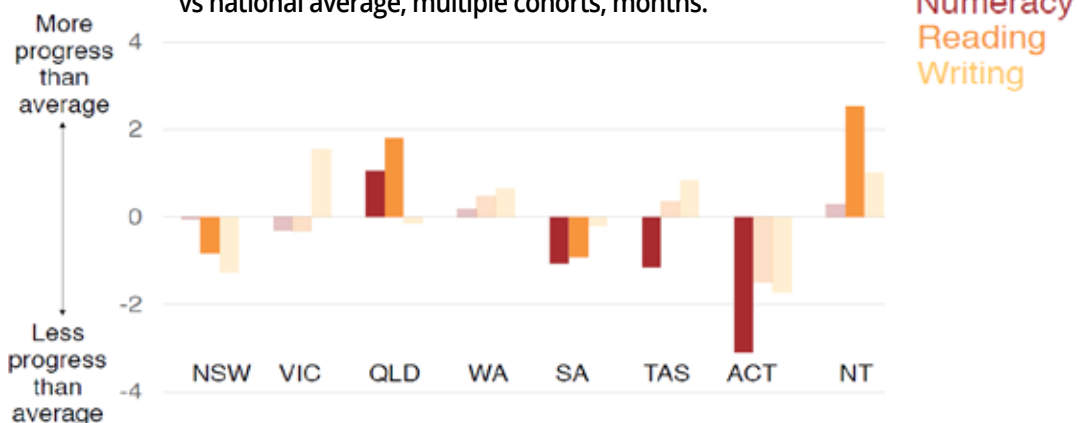
Thanks to the efforts of teachers and schools, using targeted approaches based on where students are at, the growth in learning, or "value added", is higher than elsewhere in Australia.

In other words, your hard work is paying off. So enjoy the pay increases, and your holidays. You've earned them.

Finally, thank you to all members for your continued support for the AEU. It is your involvement, determination and professionalism that gives our union our strength.

We have many achievements to celebrate this year, and I am already looking forward to the challenges that 2019 will bring.

Relative progress from Year 3 to Year 5, adjusted for ICSEA, vs national average, multiple cohorts, months.



# Refer a member and **WIN!**

With teacher pay increases coming through it's a great time to remind your colleagues of the value of union membership.

Refer a new member to the AEUNT this term and you will go into the draw to WIN a Samsung Galaxy Tab A 16GB!



## How to enter:

1. Sign up a colleague as a new member using the accompanying form, or by visiting [aeunt.org.au/membership](http://aeunt.org.au/membership)
2. Ask your new member to write your name in the Referral field
3. Make sure the new member submits the Membership form to the AEU NT office by 10 Decemeber 2018
4. The referring member will automatically go in the draw to win!

Sponsored by



## Special offer for new members!

Join now and pay nothing until school goes back!

That's right, pay nothing until January. Sign up and return your form to our office by Friday 14 December 2018 and you'll get 2 months free membership. Fee deductions will commence at the beginning of the 2019 school year.





## Membership Application

### Membership Agreement

#### Terms and Conditions

I declare, if admitted to the Australian Education Union NT Branch, I will abide by the rules of the Union. To be a financial member I must have paid all subscriptions in advance. In order to cancel my membership I must give two weeks' notice, in writing, to the Union. I authorise the AEU to request my salary and other employment details from the relevant employer for the purpose of updating AEU membership records.

Complete both sides of this membership form and:

Email to: [admin@aeunt.org.au](mailto:admin@aeunt.org.au)

Fax to: (08) 89482577

Post to: AEU NT, PO Box 41863,  
Casuarina NT 0811

## Why Join?

- ☒ **Belong – Numbers build power!**  
185,000 members Australia wide  
1800 members across the NT
- ☒ **Be protected**  
Expert and confidential industrial and professional support
- ☒ **Access to FREE legal advice**  
Assistance with workers' compensation claims
- ☒ **Reap the rewards**  
Eligibility to join Teachers Health  
Savings on products and services with Union Shopper  
Improvements in salaries and conditions  
Attendance at union training courses
- ☒ **Make a difference**  
Promote public education and TAFE  
Campaign on issues that matter to you  
Support social justice
- ☒ **100% tax deductible**  
AEU NT membership fees are 0.8% of gross salary (plus GST). For a full breakdown of teacher salaries and membership fees go to [www.aeunt.org.au](http://www.aeunt.org.au) and follow the links.

