



## Decisions of the 2020 Branch Conference 12-13 September, Hilton Darwin

### **Affiliations**

1. That the AEU NT affiliates with the following organisations in 2021:
  - Unions NT

### **Branch Conference**

2. That the 2021 Branch Conference be held in Alice Springs.

### **Principals**

3. This conference calls on the NT Government and the Department of Education to reaffirm their commitment to continue with the principal permanency project, with the aim of regrading all principal positions as ongoing and creating a new classification structure to be codified in the upcoming round of teacher enterprise bargaining.

### **AEU NT/ DoE Relations**

4. That this Conference lobby for union FTOs to be involved in the development of the Strategic Leadership Policy with a focus on ensuring the policy is relevant for remote and teaching principals, current and aspiring.

### **Non-Contact Time**

5. That this AEU Conference censures NT DoE for its systemic failure to provide small school non-contact time in a reasonable, timely or satisfactory manner. Further, Conference demands that DoE develop a process whereby senior officers (ECO and above) are held accountable for delivering this in practice. Conference demands that consideration is given to solutions outside the individual school's budget.
6. That this Conference endorses negotiating in the next EBA that special education teachers that are based in a secondary setting receive parity with other secondary teachers for the allocated time release.
7. That this Conference directs the AEU NT Branch Executive to bargain for primary school teachers' non-contact time to be increased to the same as high school teachers in the new EBA.

### **Class Sizes and Teacher-Student Ratios**

8. That this Conference requests the Full Time Officers lobby the DoE to introduce a "student weighting" where students with a diagnosis or imputed should be weighted as more than one child for class size purposes. The use of the rating scales from Education Adjustment Plans could determine the weightings. Students with substantial and extensive ratings would count as 2 and 3 respectively when determining class sizes.

9. That Conference requests the NT DoE work towards implementing a staff to student ratio of 2:5 in special school settings and a ratio of 2:6 in special school satellite classes which are based in mainstream schools.
10. This Conference requests that in the process of negotiating the EBA, the Department in cooperation with the AEU Officers undertake a review of class sizes taking into account WHS, stages of schooling, assessment pressure, teacher voice and other relevant factors leading to an overall call for a reduction in class sizes.

### **SESOs**

11. That Conference demands that the NT DoE provides all Special Education Support Officers (SESOs) in special school settings with the appropriate first aid training qualification and annual/biennial renewal within their working hours and at no cost to them. This is due to the fact that holding a current first aid qualification is a prerequisite for being employed by the DoE as a SESO in a special school setting.
12. That Conference demands the NT DoE pays Special Education Support Officers a Higher Duties Allowance if they are the incumbent SESO for a class and they are required to manage the class with a relief teacher for more than two days. This would reflect their increased responsibilities. It is envisaged that this Higher Duties Allowance would be a daily allowance calculated by paying the difference between the individual SESO's AO4 current pay point and AO5 pay point 3.

### **Assistant Teachers**

13. This Conference directs the FTOs to enter into bargaining during upcoming EBA negotiations to change the policy surrounding the progression of Assistant Teachers within their allotted tier. Currently there is no way for ATs to move progressions without further training. We propose that AT pay is scaled within their tier based on years of service, not just level of training. For example, an AT could be a level 2 and after four years of service become a 2.4 and receive an incremental pay increase.

### **Salaries and Bargaining**

14. This conference directs the FTO to negotiate with OCPE for a pay rise of at least 5-7% per annum for the 2021 EBA.
15. That this Conference mandates that one member of the AEU NT EBA negotiating committee for the next EBA negotiations be a "remote representative" that has worked and lived in a remote (category 3) community for two or more years.
16. This Conference calls on the DoE to increase our Remote Retention payment. It currently stands at \$1000 for working remote for a year and from that, we receive between \$650-\$700. In WA, the remote retention in the Catholic system is \$20,000 and after tax, teachers receive around \$13,000 per annum as their bonus. We want the remote retention payment increased from \$1000 to \$10,000.

### **School Calendar**

17. We direct the Full Time Officers to negotiate with the Department of Education to survey schools, educational centres, staff and parents to determine if the current structure of stand down and holidays (1, 3, 2, 6) is meeting the needs of the aforementioned stakeholders; and if it is not then to negotiate to adjust the stand down and holiday structures to better meet these needs.

