



AEU NT 2023 Branch Conference DECISIONS

This list of decisions has had sub-branches and movers/seconders removed to protect their anonymity for public consumption. If a member of the union would like a copy of the draft minutes with this information included – please email aeunt@aeunt.org.au

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Membership, Leadership and Activism

Noting the AEU NT's Winning Aspiration:

“Our union is a strong and effective presence in all schools and public education workplaces. We have powerful and dynamic leaders driving activism in all workplaces.”

- That the AEU NT affiliate with the following organisations in 2023:
 - Unions NT.

- That the 2024 AEU NT Branch Conference be held in Darwin.

- This Conference authorises Executive to make improved union rights a key focus of our next enterprise agreement, such as:
 - Guaranteed and formalised access to orientation events
 - The right to use DoE mass communications to communicate with members and potential members
 - Notification of new employees
 - Guaranteed access to payroll deductions for all DoE and school council staff.
 - That this conference directs the AEU NT Full time Officers to improve communications regarding any actions or progress towards motions that have been carried by committing to providing quarterly updates to members (once per term).

Working Conditions & Workloads

Noting the AEU NT's Winning Aspiration:

“Our union has highly skilled, active and informed members who understand and enforce our rights at work.”

- This conference calls on the Department of Education and OCPE to make meaningful reductions to workloads by:
 - fulfilling their commitment to work in good faith with the AEU NT to identify areas that can be practically addressed in the immediate future, outside of the bargaining process;
 - making significant adjustments in the next Enterprise Agreement

We direct the AEU NT Executive to explore the ideas generated by the delegates of the AEU NT 2023 Branch Conference as they develop claims for these processes.

- That this Conference directs the FTOs to lobby the NT Government to provide a basic program structured around the appropriate achievement standards for each grade that teachers can download and use as a base for a more personalised program.
- That the AEU NT executive demand that the Department of Education mandate a policy of a limit of only 6 identified and verified students in a special education classroom in a special school environment prior to the commencement of the 2024 school year.
- That AEU NT calls on the FTO to lobby the NTG and OCPE to include additional needs weightings to the maximum class size provisions in the Enterprise Agreement. The desired effect is to reduce class size for cohorts with higher concentrations of Students with additional needs, including but not limited to IBP's EAP's, HCP's, to allow a more equitable delivery of quality education.
- Noting the research conducted in several countries, we call upon the AEU NT, its Full Time Officers and Branch Executive, to push the Federal and NT Government to provide funding to ensure that every class has a maximum of 24 students on the enrolment ledger. Any agreements made to take more students must be in writing between the relevant teachers and school leadership.

That the FTOs call on the DoE to cap Intensive English Units to 12 students with the inclusion of a support staff member for every class.

- That the FTOs call upon the Department of Education to ensure that the number of students on the roll for any class not be allowed to exceed any student maximums according to the Teacher Responsibility Guide/Education Agreement by no later than 2024.

- That this Conference calls upon the FTOs to lobby the DoE to immediately take action to ensure every classroom including, but not limited to, primary, secondary, specialist subjects and special education have at least one support staff member for the entirety of each school day to support teaching and learning.

- That this conference asks the FTOs to demand that the DoE boost funding to schools in a way that ensures more classroom support staff can be employed by the DoE, rather than being employed by school councils. Doing so will enable schools to better attract and retain staff in these positions whilst ensuring greater consistency in pay and conditions across the NT. Currently, most schools use discretionary school council funds to employ casual support staff in addition to government-funded roles for AO staff, such as Special Education Support Officers (SESOs) and Special Education Assistants (SESAs). These casual staff are crucial to supporting the learning of students and supporting teachers in their work.

- Noting that it has become common practice to replace absent Classroom Teachers with SESOs who legally cannot have duty of care, this conference calls on the Department of Education to cease this practise as a matter of urgency and ensure:
 - every classroom has a teacher or other person with duty of care present at all times
 - and a SESO (or other relevant support staff employee) where it is current DOE policy to have one.

- Conference notes that harmonisation of minimum non-contact time at 5 hours and 20 minutes for all teachers comes at a multi-million-dollar cost to the Department of Education. Conference further notes the AEU NT's "We're Worth More" campaign is aimed at securing the education funding needed for this and other priorities that will reduce members' workloads.