Title Mr / Ms / Miss / Dr / Mrs

First Name .....

Surname .....

DOB (dd/mm/yy) .....

Postal Address .....

Home phone .....

Mobile .....

Do you identify as an Australian Aboriginal  
or Torres Strait Islander person? Yes / No

Work email address .....

Non-work email address .....

Workplace Classification (e.g. CT2, AO3) .....

Referral? .....  
(if an AEU member recruited you write their name here)

☐ Permanent ☐ Contract ☐ Part-time ☐ Other

If part-time: State ratio (eg 0.6) .....

If other: (eg student, relief) .....

*I hereby apply for membership of the AEU Northern Territory Branch and have read, understood and agree to all the terms and conditions of the AEU membership set out in this form.*

Sign ..... Date .....

# PAYMENT METHODS

## ☐ Direct Debit (fortnightly)

I, (Full Name).....

Authorise AEU NT to debit funds from my account, as determined by the AEU Executive. This authorisation is to remain in force in accordance with the Direct Debit Service Agreement.

Name of Financial Institution .....

Branch Name .....

Account Number .....

BSB .....

Sign..... Date.....

OR

## ☐ Credit Card (monthly)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Name on Card .....

Expiry Date.....

Sign..... Date.....

OR

## ☐ Payroll Deduction (fortnightly)

I, (Full Name).....

Of (Private Address).....

AGS Number .....

I hereby authorise NT Payroll DECS to deduct my union fees from my salary each fortnight. The amount is as per the AEU NT schedule of union fees, and this amount may vary as determined from time to time by the AEU NT Branch Executive, and according to my substantive salary. This amount is to be forwarded to the AEU NT Branch PO Box 41863 CASUARINA NT 0811

I further authorise DECS and the Department of Education to update my deduction or release to the AEU NT Branch my AGS number, salary details, classification, increment point, TEP allowance, Highly Accomplished or Leading Teacher status, full time/part time status, and fee deduction amount upon request by the AEU NT Branch.

I understand that I may revoke this authority at any time by emailing the Manager DECS Payroll at payrolldecs@nt.gov.au and that upon receipt of such communication DECS will immediately revoke this authority. I acknowledge that, upon my resignation from the AEU NT, I am solely responsible for ensuring my payments have been ceased by Payroll DECS and the AEU NT will not be under any obligation to reimburse any overpayments for failure to do so.

Sign..... Date.....

## DIRECT DEBIT REQUEST SERVICE AGREEMENT

The following is your Direct Debit Request Service Agreement with The Australian Education Union – Northern Territory Branch. The agreement is designed to explain what your obligations are when undertaking a Direct Debit arrangement with us. It also details what our obligations are to you as your Direct Debit Provider. We recommend you keep this agreement in a safe place for future reference. It form part of the terms and conditions of your Direct Debit Request (DDR) and should be read in conjunction with your DDR form.

**Account** means the account held at your financial institution which we are authorized to arrange for funds to be debited. **Agreement** means this Direct Debit Request Service Agreement between you and us. **Business day** means a day other than a Saturday or a Sunday or a public holiday listed throughout Australia. **Debit day** means a day that payment by you to us is due. **Direct debit request** means the Direct Debit Request between us and you. **Us or we** means the Australian Education Union – NT Branch you have authorised by signing a direct debit request. **You** means the customer who signed the direct debit request. Your financial institution is the financial institution where you hold the account that you have authorised us to arrange to debit.

**Debiting your account.** By signing a direct debit request, you have authorised us to arrange for funds to be debited from your account. You should refer to the direct debit request and this agreement for the terms of the arrangement between us and you. We will only arrange for funds to be debited from your account as authorised in the direct debit request. If the debit day falls on a day that is not a business day, we may direct your financial institution to debit your account on the following business day. If you are unsure about which day your account has or will be debited you should ask your financial institution.

**Changes by us.** We may vary any details of this agreement or a direct debit request at any time by giving you at least fourteen (14) days' written notice.

**Changes by you.** You may change, stop or defer a debit payment, or terminate this agreement by notifying us at least fourteen (14) days before the next debit day. You may notify us of changes by emailing admin@aeunt.org.au or by phoning (08) 8948 5399.

