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Editorial

It is wonderful to read about inspirational people and this edition of IE focuses on several. Michele O'Neil is the President of the ACTU and a truly inspirational leader. IE gives our readers the opportunity to get to know Michele and the experiences that have made her who she is today - it's a great story.

Early childhood educator, Sue Motely has a great story as well. It's one that isn't lived in the high pressured national industrial arena, but in the everyday experience of passionate and creative educators. Sue's story highlights and reminds us all of the great diversity of experience that staff in schools and early childhood centres bring to their work and the rich learning environments they develop for their learners.

This edition of IE continues to focus on key professional issues and how our education unions advocate for educators and strive to improve their working conditions which in turn improve the learning environments for students.

We look at the very important equal pay case for early childhood teachers which is being run by the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch; see what the 25,000 participants in the recent *Work Shouldn't Hurt Workplace Health and Safety* survey tell us about their experiences; take a long hard look at the wellbeing and workload issues for our graduate and early career teachers, and unpack the impact of the Nationally Consistent Data Collection (NCCD) process on workloads.

I commend this edition to you.

Debra James
iemagazine@ieu.asn.au

AUSWIDE

South Australia

An Australian first: School in aged care facility

In May Australia's first co-built educational and aged care facility was opened. Southern Montessori Middle School is built on the grounds of Kalyra Woodcroft Aged Care.

The school consists of three classrooms for approximately 60 students.

"The students needed more space to learn, our residents saw the opportunity could add a vibrancy to their home, and the local council worked with us to make it happen," Noel Browne, Principal at Southern Montessori School, said.

"Society is facing increasing age segregation which we believe can be influenced by learning programs and intergenerational care opportunities which encourage meaningful understanding and connection between the two generations. This can only lead to a more balanced and well functioning society.

"Research shows everyone benefits when the young and older generations come together and children develop empathy and respect for older people."

IEU SA applauds this 'out of the box' thinking on schooling and caring for the important ageing sector of our community - it fits with our principles of: Better Jobs, Better Schools, Better Society.

Queensland

Question mark over camps and excursions

A recent Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) decision has placed a serious question mark over the extent of Queensland members' participation in excursions, camps, trips and outdoor education.

The Commission has held that an injury sustained by a teacher participating in a particular activity whilst on a school excursion did not arise out of, or in the course of, the teacher's employment.

Consequently, the teacher was not covered by workers' compensation insurance.

In this case, due to unforeseen weather conditions, the teacher was participating in a specific activity on a school excursion overseas which had not been approved by the employer beforehand.

However, the Commission's decision has important ramifications for a broad range of activities which are not limited to excursions.

The teacher was injured in the 'unauthorised' activity and WorkCover was declined because the employer had not specifically authorised this emergent activity.

This QIRC decision means QLD members may not be covered by workers' compensation if they are injured whilst undertaking activities not specifically identified in documents such as position descriptions, school policies, risk assessments or Activity Intention Sheets.

If participation in an activity is not the result of a clear requirement or direction from the employer that it is part of the employee's role, then members are vulnerable.

IEUA-QNT is appealing the Commission's decision in the Industrial Court of Queensland but until - and unless - the decision is overturned, members must exercise caution in whether or how they decide to participate in activities.

Without clear, written directions from employers on participation in activities, QLD school employees are vulnerable.

If members are in doubt about any aspect of an excursion, camp, trip or outdoor education, contact our Union today.

Northern Territory

Gender Equality Framework a first for the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory (NT) Government is taking meaningful action on gender inequality, announcing the development of the Territory's first Gender Equality Framework.

The Office of Gender Equity and Diversity undertook consultations earlier this year, across four key focus areas: safety, health and wellbeing, economic security, and leadership and participation.

The consultations played an important role as a primary research tool around how gender inequalities manifest in the community and the ways to address them from both local and government levels.

In Australia, working women are more likely to be in insecure work, still suffer from a gender pay gap and will retire with 47% less super than men.

The Framework will play an essential role in rectifying some of these sobering statistics, creating a culture that values and upholds equity in all its forms and ensures all people feel safe and respected as equals.

It will also aim to address the gender inequalities occurring in the NT which include the highest rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia; high levels of ill health and chronic disease and the second highest gender pay gap in Australia.

The Northern Territory Gender Equality Framework will focus on long-term strategies to challenge systemic gender inequalities, build evidence-based approaches, share responsibility and strengthen community partnerships.

The consultations, which included input from individuals as well as community and advisory groups and interested organisations in urban, rural and remote parts of the NT, will help shape the framework.

To read the consultation paper, visit <https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/>

Tasmania

Teachers' wages deadlock broken

Members in Catholic schools, whose wages have parity with the government sector, have not had a pay rise since March 2018. However, with the recent settlement in the government sector there is some relief in sight. A circuit breaker one year wages deal was offered by the state government to the Australian Education Union (AEU) and a ballot of members returned an 84% endorsement. Staff in Catholic schools will also be backpaid to the same date.

The new government sector deal comprises back payment to 1 March of 2.1%, additional 0.25% pay increase on date of registration of the agreement with the Industrial Commission. It also includes a one-off payment (on agreement registration) of 0.15% for employees earning less than the equivalent full time salary of \$80,000 or \$120 for employees over this threshold. There are no changes to conditions. The offer contains a commitment for the parties to commence immediate negotiations for a two year agreement and, if agreement on wages is not reached by 29 November 2019, the matter will be arbitrated by the Commission.

Victoria

A silver milestone

This year IEU Victoria Tasmania celebrates 25 years since the merger of the three sector specific Victorian non government education unions and the formation of the Victorian Independent Education Union (VIEU).

This is an important year to acknowledge our roots and work on a clear vision for the next quarter of a century.

The origins of the Union came from the collectivism of assistant masters and assistant mistresses, who through their associations, agitated for an increase in their salaries.

In the early 1900s, teachers were earning as little as £12-20 per year, much less than teachers in government schools, and the wages of assistant mistresses were much less than their male counterparts. It is against this backdrop that a small, yet valiant group of women set out to achieve an industrial award that regulated their wages and conditions, finally realised in 1947 with the *Teachers (Girls' Schools) Award*.

Fast forward through the inclusion of other independent schools into awards, the first award in the Catholic sector, the extension of award coverage to education support staff, and the merger of the Association for Catholic Primary Principals with the Catholic Primary Staff Association.

There has been the movement from a state industrial relations system to the federal jurisdiction, the introduction of enterprise bargaining and the incremental process of improving wages and conditions.

The Victorian Independent Education Union also amalgamated over the last decade with both the Tasmanian Catholic and independent school unions - stronger together.

All the campaigns have been driven by dedicated, committed and courageous teachers, principals and support staff who know that they are stronger together.