- That the AEU NT FTOs are called upon to lobby the DoE to add to the TRG a provision for NCT for Assistant Teachers/Aboriginal Educators equivalent to that of classroom teachers. This will facilitate team planning, assessments, training, and reviews as a teaching team.

- That this conference directs the FTOs to advocate for the content of at least one primary professional development day to be an opportunity for teachers to work on planning and programming in either small teams or with teachers in nearby schools as appropriate.

- That the AEU NT push the DoE to immediately follow through with the realignment goal of putting students at the centre and ensure that the resources and expertise needed to achieve this be located in the regions to ensure that services and support is localised, timely, efficient and needs driven.
- That this AEU Conference directs the Full Time Officers to lobby the Department of Education and the Minister for Education to have the Director and Assistant Director Positions who supervise Senior Teachers/Advisors Level 1 and revert to Senior Teacher Level 4/Level 3 positions as a matter of urgency.
- That this Conference directs the FTOs to strongly advocate to the appropriate body for the creation of a new classification category of Education Support Officer (ESO) to come under the Teachers', ATs and Non-Contract Principals' Agreement for those SESOs and SESAs and other classroom support staff who are interested in becoming teachers. This would establish an attractive path to a teaching qualification for this highly skilled group, combining work and study, in line with Action 9 of the National Teacher Workforce Plan.
- That the FTO's push the DoE to undertake an investigation to produce an in-depth breakdown and/or formula to help DoE employees gain a clear understanding of their backpay entitlements by pay schedule. Each employee should be able to be confident correct amounts have been paid according to teaching level and pay scale, prior to the end of the 2022-2023 financial year.
- That the AEU NT holds the DoE to account on permanency by strongly advocating for more teachers and all NTG employed support staff to be made permanent by the end of 2023, rather than being placed on contract after contract.
- That the AEU NT elected officers lobby the DoE to improve implementation of existing processes around staff contracts, so they are finalised before employment commences thus ensuring staff are paid on time.
- That the AEU NT Branch Executive request the Department of Education review its current recruitment and tenure processes for TFA candidates with a view to streamlining and standardising the engagement process so that there is no ambiguity, especially with regards to pay, conditions and entitlements. This should happen before the next round of TFA recruitment.

- Remote retention allowances offered in the Northern Territory have failed to keep pace with those in similar jurisdictions. This AEU NT conference calls on the Employer to negotiate competitive Remote Retention Allowances in the next Enterprise Agreement to attract and retain quality teachers in remote schools.

- A lack of available and affordable housing is stifling the efforts of remote schools to attract staff for important support roles. This AEU NT Conference calls on the FTO's to lobby for the provision of additional Government Employee Housing (GEH) for critical support staff in remote schools. In the absence of available GEH stock, a suitable rental subsidy should be paid.

- That Conference demands that the NTG urgently address the following serious housing concerns of our remote Members including but not limited to:
 - The apparent refusal by any NTG agency to repair and maintain alarms and security features on remote housing;
 - The dire need for the immediate replacement of condemned and subsequently demolished houses so there is adequate housing stock for teaching staff so there is no requirement to share (currently there are situations where there are 4 adults in a 3 bed, 1 bed house; 3 adults in a 2 bed, 1 bath house);
 - The failure of the NTG to address the provision of housing security features which are robust enough to withstand serious break-ins;
 - The failure of the NTG to ensure damage to properties which have been broken into are repaired much more promptly, ie. robust temporary repairs should be done within a day;
 - The absence of a rigorous maintenance schedule for each teacher house, for which each teacher tenant needs to receive a copy and can hold GEH to account
 - The need for an immediate security review of all teacher housing to prevent home invasions

- That this Conference calls upon the DoE to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that all remote teacher houses have enclosed, and lockable car cages installed.

- That the full-time officers advocate for the ability for contract principals to claim for freight for food and essentials to be reinstated. This is an added expense that principals in urban settings do not have to deal with thus putting very remote contract principals at a disadvantage.

- That this conference directs the FTOs to lobby the NTG to increase FOILS for locations with extensive travel or geographical isolation from Darwin/Alice Springs.