**Your obligations.** It is your responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient clear funds available in your account to allow a debit payment to be made in accordance with the direct debit request. If there are insufficient clear funds in your account to meet a debit payment: you may be charged a fee and/or interest by your financial institution; you may also incur fees or charges imposed or incurred by us; and you must arrange for the debit payment to be made by another method or arrange for sufficient clear funds to be in your account by an agreed time so that we can process the debit payment. You should check your account statement to verify that the amounts debited from your account are correct. If National Australia Bank Limited A.B.N. 12 004 044 937 ('National') is liable to pay goods and services tax ('GST') on a supply made by the National in connection with this agreement, then you agree to pay the National on demand an amount equal to the consideration payable for the supply multiplied by the prevailing GST rate.

**Dispute.** If you believe that there has been an error in debited your account, you should notify us directly on (08) 8948 5399 and confirm the notice in writing with us as soon as possible so that we can resolve your query more quickly. If we conclude as a result of our investigation that your account has been incorrectly debited we will respond to your query by arranging for your financial institution to adjust your account (including interest and charges) accordingly. We will also notify you in writing of the amount by which your account has been adjusted. If we conclude as a result of our investigation that your account has not been incorrectly debited, we will respond to your query by providing you with reasons and any evidence for this finding. Any queries you may have about an error made in debiting your account should be directed to us in the first instance so that we can attempt to resolve the matter between us and you. If we cannot resolve the matter you can still refer it to your financial institution which will obtain details from you of the disputed transaction and may lodge a claim on your behalf.

**Accounts.** You should check: (a) with your financial institution whether direct debiting is available from your account as direct debiting is not available on all accounts offered by financial institutions; (b) your account details which you have provided to us are correct by checking them against a recent account statement; and (c) with your financial institution before completing a direct debit request if you have any queries about how to complete the direct debit request.

**Confidentiality.** We will keep any information (including your account details in your direct debit request confidential. We will make reasonable efforts to keep any such information we have about you secure and to ensure that any of our employees or agents who have access to information about you do not make any unauthorised use, modification, reproduction or disclosure of that information. We will only disclose information that we have about you: to the extent specifically required by law; or for the purposes of this agreement (including disclosing information in connection with any query or claim).

**Notice.** If you wish to notify us in writing about anything relating to this agreement, you should write to: AEU-NT, PO Box 41863, CASUARINA NT 0811. We will notify you by sending a written notice to the address you have given us in the direct debit request. Any notice will be deemed to have been received two business days after it has been posted.



## School Profile: Sadadeen Primary

# Child-centred approach brings **positive** change

Sadadeen Primary School in Alice Springs has worked hard over the past few years to create a school community that recognises the relationship between learning, belonging and non-government services.

We have done this by embedding a whole school approach to trauma informed practice, including embracing strategic partnerships with other government and non-government services.

This change in practice came from the realisation that a traditional approach was just not working for many of our children, who have backgrounds of complex trauma, ongoing intergenerational trauma and/or are living in precarious situations.

Behaviours were alarmingly significant, staff burn-out was evident and learning was not terribly successful. A change was needed and as a whole school we adopted a child and family centred model that is responsive to needs and recognises the many barriers to school engagement that our children and families experience.

We have developed a clear and strong vision. Our approach is well researched, based on understanding the educational impacts of trauma. We recognise that by creating a safe and supportive environment, where students make positive connections with peers and adults and learn how to calm their emotions so they can focus and behave appropriately, they can then feel confident enough to advance their learning.

Establishing these fundamental building blocks is essential to maximising the learning outcomes for our cohort of students.

The approach demands quality and commitment at every level of our school, including the leadership team, teaching staff, administration, canteen, student support staff, bus drivers and partner agencies. The plan is up on the walls and the learning, progress and areas to work on are visible to everyone.

Key features of this framework include:

- A change in thinking about behaviour to the understanding that all behaviour communicates a need and how you respond appropriately to that need.
- A belief that the physical environment encourages and promotes physical regulation and relaxation, hence playground upgrades to more exciting and soothing spaces to play.