Today's unionists stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before, and members need to continue to fight for the future and the next generation.

New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory

Professional issues prominent in claim

The NSW and ACT Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement 2017 expires on 31 December. Work intensification is consistently identified by teachers and support staff as being both an ongoing and increasing issue in schools.

IEUA members point to increased administrative tasks, increased data collection and reporting and a raft of expectations eroding out of class time.

The consequences of work intensification lead to decreased teaching time, an increasing sense of professional disempowerment and young teachers leaving the profession prematurely.

Solutions to be pursued by the Union include:

- consultation must occur with staff before a school or diocese decides to implement a new program or approach, to establish the educational and workload impact of the proposed activity
- dioceses should provide complete mandated programs which comply with NESA and TQI, with teachers adapting, modifying and contextualising the program, and
- explicit support for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) to ensure teaching is not compromised by the data collection.

Reconceptualising the implementation of 'new' additional work is critical. The Union is calling for an educational impact review which would entail consultation with the relevant staff to answer the following:

- Who requested the initiative?
- Who will perform the work?
- What funding is available?
- What is the cost/benefit?
- and importantly, what peer reviewed evidence exists to support this initiative?

Protecting teaching and learning from unnecessary intrusions, the provision of programs and tangible assistance with NCCD processes will be central to discussions with the various dioceses.



Kaleidoscope Michele O'Neil

Like many products of the Catholic system, Michele O'Neil's earliest memories of school are characterised by those "formidable nuns", not scared of standing up to authority, journalist Sue Osborne writes.

The ACTU President attended Catholic primaries in Melbourne and Canberra before her high school years at Braddon Catholic Girls High School in Canberra (now Merici College).

Michele admits she wasn't the easiest student, with a tendency to rebel. "Some parts of school I found fascinating, others not. I loved the social aspect."

Her activism developed at a young age. Her five big sisters were a major influence, as were her parents. Her father was a public servant and her mother worked in a tannery, as a factory worker and a waitress. Conversations about politics and social justice were common around the dining table.

Michele has memories of her sisters taking her to protests at the Aboriginal tent embassy outside Parliament House and anti-racism and anti-apartheid protests.

She said some teachers, particularly in English and History, welcomed her rebellious nature and saw her tendency to question the status quo as an opportunity for engagement rather than punishment. Those teachers live on in her memory.

At 14 Michele got her first job as a waitress and immediately joined the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union. One of her supervisors was sexually harassing her and she turned to the union for support.

"The older women who were union members realised something was wrong. I finally told them what was happening, and they took me to see the union delegate, and it was dealt with.

"That was a positive early experience I had of what workers can achieve by sticking together."



After school Michele went into the community sector as a youth housing worker, helping people her own age who were homeless. She eventually became a campaigner for the National Youth Coalition for Housing.

"There wasn't a lot of money for community services. I got a taste of insecure work very early on. I had to fight for funding for the service and my own income."

Michele left home soon after school and she had to supplement her community work with waitressing.

In her 20s Michele moved to Melbourne and worked for both the Clothing and Allied Trades Union and the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union, facilitating consultative committees with workers.

She interspersed this with work as a sewing machinist and operating a bank of knitting machines.

Michele became national secretary of the Textile Union after 27 years as

organiser, industrial officer and state secretary.

She was elected as ACTU President in July 2018 when the incumbent Ged Kearney won the Federal seat of Batman – since renamed Cooper – at a by-election in March 2018.

One of her proudest achievements was being part of the campaign to introduce world first legislation in 2008 that gave textile workers in sweatshops and at home the right to demand restitution for missed pay, leave and super all the way up the supply chain.

"This was ground breaking legislation for workers who had been forgotten. I met many smart, hard working women who had been undervalued by the bosses, politicians and society as a whole for years.

"If the boss had run off then they could demand their rights from the brands. It was life changing for them to finally have basic rights like super and sick leave."

The Fair Wear campaign brought exploitation of textile workers into the public gaze. That work continues today.

Michele said teachers are critical in keeping the union movement alive.

"It's not just formal teaching about unions, but everything that goes on in the classroom and school environment. The capacity to support critical and engaged thinking and develop someone's capacity to not accept the status quo and question what is happening in the world, that is powerful."

"To encourage people to think about how the world is, and how it might be changing by collective activism – that message never leaves you and that's what leads to unionism."

Michele said her main goal is to grow the union movement, tackle inequality in society, improve workers' rights and conditions and to make the sure the union movement remains relevant to the growing diversity of the workforce.





Learning embraces nature play

Sue Motley is committed to early childhood learning and has a great ability to listen, learn, connect and enthuse. She also implements extraordinary innovations for her centre and its surrounding community, journalist Bronwyn Ridgway writes.

As Director of a community preschool, Motley's initiatives are now engaging the region and bringing big thinkers, great achievers and hands on change agents from across Australia: notably women from Baya Gawi in the far reaches of the Kimberley in Western Australia.

For Motley, it's all about "education and actively working with the community on cultural and environment issues with a particular focus on Indigenous collaboration and participation."

Teachers and support staff in any school or centre could learn many lessons from the journey taken by Motley, her team and the community of Armidale Community Preschool in NSW.

"We have over 30 nationalities represented at the preschool as well as every type of family that you could imagine. No one is the same here, so no one feels different; we now have 85 children enrolled," Motley said.

In the last few years, the preschool has worked with the Ngroo program, facilitated by the DET NSW, which aims to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to address the barriers that may prevent families accessing early childhood services.

Projects deliver innovation

Involvement with Ngroo has increased enrolments of Aboriginal families from one to six. As Motley says, this changes

from year to year, but the families are now enthusiastically engaged in the preschool projects; one parent has consulted extensively and developed an Aboriginal education plan, another has painted a bush mural in the preschool foyer, while another parent painted a rainbow snake for the Street Library and Giving Rack.

There are now two educators on staff who identify as Aboriginal and they help all staff build connections with local elders, local families, other Aboriginal educators in schools and early learning centres in the region.

Beyond the gates

Beyond the centre's immediate community, significant links have been forged with Armidale TAFE, the University of New England, the Early Years Nature Connections Group, the Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre and numerous leading specialists in health and development.

Connections in and around the preschool have flourished, and the centre has grown and developed under Motley's leadership; the preschool environment transformed from a traditional plastic jungle into a calm and natural space.

The journey hasn't been without challenges, infused with cultural considerations, inclusion of children with additional needs, refugee and international families.

Cultural inclusion

"Fire and food cross all cultures and will usually get people talking; I've found cultural awareness is embedded by building and maintaining respectful relationships," says Motley, supported by a committed management

committee and a vibrant and involved community.