- This AEU NT conference calls on the FTO's to lobby the NTG and OCPE to give remote staff the option to receive FOILs (Fares Out of Isolated Locations) as an automatic payment, at a frequency in line with their remote category, to the full value of the entitlement.
- That this Conference directs the AEU NT FTOs to demand a more transparent and easy-to-follow procedure and policies document around priority transfers, including but not limited to a valid timeline, checklist, and a direct line of contact for transferees.
- That this Conference directs the AEU NT FTOs, in light of recent backpay of 'working days', demand that the OCPE stop forcing DoE employees to include weekends in their Long Service Leave applications and that the employer removes the minimum days required for accessing Long Service Leave, for those eligible.
- That this Conference requests that the AEU NT FTOs lobby the DoE to commit to upgrading the current IT infrastructure and IT components in all government schools in the NT by the end of 2025. With the increased pressure on schools to provide online learning and testing, this is a must.
- That this AEU NT Conference direct the FTOs to put pressure on the Education Department to resolve the issues of low band width in very remote schools prior to the commencement of the 2024 testing period.
- That the AEU NT immediately commence discussions with the DoE to ascertain the impact of reductions in the numbers of teachers with appropriate education knowledge and experience working in advisory roles within SWIPS, and to ensure alignment with the actual needs of schools, students, and teachers in each region.
- This Conference requests that the FTOs lobby the DoE to actively consult with frontline First Nations educators in both remote and urban locations about relevant policy, resource development and decisions.
- "Read Write Inc" (RWI) and "Fresh Start" are programs that have produced successful results Territory Wide, yet the DoE has removed staff responsible for administering the program and providing training.

Due to this, we ask that this conference calls upon the DoE to:

- Acknowledge the success of these programs
- Engage with teachers who administer these programs to hear anecdotal evidence
 - good or bad - BEFORE making changes to the level of support the program receives.

- Facilitate training and refresher opportunities for educators who deliver these programs
 - Ensure collection of comprehensive data on the effectiveness of the program BEFORE making changes to the level of support the program receives.
- That this AEU NT conference calls on the Department of Education to establish regional relief teacher pools as soon as possible, including decentralised funding for travel and accommodation to ensure staffing is sufficient for all staff to access their full non-contact time in regional and remote schools.
 - That this Conference directs the full-time officers to lobby DoE to create and develop an 'Out of Community' SAMS code for school use as soon as possible. Then when students are 'out of community' this information can be centralised for DoE to then use to look for where the students may now be attending school or located. This will not only highlight what attendance issues are within a remote school's sphere of influence and assist schools working with RSAS regarding student attendance.

Indigenous Education

Noting the AEU NT's Winning Aspiration:

"Our union champions the equitable and representative participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Our Aboriginal members are the first point of contact for decision-making relating to Indigenous education policy."

- This Conference authorises the establishment of a Working Group on Indigenous Representation, to be appointed by the FTOs from among interested Indigenous members.

This working group will meet to review the Branch's current rules and make proposals for rule changes to be put to the 2024 Branch Conference, that increase the representation of Indigenous voices and develop Indigenous leadership at all levels: sub-branches, regions, Branch Executive and Branch Conference.

- That this conference directs the FTOs to prepare a rule change proposal to allocate each sub-branch one additional Conference delegate position to an Indigenous member irrespective of sub-branch member numbers
Until this rule change takes effect, observer positions for additional Indigenous members are to be made available, from the 2024 Conference onwards.

- That this Conference calls upon the AEU NT, in line with AEU Federal, endorse the Yes to the Voice campaign and, at minimum, commit to the following actions:
 - Host and engage in discussion about the implications of the Voice for the Territory
 - Publicly promote AEU NT support for the Voice through branch publications and social media.

- That this conference directs the FTOs to lobby DoE to ensure that all schools where most students speak an Aboriginal language get enough funding to provide an Assistant Teacher in every class from PS-12, and to have their role covered if they are absent. Education funding policy must recognise that these first-language-speaking Aboriginal educators are indispensable components of good bilingual or EAL/D teaching.