- Classrooms that support play-based learning and create spaces where students feel safe and comforted.
- Purpose built therapy rooms for calming when things get hectic in classrooms.
- Acknowledgement that academic learning comes AFTER a sense of safety has been established, which might take a while.
- The understanding of the importance of building strong relationships.
- Ongoing professional development around trauma informed positive behaviour support.
- A strong commitment to building an inclusive and caring school environment.
- Use of consistent language across the school, giving children the language to describe feelings and responses, supported by a school wide explicitly taught SEL program.

The impacts of our approach can be seen on a number of levels, most markedly in a 50 per cent decline of behavioural incidents between 2015 and 2017. In addition, our assessment data is showing promising signs of improvement for children in the early years.

### **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](mailto:admin@aeunt.org.au).

# Looking back

It was another big year for the AEU NT as our union grew in size and influence, campaigning and advocating for our members across the Territory.



Yalmay Yunupingu (left) accepted the 2018 Arthur Hamilton Award on behalf of Yirrkala School at the AEU Federal Conference.



AEU officers visited 112 schools and workplaces and supported TAFE members at Batchelor and CDU.



We welcomed 350 new members to the AEU NT, including at the DoE new teacher induction.



A highlight was securing an enterprise agreement that contained pay rises and enhanced conditions for teachers and assistant teachers.





# on

# 2018



We set up networks for AEU NT and IEU women and LGBTIQ+ members.



Organisers visited the Arnhem region along with the ACTU and reported on working conditions for Aboriginal Australians, particularly the harm that the CDP program is causing in remote communities.



We remain committed to fighting for Fair Funding for our public schools. This campaign will continue in 2019 right up until the federal election.



In 2018 we re-established training for sub-branch reps. We have now trained over 40 of our members with the program continuing in 2019.





# We are **women**, we are union!

The 2018 Federal Women's Conference focused on the intersection of unionism and feminism that has gained improvements for women's rights at work.

The AEU views gender equity as part of our work to achieve a more just society. This means understanding the intersection of gender, class, Aboriginality, race, culture, disability and sexuality and how they impact on students, educators and the broader Australian society. The AEU believes that the critical factor in achieving gender equity is systematic commitment to cultural change.

Women are now the majority of the union movement and we must continue to organise for change and become involved in the process. Gender equity has achieved some reforms for women, however there are still many issues to be addressed to achieve gender parity.

The AEU NT Branch is working on a gender equity plan and recently sent two members to the conference in Melbourne. One of our members wrote about her experience.

## **Jenny Young**

Senior Teacher, Batchelor Area School

Attending my first ever Federal Women's Conference with my fellow NT delegates, Natalee Forder from Ngukurr and Women's Officer, Alyson Kavanagh, was one of the highlights of my time as a union member in education.

I have always supported the AEU but never really considered becoming an activist so these two days were for me, an awakening. Experiencing the combined passion, wisdom, knowledge and lived experiences of women from all over our country, across all sectors of education was inspiring and motivating to say the least.

Listening to speaker after speaker share their personal journeys with feminist unionism, their achievements, their struggles and their continuing activism left us sometimes in tears and at other times in gales of laughter. But most of all, these incredibly strong, forthright, resilient women left us all reinvigorated and energised to do all we can to better the gender inequities that still exist today in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia.



*Federal Women's Conference AEU NT delegates Jenny Young (left) and Natalee Forder (right)*

The conference gave us all a safe place to collaboratively explore the issues which continue to affect women in public education across Australia and to address the continuing difficulty of women to achieve leadership and decision making political power to obtain influence over decisions that directly affect their lives and their work.

Everything from reproductive rights, maternity leave, domestic violence, sexual harassment, equal pay, gender-based violence and the huge imbalance between men's and women's accrued superannuation all received attention.

Much has been achieved by our union, by the hard-working, dedicated and zealous women (and men) who persevere every day to overcome obstacles and adversity for the greater good. With huge funding inequities which have private schools spending seven times more than public schools in capital works, with most leadership positions across all education sectors being held by men despite the workforce being predominantly female, with superannuation entitlements of women being 50% less than men's, with women continuing to be trapped in domestic violence and retiring in poverty despite a lifetime of hard work giving to their families, there is still so much to be done. Let's do it!

# It's given me a greater sense of **belonging**

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



*Kiera Lansdown, Clyde Fenton Primary School*

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

I had been employed for just over a year when I received permanency.