Described as having incredible drive and an ability to bring all comers together to move forward, Sue Motley's skills and sense of inquiry appear to have developed at a young age. An adventurous child who spent most of her time in the great Australian outdoors, she then lived as a teenager in Indonesia and was inspired by the cultural diversity there.

She went on to become a nurse then midwife but after a back injury, Motley took an administrative job at Armidale Community Preschool in 2004. Enthused by her new early childhood learning environment, Motley completed a Certificate III course then a Diploma, then a Bachelor of Teaching (birth-five years) in 2012. In 2014 she was appointed Director/Nominated Supervisor of Armidale Community Preschool, steering the centre through a funding crisis then on to a new and exciting horizon.

Inspiration and change

Inspired by innovative practices, the centre and its team have implemented gradual change towards a natural preschool environment. This includes systematic changes to early childhood education, so that it better reflects early learning concepts and pedagogy in a natural setting.

Armidale Community Preschool has been involved in various projects including hosting pre service teachers from Nauru, the Ngroo project, the ELLA language program, a Good for Kids research project and a University of New England research project investigating nature play in early childhood. In 2017 the centre installed a Street Library and



Giving Rack and in 2019 the team initiated a playgroup in collaboration with Pedal Early Service for siblings and families. A few years ago, they initiated a School Readiness evening and now all primary principals and early childhood services in the Armidale region get together for one evening and invite all parents to participate.

In 2018 the centre hosted an incursion featuring Aboriginal dance, then the preschool children and educators went on an excursion to the Aboriginal Cultural and Keeping Place where they played Aboriginal games and explored the bush tucker garden and labyrinth. Lessons learnt there have been introduced into the centre's activities.

In 2018 Motley brought together an exciting group, planning and implementing a two day Nature Play conference at Thalgararah, in conjunction with Dr Sue Elliott (UNE), Matt McKenzie (Principal Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre), and Fran Hughes (NSW TAFE and Early Years Nature Connections Group).

But it was after Motley took leave without pay and worked at Fitzroy Crossing at Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Centre for three months to experience Aboriginal culture, that she saw the need to bring some of Baya Gawiy's wisdom and teachings to Armidale and NSW.

Dynamic influences

The overwhelming success of the 2018 Nature Play conference has led to a second Nature Play conference in September this year. Funding through Rotary Central Armidale has made it possible to bring two Aboriginal educators from Baya Gawiy in the Kimberleys to participate and share their extraordinary knowledge, experience and practice.

Attended by teachers and educators from throughout NSW, Nature Play 2019 was booked out within days. The program was shaped to inspire schools and centres to move toward nature play, significantly changing their programs and learning environments. The conference included innovative and experiential learning sessions on Indigenous aspects of nature play, nature and wellbeing, navigating nature policy, culturally diverse journeys, nature's seasons, bush walks and nature pedagogy and sustainability. Care for country, Motley says, is the fabric of Aboriginal culture.

Footprint on their doorstep

Always looking at their own daily practices to improve and diminish their environmental footprint, the Armidale Community Preschool team are exploring the feasibility of using bamboo nappies and wipes and providing or selling nude food lunchboxes and wet bags on enrolment. They have recently replaced plastic utensils and plates with washable items and now are investigating the use of washable and reusable products instead of paper.

With the geographical region in the grip of severe drought and on level four water restrictions, the preschool staff work with the local council to develop ways to conserve water, such as educating the children about water conservation and using small buckets from their handwashing to water the plants and vegetable garden. Using drought funding from NSW Department of Education, hydropanels will soon be installed on the preschool roof to gather drinking water into a bubbler system for the children.

The centre hosts students from local high schools and support agencies to provide worthwhile experiences and exposure to an early childhood setting. Community organisations such as Rotary and representatives from the Aboriginal community and local government are invited to preschool functions and they are involved with activities programming and assistance.

A street or community pantry has been recently installed by Bateau Bay Men's Shed and there are plans for the area in front of the preschool to be more of a community destination with seating and vegetable barrow with surplus produce from the preschool vegetable garden.

An extraordinary example of inclusivity, interwoven with sustainability, Aboriginal culture and nature play, Armidale Community Preschool, its team and its community have become powerful agents for change in education at all levels throughout Australia.

For more information:

<https://mwrc.com.au/pages/baya-gawiy-early-childhood-learning-unit>

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-learning-languages-australia>

<https://www.ngrooeducation.org/our-story>
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-23/murrurundi-water-hydropanels-solar-technology/10836638>

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/Publications/good-for-kids.pdf>

Baya Gawiy

Baya Gawiy is an early learning unit at Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberleys. The unit is a centre for Indigenous knowledge and learning and provides culturally appropriate care for children up to four years of age.

The unit offers a Goodstart Secondment Program, which offers short term employment with experiential learning to qualified early learning teachers and educators. Those on the secondment program work alongside Indigenous teachers and educators, engaging with the region's Indigenous heritage, contemporary cultural practices and the community.

Training for local educators is promoted and it helps to build staffing capacity. This in turn allows more children to access the unit's quality early years program, providing smaller staff/child ratios and enhanced educational programs including going out on country to deliver important learning opportunities.

Early Learning Coordinator at Baya Gawiy, Louise Perrott, says "the most important factor if you'd like to participate in the Secondment Program is to come with an open heart and an open mind. There is so much to learn and we welcome qualified early learning teachers and educators to work along side us. Many of the children here have behaviours and dispositions that fall in the high level, often with speech and hearing delays. If a teacher or educator is looking for a challenge would like to see through the eyes of an Indigenous child, this is the place for you. We go on country, which is one to two hours away, and as Sue Motley found, it's a rich Indigenous cultural experience with the children and their families."

Baya Gawiy is committed to strengthening the power of women and their families to create culturally rich, engaged and healthy lives for Indigenous peoples living in the Fitzroy Valley and beyond. Baya Gawiy's vision is driven by shared core values, guiding principles and behaviours.

Enquiries about secondments are welcomed, email eclumanager@mwrc.com.au or phone (08) 9191 5000, or sign up for the Baya Gawiy newsletter on www.mwrc.com.au



Decision in landmark equal pay case coming soon

After six years of arduous and expensive work the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch is awaiting the outcome of its landmark equal pay claim for early childhood teachers from the Fair Work Commission.

The Union has two key bases of its claim for higher pay rates.

The first is a claim for an Equal Remuneration Order, seeking higher rates of pay for teachers in early childhood services, because they are paid less than male employees who have similar skills, qualifications and responsibility.

IEU witnesses in the case included male engineers and male primary teachers as comparator groups with early childhood teachers, who are overwhelmingly female. The second

is a claim that the Teachers' Modern Award rates have been set too low and do not reflect the proper work value of any teacher, including teachers in schools.