- That the AEU NT urges the Department of Education to note that in recognition of the increased effectiveness and productivity of Teachers and Assistant Teachers proficient in Indigenous Languages, an employee (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) who is required to use Indigenous Language in the course of their employment should be entitled to an allowance paid fortnightly where a role identifies the need for language skills and where the employee can demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the language for the simple purpose of simple communication and there is confirmation of these language skills being used in general communication.

- That this Conference directs the FTOs to push for 5 days of paid cultural and ceremonial leave for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in the next Enterprise Agreement, in addition to the 5 days of unpaid leave currently available for this purpose.

- That this conference directs the FTOs to lobby the relevant agency to allow long-term (10+ years) permanent local DoE staff (AT/CT) to retain a school-allocated house post-employment and commit to the construction of more staff houses to support this.

Health and Safety

Noting the AEU NT's Winning Aspiration:

“All staff, students and community have clear expectations around work health and safety, backed by clear policy. Every school and every workplace is a safe and healthy place.”

- This conference commends the Department of Education on its report into Occupational Violence and Aggression in NT Government Schools and endorses all the report's

recommendations. We call on the Department of Education to support swift implementation with adequate resourcing.

- Noting the growing number of concerns being raised by Teachers about bullying in the workplace, this Conference asks that the Governance Committee makes it a priority to hear concerns about intra-departmental bullying and abuse of power.
- This conference asks the OVA Governance Committee makes it a priority to hear concerns for recording incidents, including unsafe, derogatory language, homophobic, misogynistic racist or ableist comments directed at staff and students. We would like a clear outline of steps that are being taken to ensure the safety of staff and students.
- That the AEU NT asks the DoE to negotiate with SWIPS to provide other ways of supporting schools and students if they don't have the personnel for their programs. This support should be evident both during critical incidents and down the track to address long term effects on specific students.
- That the FTOs push the DoE to better consult with frontline staff regarding improving implementation and understanding of the DoE endorsed TRB Protective Practices guidelines, particularly regarding their application in high needs, volatile settings.
- That this conference directs the FTOs to lobby the DoE to commit to ongoing development of realistic and measurable staff wellbeing strategies, through an extension of the actions outlined in the Teacher Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2022.
- That the AEU NT publicly campaigns to hold the Department of Education accountable to the recommendations of the 2018 Study of the School Counselling Service in Northern Territory Government Schools. Specifically key area 1, recommendation 1.2: assign a full-time School Counsellor to every school. This will enable Northern Territory Government schools to adequately meet the needs of students as identified in the "Gone Too Soon" parliamentary inquiry (2012).
- That the FTOs include on the next log of bargaining claims for both the General and Teaching Agreements five days pa of non-cumulative, non-certified leave be available to any worker experiencing symptoms of menstruation or menopause in addition to existing personal leave entitlements.

Political Power

Noting the AEU NT's Winning Aspiration:

"We lead the education conversation in the Northern Territory. We challenge government to implement policies aimed at improving public education outcomes and hold them to account as required."

- This conference endorses the recommendations of the AEU NT's report "[Funding For Success](#)" and implores the Commonwealth and NT Governments to work together to implement them in full according to the timelines set out therein.
- That, as part of the current review into school funding, the AEU NT full-time officers look at and discuss with the Education Department how the Education Department distributes their funding to schools. At present, some schools are receiving a lot of funding whilst other schools are getting the bare minimum and are struggling to have equipment and classrooms that are useable.
- That this AEU NT Conference requests that the FTOs lobby the Department of education to establish a minimum standard of infrastructure for all NT classrooms, including but not limited to:
 - Air conditioning
 - Reliable wireless internet
 - Windows that open for ventilation
 - Working fans
 - A working phone that can be used to contact the school office or principal
 - Adequate lighting
 - A door that locks from the inside without a key
 - That classrooms be properly equipped and set up to support students with hearing loss

Funding to bring classrooms up to this standard must come from outside of school budgets. The government is asked to action this before the end of 2023.

- That the FTOs lobby the DoE to increase the fixed funding for schools to increase annually by CPI by the 2024 budget at the latest.

Urgency Motions

- We ask the FTOs to lobby the government to ratify employee' entitlements (Long Service Leave, sick leave) and superannuation to be continued to be paid and accrued whilst on

workcover. This has been ratified by the Prison Officers entitlements in their last agreement.