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

I found the process quite easy as my principal was very keen to sign me on. He helped me through the process and sent through the contract quickly. Working towards permanency I put in a lot of extra time and tried to find strategies to improve student engagement and attendance. As physical education is my specialty I used sport to do this. Working especially on improving sport amongst girls at Clyde Fenton I saw massive improvements in participation and attitude.

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

It's a great feeling. I feel secure in the job and it makes me work harder as I want the best for the students. When Jeff Parker offered me permanency it felt good because it felt like I was appreciated, and the extra work hadn't gone unnoticed. It's important now to keep the high expectations and continue to develop student engagement. Looking back on my first year at CFS and the stresses towards the end of the year whether I'd be staying on or not in comparison to permanency it's made me plan for future actions. I am able to create a sustainable sports program and keep developing carnivals/projects for the school.



*Makhdoom Bhatti, Ntaria School*

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

Prior to this offer of permanency, I had been on contract for more than four years, since 2014.



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

The process began with me committing to this position and dedicating my time and efforts to it in the long run. From there it was a simple and straightforward process where I satisfied the requirements and was granted the permanency. All of this could not have been achieved without our school's principal.

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

It was great to have permanency. Generally, each year brought anxiety as to whether my contract would be renewed for the following teaching year. Much of life centred around this and the uncertainty made it difficult to plan ahead. But with this security of employment I feel mostly relief and appreciation. This has given me the incentive to work more diligently and with greater satisfaction.

I can now make long term plans with respect to preparations for teaching. Ultimately, it has evoked a sense of belonging where I feel closer and more involved with the rest of the teaching staff and department.

## **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](mailto:admin@aeunt.org.au).

# The **choice** on education policy

Recent announcements by the Labor Party on schools funding, early childhood and TAFE highlight differences between the major parties, writes Jarvis Ryan



Education is once again shaping up as a federal election battleground. The Morrison Government has nailed its colours to the mast with a cash splurge for private schools and not an extra cent for public education.

By contrast, Bill Shorten and the Labor Party have provided hope that a change of government will lead to improvements in education policy and funding.

## Schools

Shorten announced in October that a Labor government would inject an additional \$14.1 billion into public schools over the next decade.

This funding commitment includes \$3.3 billion in the first three school years (2020-2022), the equivalent of 8250 extra teachers. Mr Shorten also committed to smash the Liberal National Coalition's arbitrary 20 per cent cap on federal funding for public schools, and to work with state and territory governments to bring all public schools to 100 percent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

By comparison, the Morrison's government cut public school funding by \$14 billion, including by \$1.9 billion in 2018 and 2019. Recently Prime Minister Morrison announced a \$4.6 billion special funding deal targeted solely at private schools.

Labor's SRS commitment is especially important for Northern Territory public schools, currently funded at 24 per cent of the SRS by the Commonwealth, but facing a decade of cuts under the Coalition model.

## Early childhood

The schools funding announcement followed a commitment to extend funding for universal access to preschool for four-year-old children to three-year-olds, at an estimated cost of \$1.75 billion.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds will benefit most from earlier access to education programs, giving them a greater chance to close the gap with peers from wealthier backgrounds.

Australia currently ranks 23rd in spending on early childhood education (ECE) among OECD nations as a proportion of GDP, behind countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Russia.

An important component of Labor's commitment is providing a longer-term commitment to ECE funding, as opposed to the Coalition, which has only guaranteed funding for 2019.

## TAFE

Shorten has promised to rescue Australia's ailing TAFE system, which has been decimated by cuts and deregulation since the early 2000s, saying that employers have become reliant on foreign labour as a cheaper option than training workers.

"I think we've got about 1.6 million people in Australia at the moment who have a visa that gives them temporary work rights. That is addictive to the Australian economy and it means we're not training up enough of our own young people – and some not-so-young people too," Shorten told Fairfax media.

In his Budget reply speech in May, Shorten pledged that Labor would scrap upfront fees for 100,000 TAFE students. He has also said that at least one in ten workers on any federally-funded project should be an apprentice.

AEU members can be proud of the efforts of our lobbying. Now it's time to get the message out to voters about the importance of education and equity!