Gender gap

Early childhood teachers are overwhelmingly women (according to the 2016 Workforce Census 96.1% of long day care employees are female). Many chose to teach because of a vocation or belief in the importance of the work that they are doing.

There is no rational or just reason why they should be paid so much less than their equally qualified colleagues teaching at primary and secondary school level. Early childhood teachers graduate after four years of university

study and many are qualified to teach in primary school as well as early childhood settings. The wage differential contributes to shortage issues for early childhood teachers and turnover.

It is not uncommon for long day care centres, for example, to fill the minimum ratio requirement for early childhood teachers with university students enrolled in teaching degrees who, upon achieving qualification, move to primary schools where they can enjoy better pay and conditions. This is also true of fully qualified teachers.

Addressing wage undervaluation of early childhood teachers will impact upon the gender pay gap in this country. That wage gap arises because occupations which are predominantly



"Early childhood teachers are overwhelmingly women. There is no rational or just reason why they should be paid so much less than their equally qualified colleagues teaching at primary and secondary school level."



female, such as this one, are paid significantly less than male dominated occupations.

Evidence was supplied during the proceedings that early childhood education has been affected by perceptions that lower the perceived value of the work in the eyes of the community.

In particular, perceptions that the work involves caring for children and as such is work that women are 'inherently' capable of doing, rather than using complex learnt skills and knowledge.

These gender based views have led to downward pressure on wages leading to early childhood teachers being paid up to 49% less than primary and secondary school teachers.

Outdated award

The award rate for teachers has not moved to reflect increases in work value since at least 1995.

The work environment for teachers has altered significantly over the last 20 years. Rather than the traditional classroom, increasingly teachers are working in open plan classrooms; 'agile space' environments, including with multi-age groupings; in self-paced learning environments for students, including where they are using their own devices, with consequent impact on the physical and mental aspects of the work, including an increase on noise, and a higher degree of more difficult supervision required.

To some extent, this has always been present in the early childhood setting. However, these workplaces bring additional challenges of being noisy, chaotic, not in large part equipped for adults in the main classroom areas, and - necessarily - full of very young children who have difficulty controlling emotion and following instructions.

The award contains rates of pay that are considerably below the rates necessary to achieve the modern awards objective of being a fair and relevant safety net.

The vast majority of primary and secondary school teachers in both the government and non government sector are employed under enterprise agreements that provide for rates in excess of those claimed by the IEU.

Opposition from industry

The only opposition to this case has come from the for profit long day care industry, which employs a small fraction of all teachers covered by the award.

The evidence of change from primary and secondary school teachers was uncontested by any employers, and the increases sought were not opposed by those who employ the overwhelming majority of teachers covered by the award, whether in the early childhood education sector or otherwise.

The Australian Childcare Alliance has sought to downplay the extent of changes in work value of early childhood teachers.

However, no application was made arguing that early childhood teachers should have different award rates of pay than other teachers.

The overwhelming evidence demonstrates that a teacher is a teacher, and that the work value of an early childhood teacher is no lower than that of other teachers (noting they have the same qualifications and in most locations a requirement to meet the exact same national teaching standards). The IEU's position is that the largely uncontested

case should lead to substantial increases in the award rates of pay.

Compelling witnesses

During the proceedings before the commission a number of compelling witnesses gave evidence to support the IEU claim.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Organiser Lisa James gave extensive evidence on the depth and breadth of early childhood teachers' work, their requirements to be accredited by NESA by meeting the same teaching standards as school teachers, and the extensive pedagogical requirements of the Early Years Learning Framework, which guides their work.

Witness Kenan Toker, 27, is a software engineer with Langdale Consultants. He took a day off work to attend the commission in support of early childhood teachers.

"I've been very happy to give evidence in this case for early childhood teachers," Toker said.

"I believe my own work as a software engineer is similar in terms of skill and education required and I hope for a positive outcome."

Witness Jenny Finlay travelled from Queensland to make a statement. Finlay is Teacher/Director at Borilla Community Kindergarten in Emerald, in rural Queensland. She is also the Early Childhood Representative for IEUA-QNT.

Finlay described the complexities and responsibilities of her work at Borilla, which is a large kindergarten servicing 132 children with a range of needs, including low socio-economic background, English as a second language, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and special needs.

Finlay has worked at the centre for 23 years and said in that time the work has evolved.

"I wanted the Commission to hear the story of what an early childhood teacher actually does; how the work has changed, the complexity of it, the challenges of it and the training it takes to be an early childhood teacher."

She said risk assessment and risk management were a significant part of her responsibilities.

Former IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary John Quessy said "I am proud that we ran this case, proud that we committed the time, the resources and the money to see it through to the end when there were plenty of times when it looked just too hard and there was temptation to throw it all in - we did not yield to that temptation."

The Commission's final decision is expected between December 2019 and April 2020.

Compiled by journalist Sue Osborne



WORK SHOULDN'T HURT

78%
of workers have
suffered a mental
or physical injury
at work

Work shouldn't hurt; teaching shouldn't hurt. But it does. Each year, our Union supports members who have been injured or become ill because of their work, Jessica Willis writes.

As reported in the last edition of *IE*, findings from teacher targeted bullying and harassment and psychological wellbeing research have put a spotlight on the lived reality of Australian teachers, and now the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has added to the furore with the release of findings on the state of workplace health and safety across Australia.

The *Work Shouldn't Hurt* survey has exposed an underbelly of unsafe work practices that have led to deaths and unacceptable numbers of people being exposed to trauma, experiencing violence, or sustaining psychological or physical injuries and illnesses.

A career without workplace injuries is the exception not the norm, according to the *Work Shouldn't Hurt* report, which surveyed over 25,000 participants from the Australian workforce.

The report found Australian workers are dealing with systemic physical and mental health issues as a result of the conditions of their work, with most workers aware of serious threats to their physical and mental health which are being actively ignored by their employers.

No worker immune

The report found Australians are more than twice as likely to suffer an injury at work than to have a secure job and nearly 80% have suffered a psychological or physical injury while at work.

Sixteen per cent said they knew someone who was killed at work or died from a work-related disease and another 55% said they were aware of existing conditions in their workplace that could cause serious injury or illness if not addressed.

Issues such as workplace abuse, over work, threats of violence and actual violence, bullying and harassment mean that stress, depression and anxiety are rampant.

It also found there is a widespread belief that employers do not know how to respond or are not willing to take action on serious threats to their employees' safety.

Danielle Wilson, IEUA-QNT Industrial Officer said the education sector is no exception to these findings.

"People working in the education sector face a range of risks that need to be managed, including student violence, hazardous substance exposure, chronic vocal injury, repetitive strain injury, injury from participation in physical activities, and slips, trips or falls common to most workplaces," Wilson said.