18. That this AEU NT Conference recognises the need for a dedicated preparation day for teachers to set up classrooms, especially at the beginning of the school year. This day has been “hijacked” by whole days PDs, often in locations away from teachers’ usual workplace and there has been an expectation that teachers set up their classrooms in their rec leave time or over a weekend.
19. That the AEU NT Full Time Officers direct the Department of Education support remote teachers leaving at midday on the last day of the school term.

### **Stand Down**

20. That this AEU NT Conference requests the Full Time Officers lobby the Department of Education to change the classification of staff holiday break time from “stand down” to “leave”.

### **Travel Allowance**

21. This Conference requests that the AEU NT log of claims for the upcoming EBA includes a travel allowance for camps (especially in remote locations) or time off in recognition of additional hours worked.

### **Special Education Provision**

22. That Conference directs the Department of Education and Department of Health to discuss and provide the funding for at least a .5 provision of a Paediatric Nurse Practitioner in each special needs school. This would provide support to SLT with medical/health planning, monitoring the health care plans of students with complex medical needs, to support and train all staff in medical and other procedures where appropriate and to liaise with families and NDIS about their children’s health care needs.
23. This Conference notes the unique challenges faced by teachers in remote contexts, and the high prevalence of students with additional needs within their classrooms. As such, we call on the Department to designate and deploy adequate specialised staff to support remote and very remote schools in meeting the requirements of NCDD reporting including:
  - Obtaining official diagnoses in a timely fashion and removing the need for teachers to impute diagnoses where they are not qualified to do so.
  - Determining appropriate education adjustment measures and providing professional intervention for students where necessary.There should be a transparent process for accessing these staff and they should be additional/separate to the staff that are allocated to work in town and regional schools.
24. That Conference directs the DoE to allocate to staff in special schools, annexes and special needs settings a further pupil free day per year to take account of additional professional development requirements in these specialist settings.
25. This Conference directs the Full Time Officers to express our concern over how special needs funding is allocated and commence an investigative process into a more equitable system within the Department of Education.
26. This Conference requests the Full Time Officers enter into discussions and form resolutions with the DoE to provide more streamlined processes and access to the compulsory inclusive and trauma informed practices. It is extremely hard to access and there is little support. We propose a dedicated team for certain hubs that remain linked to schools and can provide support sessions and follow ups for these annual and biannual compulsory trainings and any other mandated practices or schools identified needs that align these mandates.

27. That the Full Time Officers advocate to the DoE on behalf of all NT schools to investigate appropriate school settings and provide evidence-based expertise and resourcing to cater for the needs of students impacted by FASD and trauma.
28. That this Conference directs the Full Time Officers and the Executive to undertake a public education campaign about the need for Special Needs Funding and ESL funding to be separated from the global budget.
29. That this Conference directs the Full Time Officers to communicate to the appropriate people in DoE that the funding for the employment of ISAs needs to be separated from global budget and require an acquittal so that the funds are spent on inclusion support.
30. That this Conference directs the Full Time Officers and the Executive to undertake a public education campaign about the need for trauma informed education practices to be reflected in the priorities of the department and therefore schools.
31. We direct the Full Time Officers to express our concern over how special needs funding is allocated and commence an investigative process into a more equitable system within the Department of Education.
32. This Conference calls on the NT Government to immediately address the issue of the substantial underfunding of special needs provision in remote schools. The Conference proposes a change from the current funding model to a needs-based funding model in line with other jurisdictions. It is imperative that the funding increases in order to create a fair and equitable distribution of special needs funding between remote and urban schools.

### **COVID19**

33. That Conference calls on the Department of Education to ensure that the last week of Term 4 is instead converted to holidays/stand down for all remote school staff (Cat 1, 2 and 3 and special category) as compensation for the inability to leave our regions and access essential services due to COVID-19.
34. This Conference calls on the FTOs to lobby the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Health to send trained mental health workers into all education workplaces no less than once a month. These workers will provide free face to face services to all DoE and school council employees.
35. That this conference directs the Full Time Officers to lobby the DoE to investigate the impact that COVID19 has had on current sick leave entitlements and increase the number of sick days provided to school-based staff from 15 to 20 days per annum without the need for medical certification for the additional five days. This entitlement is to remain in place for the duration of pandemic restrictions in the workplace.
36. That Conference demands the DoE Chief Executive urgently provide adequate funding for all NT Schools to replace water bubblers with more water taps, or otherwise develop an alternative solution to the health and safety issue that has resulted from water bubblers being turned off in NT schools.