LABOR'S PLAN FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS	
State	Extra Commonwealth funding from 2020-2022
ACT	\$57 million
NSW	\$917 million
NT	\$41 million
QLD	\$647 million
SA	\$256 million
TAS	\$52 million
VIC	\$804 million
WA	\$501 million
Australia	\$3.3 billion



# Re-engaging students on Elcho Island

**This is a story about what schools in remote communities can do with extra funding**

Shepherdson College on Elcho Island is one of a number of schools in the Arnhem Region with low student attendance that have been provided with additional funding by the Department of Education to develop engagement programs.

This extra funding was directed into a mobile program for students who had not been attending school. It is now gaining widespread support in the community and among teachers.

This report was written for the school newsletter at the end of term 3 by AEU NT member and Mobile School coordinator, Emanuel Holbein.



## Buthan School

The first day of our outdoor school at Buthan started with students writing their names on a concrete slab using charcoal the they had found on the ground. From this we created a roll and formalised an engaging learning program to involve students who have not been coming to school.

Buthan School has been very successful in engaging an average of 25 students aged two to 16 in an outdoor classroom environment. A healthy breakfast is provided in the mornings, which helps to bring everyone together.

Structured Yolngu Matha, Maths and English programs that cater for age and ability levels are taught. A snack and lunch are also provided.

Wendy Hughes has been out to run gardening lessons, the Cathy Freeman team visit on Fridays to help students set personal goals for the future. Josh Gorman delivers music



lessons on Wednesday mornings and Danyon Smillie from AFL NT has also visited to run some footy games, which always draws out a few extra students from the surrounding houses.

Yälu Marnggithinaraw Indigenous Coporation is a grass roots Yolju run organisation that facilitates community development programs that includes teaching children and families through Yolju knowledge systems. Yälu have been sending people out to teach culture lessons and the Remote School Attendance Strategy team are working to support parents in sending their children to Buthan school if they are reluctant to go to the main school.

The students of Buthan school have a classroom in the school to use when it's too windy and dusty. This classroom will also be available later in the year when it's too humid or rainy to work outside.



*Left: Creating a class roll with Etana Dhamarrandji.*

*Top left: Students created a giant topographical map of Elcho Island and learned about ecosystems and the history of different places and rehearsed sentences in both English and Yolngu Matha*

*Top right: Outdoor counting with (l-r) Jeremiah Yunupingu, teacher Emanuel Holbein, George Gondarra, Dylan Marika*

# Judged on our merits

Understanding the merit selection process will ensure a fairer process for colleagues applying for promotions, writes Mick McCarthy



**In large organisations, having to apply for and win a position against other candidates is a standard occurrence.**

How that selection process is conducted (and often seen to be conducted) matters greatly if there is to be a good working environment where colleagues have confidence in their peers and their superiors.

Some managers and organisations believe the best way to select individuals for a position is that they choose who does what (a “captain’s pick”). That’s not how things are to be done in the NT public sector.

## **Legal and procedural basis**

All departments and employees of the NTPS are governed by the Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA). The Act specifies how selection and recruitment process must be conducted in its clause on merit selection, which defines the merit principle.

The merit principle states that the employment of a person within the public sector, including on a promotional position, must be based solely on a person’s suitability, as measured by their knowledge, skills, qualifications, experience and potential for future development.

In accordance with subsidiary legislation (Employment Instruction Number 3), “natural justice” must be applied during selection processes.

Luckily you don’t need to get bogged down in any of this legislation because the Department of Education has a well-written and comprehensive

document governing selection procedures. The AEU NT encourages all sub-branches and members participating in and conducting selection panels to read and refer to this guide.

## **Establishing selection panels**

The guidelines set out clearly the composition requirements for selection panels for all levels of positions. Selection panels must be formed and the position advertised for every vacancy, permanent or fixed term, that will last more than six months (one school semester).

Two key points to note:

All panel members must be formally trained in merit selection via courses conducted by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE);

Staff representatives on panels must be nominated and elected by the staff of that school. The AEU encourages all sub-branches to make sure they have members who have been trained and a proper election process is carried out when positions become advertised.

## **Rights of candidates**

A candidate has the right to respond to any negative comment that is made about them in written or verbal referee statements or to concerns raised by panel members when the panel is considering the merits of applicants. A panel should always provide this natural justice to applicants.

Candidates should also receive a statement summarising the merits of the successful candidate. This is crucial because it allows unsuccessful candidates to determine whether they may be grounds for appeal.