"By far, the majority of the WorkCover claims our Union assists members with are psychological injuries.

"Teachers are second only to emergency services and military in the incidence of work-related psychological injury.

"These are caused by a range of hazards including work intensification, exposure to trauma or violence in schools, workplace bullying and harassment and poor management practice such as micromanagement."

Psychological illness and injury

Work Shouldn't Hurt highlighted a disturbing growth in the rate of psychological illnesses or injuries such as stress, depression or anxiety at work.

It found psychological work hazards are under regulated and consequently under recognised but are just as dangerous as physical ones.

More than 60% of respondents experienced poor mental health because of unaddressed psychological hazards in their workplace.

These can include debilitating issues like stress, anxiety or self-harm.

According to the survey findings, of the total respondents:

- in the last 12 months 47% of respondents were exposed to traumatic events, distressing situations or distressed or aggressive clients/customers
- 66% of respondents experienced high workloads
- 31% experienced occupational violence (abuse threats)

KEY FINDINGS:

- 78%** had been physically or psychologically injured or ill as a result of their work
- 78%** knew someone who had been seriously injured or ill as a result of their work
- 16%** knew someone who was killed at work, or died from a work-related disease
- 55%** said they were aware of existing conditions in their workplace that could cause serious injury or illness if not addressed
- 80%** said the penalties were not significant enough to make employers or companies take safety seriously
- 91%** said employers or companies who cause the death of a worker through gross negligence should face serious jail time (up to 20 years)
- 98%** of respondents said they believed unions had a role in work health and safety, and
- 97%** said unions should be able to take employers and companies that break health and safety laws to court.

or assault at work by clients, customers, the public or co-workers), and

- 61% have experienced poor mental health because their employer or workplace had failed to manage or address these poor work conditions.

It was revealed 91% of respondents did not make a workers' compensation claim in relation to their poor mental health, and of the 9% who did only a third of them were approved.

Members won't be surprised by these results and many will have stories similar to the anonymous teacher from the ACT who detailed the following in *Work Shouldn't Hurt*.

"I have been physically assaulted at work seven times over my teaching career. In 2018 I developed a psychological injury after being physically assaulted three times in one year. I was diagnosed with chronic stress and became very unwell. It took Comcare and EML five months to pay me one month's salary, which put me under financial pressure causing more stress. Psychological injuries need to be assessed and paid far more expeditiously."

Current penalties not enough

Responses in *Work Shouldn't Hurt* demonstrate a broad belief that employers are well aware of the risks their employees are facing in their workplace but are not willing to take these threats to their safety seriously.

Nearly 80% of survey respondents said existing penalties for employers are not enough to make them take safety seriously.

In most states, the current system that deals with employer penalties and fines for workplace injury or death usually results in small fines for employers found guilty of negligence and these fines can be claimed against their insurance.

This system spares employers from facing the consequences of their actions, even if these actions have resulted in the serious injury or death of an employee. Respondents described being physically assaulted (punched, kicked), being held hostage by patients, being crushed, having had electric shocks or being burnt at work.

Others said they had broken major bones or had been left traumatised or depressed by work conditions.

Areas surveyed included exposure to traumatic events – like the death of a colleague, occupational violence, hazardous conditions, poor management, and remote or isolated work.

In 2018, the Federal Government commissioned a report into model work health and safety legislation resulting in the Boland Review, which made 34 recommendations to strengthen work health and safety laws. The ACTU is calling for all recommendations to be implemented across Australia.

What does good WHS look like?

Wilson said it is critical to maintain strong and rigorous WHS systems in the workplace to ensure all risk is minimised.

"Everyone is responsible for workplace health and safety, but employers have a primary duty of care under our legislation to protect those who work in and visit the workplace," explained Wilson.

"Having strong and efficient reporting mechanisms is essential to removing risks and ensuring regulatory compliance.

"This includes having clear lines of report so that matters can be resolved quickly; effective risk management assessments to ensure activities are well managed; and effective monitoring systems, such as active WHS Committees and well supported, elected Health and Safety Representatives to give workers a strong, effective voice in the workplace.

"Where WHS is taken seriously by employers, risk of injury is minimal and if injury occurs employees usually feel well supported and make quick recoveries.

Unions create safer workplaces

Among the grim findings of the survey, there was a positive outcome regarding the role unions play in creating safer workplaces.

The survey confirmed that union workplaces are safer workplaces, due to a number of factors from greater consultation through to on the job advocacy.

Ninety-eight per cent of respondents said they believed unions had a role in WHS and over 90% said unions should be able to enter workplaces to address health and safety issues.

Wilson said our Union plays an important part in ensuring workers have a support network to turn to when concerned about their safety.

"When members use their collective voice, they are empowered to manage workplace issues and risks at the workplace level," Wilson said.

"Our Union can advise how to ensure there is effective consultation in the workplace through committees and elected Health and Safety Representatives.

"Genuine and effective consultation between employers and employees is essential to good workplace health.

"In the case where workers' compensation claims need to be made, we support members throughout the process and can act as a representative if claims are rejected.

"Members can also contact us at any time to get information about risks in the workplace and about how and where to report issues."

Danielle Wilson is an Industrial Officer and Team Leader on the IEUA-QNT Industrial Team. Danielle has worked for the Union for 11 years and prior to that was an Industrial Officer for the state based Public Sector Union.

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WELLBEING & WORKLOAD

What are our graduate teachers telling us?

IEU Victoria Tasmania Branch recently conducted its third survey of graduate teacher members. IEU Victoria Tasmania Branch Student and Graduate Project Officer Jacqui Scott outlines the survey results and the international research on graduate teachers.

The results and data trends from IEU Victoria Tasmania Branch surveys are consistent with a growing number of national and international academic studies and Australian media reports.

There is a perception in Australia that there is a high attrition rate of teachers, both during their initial teacher education (ITE) and within the first five years of graduation.

An Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) report (2016) stated that estimates of attrition throughout the first five years of teaching are uncertain and range from 8% to 50%. A consistent finding is that most teachers enter the profession with positive motivations to teach and a desire to be good teachers (Bucahanan et al 2013).

The main reasons these motivations shift include insecure employment; lack of collegial support and sufficient mentoring; heavy workload and increasing additional expectations; and an inability to maintain a healthy work/life balance.


Insecure employment

The 2016 AITSL report also found just under half of graduates are employed full time in schools in their first year. Of those working full time in schools, only around a third had permanent employment. A lack of ongoing employment and job security have been identified as factors for early career teachers leaving. (Mayer et al 2015)

Insecure fixed term employment leaves teachers unable to access entitlements such as paid maternity leave and unable to apply for loans. It is difficult for provisionally registered teachers to address the requirements to become fully registered while they are on precarious contracts of employment.