37. This Conference calls on the AEU NT to negotiate with the NT government to immediately create provisions to guarantee food security in remote communities and to develop a plan for future disruptions, including additional monetary support for DoE staff when food supplies are compromised.
38. This Conference demands that the NT Government acknowledge that online learning and/or printed workbooks are not feasible or reasonable means to deliver learning to a large proportion of NT students in the event of a school shutdown, and to proactively create and disseminate a plan to address the learning needs of students for whom remote learning will be challenging.

### **Attendance-Based Funding (“Effective Enrolment”) and School Resourcing**

39. That this AEU NT Conference requests that the Department of Education confirm in writing that funding for remote schools remains at current (2020) levels for 2021 therefore lessening the impact of COVID19 on attendance and effective enrolments.
40. That Conference calls on the Full Time Officers to run a public campaign to highlight the amount of money schools do not receive due to “effective enrolment” (attendance factor).
41. That this AEU NT Conference instructs the Full Time Officers to continue to work constructively with the Northern Territory Government (NTG) to develop an alternative and more equitable model to attendance-based funding (Effective Enrolment) including but not limited to:
  - a) Seek feedback and up to date information from members in schools and communicate that to the NTG regarding the impact of attendance-based funding;
  - b) Actively advocate for the review of effective enrolment that was planned for 2020 to proceed;
  - c) Engage in ongoing dialogue regarding the development of an alternative funding model to attendance-based enrolment that distributes resourcing more equitably.
42. That this AEU NT Conference directs the Full Time Officers demand the Department of Education fund remote schools to reflect the EAL/D realities of the student cohort.

### **Remote Area Teacher Education**

43. That this AEU NT Conference instructs the Full Time Officers to continue to work constructively with the NT Government to ensure a robust consultation with all community stakeholders about the development of the new RATE program that seeks feedback at all steps of the design process and clear communication of a timeline for implementation. This consultation should include and not be limited to:
  - Potential RATE school sites
  - Potential RATE students
  - Past RATE students
  - Past RATE lecturers and staff
  - Other interested parties e.g. community members, school council members, other educators involved at RATE school sites, tertiary education providers.

### **Standardised Testing**

44. This Conference demands that the NT Government cease participating in NAPLAN testing in schools.

45. This Conference demands the DoE reduce the number of standardized tests administered to students, and ensure all tests are appropriate for the demographics of the students to whom they are administered.

### **Infrastructure and ICT**

46. This Conference demands the DoE Chief Executive and the NT Government address funding for school master plans or substantial infrastructure upgrades. Many schools in the NT, especially those in remote locations, have not had upgrades since their construction and are not fit for purpose for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Under current funding models, schools have no conceivable way of improving the infrastructure to an acceptable standard on par with schools in the cities and suburbs.
47. This Conference directs that the AEU NT continues to support Alekarenge in their push for new buildings, fences and play equipment.
48. This Conference calls on the NT Government to immediately address the inadequate ICT infrastructure in NT Schools to ensure equity of access to technology for all students.
49. That the AEU NT support schools in collecting the necessary data to show evidence of lack of IT support and using it to call for improved IT support.

### **Relief Teachers**

50. That Conference calls on Department of Education to recruit and fund (outside of school budgets) a pool of relief teachers who are able to fill urgent vacancies in remote schools for the duration of recruitment processes.
51. This Conference calls on DoE to provide dedicated relief teachers to enable greater access for remote staff to professional development opportunities.  
We propose that the DoE:
- a) Create a relief teaching pool for each remote region that can be readily accessed for the purpose of providing school staff with professional development external to the school environment.
  - b) Allow remote schools more flexibility to close for important professional development opportunities in town, other than the four allocated days already available.
52. That the Full Time Officers petition the NT DoE regarding the lack of available relief teachers in Katherine. Any relief teachers are quickly placed on contract and no longer available. This impacts on classroom teachers with split classes, teacher wellbeing and guilt about being away from school. We recommend that the FTOs discuss the implementation of a dedicated relief teacher pool for Katherine schools.