## **Appeals and grievances**

Unsuccessful candidates have the right to appeal or raise a grievance if they believe the selection process has been run unfairly or has erred. Both these types of complaint are dealt with by a specific team within OCPE.

The AEU NT office is able to explain and assist with appeals and grievances.

In last year’s AEU NT member survey, only 25 per cent of respondents said in their experience merit selection is applied properly and fairly.

With more members understanding the process, sub-branches making sure panels are established properly and individuals challenging processes that are conducted unfairly, we can get to a situation where everyone has confidence in the system and in their peers and managers.

# Sub-branch Rep Profile:

## Grant Smith, Casuarina Street Primary School

Grant has been teaching in Katherine since graduating in July 2017. He has taught casually and on fixed period basis.

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

My role as sub-branch president is very important to me. It gives me the chance to stay up to date with issues relating to employment and expectations of teaching in the Territory. This helps me gain a deeper understanding of the context that I am working in and, as we all know as teachers, knowledge is power.

As sub-branch president I organise opportunities for members to discuss relevant employment issues as well as share important ideas that may help improve practice and student outcomes. These meetings help to increase the feeling of collective voice in the school and give teachers the genuine support they need, both personal and professional.

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

I enjoy the opportunities that being a sub-branch president gives me to connect and discuss with colleagues. Times spent with colleagues, both school and region, sharing and discussing issues and successes, allows my support network to grow.

Collegiality, and the support I gain from this, helps alleviate some of those stresses. And more positively, getting together with other union members is a great time to celebrate successes.

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

If you are thinking that becoming a sub-branch president role is for you, firstly, think about what you can, and more importantly want, to bring to the role. Being a sub-branch president is a wonderful opportunity to set the tone for meetings, discussions and, if needed, resolutions at your school.

Then think about the obligations that this role entails. Organisation is a must. Plan to hold meetings regularly and plan to be organised for them. Most of all, if you decide to take on the role, make sure you enjoy yourself and see it as an opportunity to improve your skills and knowledge as well as your colleagues'.



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# Foster carer **leave** a first



**AEU NT officers have lobbied successfully on behalf of a member to secure paid parental leave for a foster parent in what we believe is the first case of its kind in the NT public sector.**

A teacher in Alice Springs agreed to foster a newborn child when it became apparent his mother would not be able to care for him. However, the teacher would be forced to apply for leave without pay because there is no provision within the NTPS for paid leave for foster carers.

The AEU was able to persuade the Commissioner for Public Employment, with support from the Department of Education and Territory Families, that paid leave should be approved to give the newborn child the best start in life.

Although the paid leave granted was not equivalent to that which would normally be available under parental or adoption leave, it was an important precedent.

A clause on paid leave for foster carers will be included in all new enterprise agreements in the ACT public service, and the AEU will push to include a similar entitlement here in future negotiations. The Commissioner has agreed to engage in further discussions with unions and agencies about developing a policy framework to support foster care arrangements for public servants.

## Unions' joint stand on **safety**

**Education unions have collaborated on a joint submission to the NT Government's review of work health and safety, writes Tim Davis Frank**



*IEU and AEU Organisers Jengis Osman and Tim Davis Frank*

Attorney-General Natasha Fyles announced in May that a best practice review of work health and safety laws was to be undertaken in the NT. This review is important to monitor how laws covering work health and safety are being applied and whether the regulator is effective.

AEU officers worked with our colleagues in the Independent Education Union (Qld-NT Branch) to produce a joint submission that highlighted our serious WHS concerns in the school sector.

This submission was backed up by visits of the independent reviewer to meet with union members and witness the concerns outlined in the submission. The reviewer will present his final report in December.

Our union has been campaigning heavily to improve work health and safety in schools. Thanks to the efforts of union members, the Department is improving its WHS policies and 15 schools now have Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to improve practices in those schools.

One of the concerns raised was to better recognise psychological or social hazards (such as violence at work, harassing behaviour, unhealthy levels of stress) and their effects on mental and physical health. Other concerns raised were the culture of disregarding WHS concerns in the education sector and the failure to monitor or resolve hazards, such as asbestos, in remote teacher housing. Finally, the submission called on the employers to work together with HSRs, educators, indigenous communities and managers to improve WHS policies.

The submission is important to shine a light on this area of workplace conditions that have been ignored for too long. We must protect the health and safety of our teachers, students, support staff, principals and wider school community.



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