Training, induction and mentoring

Many reports indicate that ITE is not up to scratch. (Henebery 2019). The recent OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) found that Australian teachers reported being less prepared than the OECD average. The support provided to graduate teachers, in particular through mentorship, is also a concern. Mentoring has been consistently proven to impact on the intentions of teachers leaving the profession. (Kelly et al 2019) Mentorship needs to be of high quality for it to impact upon attrition rates. Graduate teachers face many challenges in their initial years of teaching. A good induction should include consistent mentorship, allocated additional time for planning and reflecting on practice and guidance to support moving from provisional to full registration. John Ryan, the Director of Queensland College of Teachers said "the support of school leaders and teachers cannot be underestimated in supporting teacher wellbeing and retaining beginning teachers in the profession".



"I was given very little support during my graduate year and it has completely knocked my confidence as a teacher."

Workload

Kelly et al cite a 2013 *Staff in Australia's Schools* (SIAS) survey which found that the two most important reasons for intention to leave the profession were "workload too heavy" and "insufficient recognition and reward". Teacher workload includes, but is not limited to, the number of worked hours, the quantity of work not related to teaching (eg administrative work) and in general the feeling of being overwhelmed by work. In recent years Australian teachers have seen an increase of responsibilities: individual learning plans, differentiation, management of ICT, national standardised testing, a multitude of policies and legal requirements, and the list goes on (see TALIS article in this edition).

Wellbeing and mental health

A small 2019 (yet to be released) study conducted by Bond University (Stapleton) examined the health and wellbeing of Australian teachers. The study produced troubling findings with more than half of respondent teachers suffering from anxiety and nearly one-fifth with depression. Respondents revealed their work environment, workload and finances to be the most significant sources of stress. 17% screened positive for having probable alcohol abuse or dependence. These rates are higher than the national averages.

The report identifies insecure employment and heavy workload as significant indicators for stress and burnout. Associate Professor Stapleton said these pressures "contribute to, or exacerbate, existing mental health issues". Early career teachers are at

risk of developing burnout and mental health issues if they are not supported in the workplace, as they learn the ropes and find strategies for resilience.

It is evident from a multitude of studies that supportive school environments, the ability to find stable permanent employment, and manageable workload are key attributes in not only improving retention rates, but also in ensuring safe and healthy workplaces for all teachers.

Union's graduate survey paints a worrying picture

For three years IEU Victoria Tasmania has conducted an annual survey of the previous years' graduate teacher members. The survey asks participants about the type of contract they are on, the severity of their workload, whether they are supported in their workplace, and how their wellbeing is impacted during their first year of teaching.

The most recent results have revealed worrying trends developing in our non government schools. The combination of more insecure fixed term contracts and increasing workload pressures are an indicator of why so many early career teachers are reporting dangerous impacts on their health and leaving the profession.

Contracts

Almost three-quarters of 2018 graduate members were on a fixed term contract, a significant increase compared to the previous year's data, which showed almost half the cohort held ongoing positions in their schools. Almost one in six of those on fixed term contracts last year were either not provided a reason or were told

their employment was fixed because they were a first year teacher or it was a 'trial period' - neither of which are valid reasons under the Victorian Catholic Multi-Enterprise Agreement. More than 15% of last year's graduates either moved schools this year or are no longer teaching. Some claimed they moved or left due to career development or relocation, but others stated they were bullied or not offered positions. One member was even "told to take a year off by the Principal", and another "missed out because they wanted someone with more experience".

Support and induction

Three in 10 graduates didn't have a mentor teacher for support last year, up from two in 10 the previous years. As a result, 11% of last year's graduates had issues with their requirements for full teacher registration and felt "a lack of support" put extra pressure on their workload. Almost half the graduates in 2018 felt they weren't given enough opportunity for professional development. The same cohort also reported a lower sense of being valued by school leadership, with 46% feeling either unsure or not at all valued. One member said "I was given very little support during my graduate year and it has completely knocked my confidence as a teacher".

Workload

The 2018 cohort of graduate teachers also reported the highest inability to cope with workload, with more than a quarter stating they did not cope well. The main reported additional workload issues that affected graduates in both 2017 and 2018 were assessment and



reporting (affecting 47% of surveyed graduates in 2017 and 70% in 2018) and full teacher registration requirements (affecting over half of surveyed graduates in both years). Other reported workload issues were planning, lack of support, conflict and relationships with other staff, and leadership expectations.

Wellbeing and attrition

More than half of last year's graduate teachers felt they were unable to maintain a healthy work/life balance. Previous years' graduates felt similar, with less than 10% in each cohort feeling they were completely able to manage.

More than 85% of the 2018 cohort also claimed to spend a lot of time thinking and worrying about their students and their job. Last year, exactly half of the graduates felt that their job adversely impacted their mental health at some

point during the year. Many of these teachers referred to high stress during report writing and assessment periods, a lack of support, and long uncertainty about their job as aspects that negatively impacted their wellbeing.

One teacher said, "I had to resort to medication to get me through the year. The whole experience affected me negatively. I hid it well at school, but it has put me off a career that I love."

Another stated they considered leaving teaching at several points throughout the year. When asked if they think they will still be a teacher in five years' time, 35% of last year's graduates responded either no or unsure. Many referred to the stress, workload and expectations as reasons they would leave the profession. One member said, "[I'm] not sure if I want a job with no switch off for the rest of my working life".

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A tale of two teachers



Pamela Escobar

I am currently in my second year of teaching. I did CRT work for a term at a local primary school then applied for a job at a Catholic school, Loreto Mandeville Hall and have been here ever since. I love teaching History and English and at

Loreto have enjoyed learning about and teaching Positive Education. At the moment I am teaching Years 7-10.

Since childhood, I have always wanted to be a teacher. As a teenager I explored other possible career pathways but I always came back to teaching. I love working with kids and the feeling of helping a child learn something and be proud of themselves for it is incomparable to anything else. It also allows and encourages me to continue being a learner myself.

Two of the big challenges many graduate teachers face once they get into the classroom are their overall lack of experience and learning to ask for continuous help until they get their footing in the new environment. I think it's important to establish a mentoring program early within the school and regular meetings (once a fortnight) is an important and effective process for mentoring and feeling supported.

In terms of preparing teachers for the classroom, I think universities need to allow students to go on longer placements, particularly during their final year. Most of what being a teacher truly entails is learned within the classroom, learning with and from real students rather than learning more theory.

Is it possible for beginning teachers to maintain a work/life balance? Yes, as long as there is a support system in place, both personally and within the workplace. Mentoring, having someone to trust and someone looking out for your wellbeing is crucial. It is important to have those 'teacher' friends who will support you and encourage you to take time away from too much work in order to avoid burning out within those early years. Schools need to have teacher wellbeing programs in place, eg counselling programs or agencies, which are available to all staff.