### **Mental Health**

53. This Conference notes with concern the Teacher Wellbeing Strategy's slow actions in addressing the huge issue of teacher wellbeing. The data from the Teacher health and wellbeing survey points toward teachers' rates of mental ill health as double that of other workforce sectors. Teachers are more vulnerable to high levels of stress due to the associated high levels of job demands. High job demands and long-term stress lead to burnout, cognitive dissonance, and high attrition rates. With nearly 40% of teachers working more than 50 hours a week, more needs to be done to rebalance teacher wellbeing.

This Conference supports the recommendations of the of the research of Dr Phil Riley from the Northern Territory Teachers' Occupational Health and Wellbeing Survey:

- a) Prolonged support for early career teachers
- b) Professional supervisory support for all teachers
- c) An anti-violence campaign
- d) Reduce non-teaching workloads (administrative burden)

This Conference directs the Full Time Officers to lobby for teacher wellbeing and the DoE to bring forward the implementation of the recommendations in full as soon as practicable. Further, Conference demands that these recommendations form part of the next EA bargaining campaign.

### **Remote Categories**

54. That this Conference calls on OCPE to review the classification of remote localities, specifically with the purpose of adding a fourth category to compensate for the significant travel time and associated costs (i.e. time, travel, accommodation) of leaving community to access leave entitlements and business days for these very remote locations.

### **Leave**

55. That this Conference directs the FTOs to request that the Special Study Leave application process be reviewed, with particular reference to the closing dates, policy, and guidelines. Members should be able to apply for the program within the semester that the points are accrued in their entirety rather than being required to wait until the following application round which may not be until the next calendar year.
56. That this Conference directs the FTOs to lobby OCPE to increase the number of sick days provided to category 2 and 3 remote teachers from 15 to 20 days per annum. The extra sick days are to be used flexibly for remote teachers depending on their context, for example to travel to obtain a medical certificate or specialist appointments. This would also be a significant boost to teacher wellbeing, physical and mental health.

### **Office-Based Staff**

57. That this Conference demand of NT DoE that all office-based staff have a clear job description that is communicated to schools and that the focus returns to supporting schools in schools.

### **Business Days**

58. This Conference requests that the AEU NT log of claims for the upcoming EBA includes a change to how business days are administered. That the discretionary nature of business days be limited by the inclusion of a non-discretionary list of approved activities. That a dispute resolution and appeal process be included with this entitlement. Furthermore, that the approval no longer rests with the principal but with HR, that they become an entitlement.

### **Permanency**

59. This conference supports the continuation of efforts by the union to reduce the proportion of school-based staff (teaching and non-teaching) employed on fixed period contracts. In line with the enterprise agreement clause on security of employment, teaching staff who have been employed for more than 12 months continuously on fixed period contracts should be given priority in opportunities for being converted to ongoing status.

60. That this Conference directs the Full Time Officers to lobby for secure fixed-term employment pathways for casual school support staff. This could take the form of conversion to a fixed-term contract after six months of regular employment, or a system similar to the teacher permanency project.

### **Contracts**

61. That this AEU NT conference requests the FTOs lobby DoE to ensure provisions for a reasonable and fair notice period for staffing be negotiated for staff on contracts. Such provisions should allow teachers and other staff members' early notification regarding the extension and intentions of the particular school, so that staff can act and plan accordingly.
62. That this Conference directs the Full Time Officers to work with the DoE Chief Executive to create an AEU NT/DoE committee to create a framework around the need for transparency when making temporary appointments.

### **Workload**

63. That this Conference calls on DoE for a 10% reduction in teaching load for three years to ensure all early career teachers have a reduced full time load to undertake the requirements of mentoring, Northern Territory Government probation requirements and provisional registration requirements.

### **Homelands**

64. That this conference calls upon DoE to recognise the unique requirements of homelands education and resource the provision of such education accordingly. Further we direct the FTOs to lobby DoE to make the review into Homelands education public by the end of the school year and lobby DoE to commit to implementing the recommendations as a matter of urgency.
65. That this Conference directs the FTOs to lobby the DoE to progress the recommendations made in the Review of education services in Homeland Learning Centres. Of urgent concern is the lack of "multi-site" loading within the School Resourcing model which limits the capacity of homeland schools to resource their homeland sites to the same standards as other single site schools. This limits schools' capacity to employ locally-based Homeland Centre Assistant Teachers, roles that are critical to the delivery of education in Homelands. And, to sufficiently fund for the provision of key maintenance roles such as cleaners for homeland school sites.