I do encourage a career in teaching, it isn't without its difficulties and challenges, but the rewards can be far greater.



Adam Wilson

I graduated from RMIT in 2012 with a Bachelor of Design in Games. In 2014 I completed my postgraduate Diploma in Education at La Trobe University. I'm technically still a graduate but have worked with Swinburne University building VET courses and at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in their Education Department. I started my first regular classroom position at an independent school, Kingswood College in Melbourne, in June last year, where I teach Media and ICT which presents lots of

opportunities for creativity and innovation.

Throughout my studies the staff at RMIT would discuss the untapped opportunities of video games and education. How many students dedicate too many hours to video games? Imagine if we could sit them down with the same enthusiasm but for educational games instead. One day I hope to bring my passions for gaming to the classroom in exciting new ways.

Personally, I have found the workload by far and away the most challenging aspect of the job. Teachers everywhere are spread very thin, and it's increasingly difficult to maintain a healthy balance between life and work.

I'm sure it's possible, but I haven't found the secret yet. It really is a struggle. I'm part time and often feel overwhelmed by the volume of work. It's important to have a great support network of colleagues, friends and family to maintain your wellbeing. I encourage teachers to have time set aside every week where they are away from the work and can just unwind.

One of the most important things for an early career teacher is a quality induction program and the most effective aspect of a good induction program is your mentor. You can't go wrong with a supportive mentor. Having someone accompany you in those early and daunting days provides a solid, supportive foundation. Frequent meetings with your mentor provide golden opportunities to voice your uncertainties.

IE asked me what advice I would give universities to improve 'classroom readiness' of graduates? I can think of many suggestions, but if I had to nominate one it would be to dedicate additional time to classroom management techniques. You start to learn what works for you on placement but practicing at university would help ease your nerves when you first stand up in front of a class.

Teaching is a truly rewarding career. The bonds you build with staff and students are both special and rewarding. It's important to remember however, the difficult days can be tough. But your colleagues have had their share of tough days too. If you support them during difficult times, they will gladly return the favour. Everyone says the job gets easier the longer you do it. But these early years are hard. Don't be discouraged.



The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability

MANAGING WORKLOADS

Almost two years on, the introduction of a new system to calculate students with disability loading has had a significant impact on how schools receive funding – and on the expectations, judgement and workload of teachers and principals.

In effect since 1 January 2018, the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability (NCCD) model should, in theory, provide for heightened effectiveness in targeting funding required to implement adjustments in educational provision for students with disability. However, part of this heightened effectiveness must be the appropriate support and resourcing of staff involved in all aspects:

- the identification of adjustments
- the implementation of adjustments, including planning of PLPs and other curriculum adjustments, teaching and LSO support work, recording, assessment and reporting, and preparation and participation in Program Support Groups (PSG)
- the undertaking of internal NCCD moderation processes to ensure consistency of decision making
- the collection and entry of NCCD data required, including recording of evidence of adjustments, and
- any NCCD audit process the school may be required to go through.

The NCCD model requires schools to:

- Step 1:** Determine which students are receiving adjustments to access education because of disability, consistent with definitions and obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards).
- Step 2:** Determine which of the four levels of adjustment is being provided to each of these students (QDTP – within ordinary range of differentiation, Supplementary, Substantial, Extensive) and identify and collate evidence to support the decisions made.
- Step 3:** Determine the broad category of disability under which each student best fits and identify and collate evidence to support the decisions.
- Step 4:** Record and submit the data.

Audit requirements

The processes and procedures used to identify and document the level of adjustment provided for each student with a disability can be audited by the Federal Government. For a student to be included in the NCCD, the school must have evidence of adjustments provided to meet ongoing, long term specific needs associated with disability that have a functional impact on the student's schooling. Evidence and any associated records for the NCCD must be kept for a minimum of seven years. Schools will need to develop processes to record, store and maintain evidence and allocate sufficient time and staffing to this.

Managing workload checklist

Opposite is a checklist that may be useful for individual IEU members and IEU subbranches/chapters to use in identifying the key workload drivers associated with the NCCD and the measures needed to manage the workload of individuals and ensure reasonable and equitable workloads across staff.

In many Catholic system and independent school industrial agreements, there are clauses relating to various aspects of workloads, including clauses on consultation on workload matters.

In some agreements consultative committees are established and have a role in recommending workload management processes. Even with these agreement clauses, the key is to make them work effectively in managing workloads and reducing stress.

It is important that workload management is a central resourcing consideration of systems and schools, not only when new and additional directives and initiatives are being implemented, but in an ongoing basis in respect to teachers' overall workloads, as well as in specific times of high workload activity. Time is the chief answer. Time to do one's job! Adequate staffing levels are key, as is adequate additional resourcing in high need periods.

NCCD Workload Checklist Tool

This tool can be used for both individual teacher workload analysis and overall picture of a school's NCCD teacher workload.

NCCD Individual Teacher Workload Activity/Driver	Numbers / Hours	Workload Management - additional release time, reduced class size, LSO (TA) hours, other admin support etc
Number of students identified for NCCD		
Number of students at the four Levels of Adjustment: - QDTP - Supplementary - Substantial - Extensive		
Number of students with PLPs		
Number of other students requiring specific intervention strategies		
Number of meetings associated with NCCD identification and moderation (planning/ attendance)		
Number of program support group (PSG) meetings (planning/attendance)		
Targeted assessment and recording/ reporting activity		
Data/evidence entry		
Leadership/co-ordination activity (including if holding POL)		
Other		

What are our teachers saying?

Jane Wenlock – levels of adjustment

I believe that the NCCD is a very positive funding program for Catholic and independent schools. Under this funding model, students who require adjustments to their program and meet the definition of a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, are attracting funding for the adjustments that are being provided to them.

In practice though, there have been a number of issues surrounding the NCCD. Two significant concerns are the level of adjustment schools are identifying students at, and the imputing of a disability - an 'imputed' disability is something that someone, (the teacher) believes the student has.

The interpretation of the appropriate level of adjustment is inevitably school specific. Teachers generally pitch their initial starting point of their lesson to the middle band of their classes. Yet as educators we know that the middle band is not identical between schools.

Teachers in school A may start their lessons already with a greater level of adjustment than a teacher in school B. Teachers from the first school may only provide evidence for the NCCD for those students who need the extra adjustments, rather than the adjustments that are provided to all students who fit the criteria.

Due to this, schools may be missing out on counting some students for the NCCD, as their starting point for the norm is lower than that of other schools.