### **Work Health & Safety**

66. That this conference directs the FTOs to lobby the DoE to reconsider its WHS practices and policies in relation to sending teachers into category 3 communities. We call on DoE to provide a form of emergency device to DoE staff travelling out to such areas for their wellbeing and safety.
67. That Conference calls the DoE Chief Executive to review work health and safety policies and provision for all schools especially those in remote locations. We expect as a minimum the following:
- a) That a WHS audit be conducted for all schools to ensure that staff and student safety is at the forefront of all education facilities.
  - b) That a WHS officer visit all schools regularly to ensure compliance with policies or provide the training to local staff to become WHS officers in their schools with remuneration offered for their time.



### **Bilingual and Aboriginal Education**

68. Referring to the Indigenous Education Strategy Element 2, Goal 2.1 “Identified schools are centrally supported to deliver mandated quality evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs,” this Conference calls on DoE to centrally assist remote schools with adequate staffing to teach students at their optimum point of learning and to administer the one to one testing that these programs require.
69. This Conference calls on the DoE to increase its efforts to recruit, support and retain Indigenous teachers and staff in leadership positions across NT schools.
70. This Conference requests the DoE to provide meaningful and ongoing cultural awareness training from locals to all staff, local to the region in which they are employed.

### **FOILS**

71. That this Conference lobby OCE for FOILS to be cumulative over the employment period of staff in remote areas rather than expire at the end of each year.
72. This Conference requests that the AEU NT log of claims for the upcoming EBA includes an extra FOIL (allow access to essential services) for each remote category. Further that the FTOs engage in talks with the other public sector unions to campaign for the FOIL entitlement to be increased across the whole NT Public Sector.

### **Housing**

73. That this Conference demands DoE create a policy and adhere to it, surrounding an acceptable response time for UMRs and security upgrades. Currently, UMRs sit unrecognised for months on end and require many resubmissions. In order to continue to do our jobs, we should at least have a certain quality of residence and security in place.
74. That the Full Time Officers (FTOs) petition the NT DoE to regain stability of housing in Katherine and return to the previous model of supplied teacher housing. New teachers to Katherine are required to have money for initial accommodation, bond, utilities connections prior to arrival and this has impacted on recruitment with some schools not being able to fill classroom teaching positions.
75. That Conference directs the Full Time Officers (FTOs) petition the NT DoE regarding the standard of teacher housing in Katherine for teachers employed prior to January 2020. Tenants have struggled with getting repairs completed within a timely manner including electrical and water when contacting the housing officer.

### **Preschool Teachers**

76. That this Conference endorse a claim for teachers in charge of preschool with one teacher being paid the same allowance as the teacher in charge of a preschool with two or more teachers
77. That this Conference endorse a claim for teachers in charge of a preschool being given 5 hours and 20 minutes of non-contact time per week.
78. That this Conference supports the position of teacher in charge of a preschool being considered a leadership role if the incumbent chooses to apply for a promotional position.

79. That the AEU NT demand that the DoE develop a preschool teacher in charge job description policy in conjunction with the AEU NT and a representative body of preschool teachers in charge by the end of 2020.

#### **ADDITIONAL (URGENCY) MOTIONS**

##### **Zoning**

80. This conference demands the NT DoE prioritise and redesign of the Priority Enrolment Zones in Alice Springs to ensure that the zoning:
- a) makes geographical sense;
  - b) works to ensure that the current socio-education disparities between schools is addressed.

The planned review of Alice Springs school zones must be made transparent and include extensive community consultation.

##### **First Language Teachers**

81. That this conference directs the FTOs to negotiate with DOE to ensure that all principals employ First Nations people as the first nation of that country language teachers. If a school is unable to fill a teaching position with a speaker of the First Nations language, then they are instructed to employ a member of the community with these language skills. This is allowed under the Alternative Authorisation to Teach, and this person would work in a tightly specified scope as directed by the school principal. As such a language and cultural teaching delivery of specialised linguistic methodology of their language to students to be recognised and remunerated at the language teacher rate as per section 2.4 The Alternative Authorisation to teach.