Another issue is in respect to teachers imputing a disability. Within the NCCD guidelines, teachers are able to impute that a child has a disability using their own analysis of data. When using the word 'disability', teachers need to have a clear understanding of what this is and how this is measured. This is a change for teachers who have relied, in the past, on other health or specialist education professionals to diagnose a disability. Teachers need to have considerable professional development to advance their understanding

within this area, as do preservice teachers within their university courses.

For teachers, the impact of the NCCD is the significant time that is required to administer the extra recording, noting and inputting of various forms of additional data to justify the stated needs of these students. Ensuring there is accountability documentation requires time and effort from teachers, which adds to an ever-increasing workload.

Teachers need to be trusted, as professionals who develop strong knowledge of a students' learning and ability. We know when to adjust our teaching to meet the needs of the individual student/s in front of us. This is what needs to be championed through the NCCD. Procedures need to be developed that meet the needs of the school's community, so that teachers and parents work collectively to the benefit of the child, without increasing the teachers' workload and taking valuable time away from what is our core business - teaching.

Jane Wenlock teaches at Kolbe Catholic College Melbourne

Angela McDonald – evidence gathering, reporting and data entry

Each school, system and diocese has been in the process of developing protocols around the identification and collection of evidence for NCCD. Teachers have been required to document a minimum of 10 weeks of evidence to support the level of adjustment given to the student.

Evidence needs to be collected to support the assessed needs, the adjustments made, the monitoring and consultation.

Evidence includes but is not limited to adjustments or supports required in assessment settings, documented adjustments to learning materials, adjustments to teaching (program, weekly or term planning), record of social emotional interventions, documentation of environmental adjustments, specific resources developed to support individualised learning, transition visit records, personalised organisational devices, Personal Care/Health Plans, Positive Behaviour Support Plan, Risk Assessment Plans, additional supervision requirements, adjusted timetables (student/teacher), therapy or disability specific programs, records of meetings to plan for adjustments with specialist staff, records of advice sought, and conversations with the student or parent, guardian or carer, specialist training for students/staff.

This collection of evidence requires a substantial amount of work from the classroom support assistants, classroom teachers, learning support teachers, leadership teams and includes liaison with other specialist staff. Ultimately though, the burden of evidence is placed upon the classroom teacher.

It is an extensive administrative load. The leadership teams and learning support teachers are required to finalise the levels of adjustments and ensure there is adequate evidence to substantiate the level of adjustment given. This requires many additional collaborative meetings. All teachers, but especially early career teachers, need support and time to manage and navigate the NCCD processes.

Schools are grappling with issues such as:

- Where to store the evidence?
- What can be done to streamline evidence collection?
- Who can collect the evidence?
- How much is enough evidence?
- What level of detail is required?
- How can schools manage the increased workloads?
- What training and ongoing support is needed?

Differences of opinions over the level of adjustments occur, despite guidelines. Schools need to crosscheck the information from Personalised Plans and across other documentation to ensure it is aligned and validates the level of adjustment given.



"...surely one of the most exciting initiatives to further the cause for diversity and inclusion within Australian schools.."

The complexities of navigating NCCD are compounded by the uniqueness of the students involved and the nuances that each school and system bring to the process.

Angela McDonald teaches at St Thomas Aquinas Primary School in ACT.

Annette Campbell – time, time, time!

The NCCD is surely one of the most exciting initiatives to further the cause for diversity and inclusion within Australian schools.

The collection is having a positive impact on support for students with disability in myriad ways.

Disability is now high on the agenda, and schools are working hard to embed their obligations under the Disability Standards for Education into practice.

Education providers everywhere are evaluating their learning and support systems and processes to ensure quality teaching for all students is their main priority.

Indeed, the NCCD may, perhaps, be considered the long overdue catalyst for reform in Australian schools, breaking the industrialised mould of the 'one size fits all' model of curriculum delivery and instead propelling teachers to meet students where they are at in their learning, to cater for individual needs through bespoke differentiation and the design of respectful learning tasks.

So, at long last, the landscape for inclusion of students with disability seems brighter.

The government has seen fit to fund students with disability in a logical and needs based way rather than through the highly restrictive diagnostic eligibility criteria of disability seen in the past.

These changes bode well for the many (approximately 18%) of students with disability in our schools who require some form of adjustments to access learning.

Who, though, is not faring so well in this new paradigm of educational modernisation? You guessed it – the classroom teacher.

The NCCD brings with it high accountability and increased transparency.

The NCCD is not optional; it is a mandatory, ongoing exercise whereby the general classroom teacher has an essential role in collating and recording the adjustments they are providing for individual students as part of their teaching practice.

In essence, the NCCD obliges teachers to document their own teaching practice in an evidentiary way.

Teachers must make visible the work that they undertake with students with disability.

Each school has its own NCCD record keeping format with which teachers are expected to comply and the school day now sees teachers not simply planning, preparing and delivering their lessons, and correcting and marking student work – as has been the norm for teachers for time immortal – but also gathering multiple examples of adjustments, provided to multiple students (around 18% of the class), and uploading such evidence for compliance purposes.

Work samples, unit or weekly planning, behaviour information, testing data, adjusted worksheets, alternative format tasks, modified homework, scaffolds, visual supports, file notes, checklists, observations, emails, meeting notes, phone call notes – the collection and upload of these masses of evidence now forms part of a teacher's expected daily practice.

And, while best practice sees the evidence collection as being embedded in normal school routines, the increase in the administrative demands that the NCCD brings to the role of a teacher cannot be refuted.

There is growing feeling among many teachers that the additional workload that the NCCD brings, on top of all that teachers already do within their roles, now makes the job unmanageable.

While maintaining an evidence base is a requirement of the NCCD, teachers simply ask for one thing to assist them to carry out their duties professionally and proficiently: time.

Annette Campbell is Head of Faculty, Exceptional Learners, St Patrick's College Shorncliffe Queensland.

Compiled by Cathy Hickey, Assistant Secretary, IEU Victoria Tasmania Branch.

The rise of the teacher influencer

The role of the teacher has always encompassed a form of influencing, but the rise of social media has put a new spin on the term 'teacher influencer'. Journalist Mykeala Campanini explores this new phenomenon and some of the industrial implications.

A growing number of teachers are becoming 'edu-famous' by creating dedicated social media accounts for their classroom and attracting thousands of followers in the process.

The devoted accounts feature inspiration for classroom decorations, projects, stationery and tips for other teachers regarding planning and marking.

The social media accounts also promote communication and interaction between teaching professionals, who find one another online and use their education focused content as conversation starters to discuss similar experiences they may be going through, as well as share advice.

Teacher influencer Annie Farrugia, the Wollongong teacher behind the popular Instagram account @teaching_with_miss_annie, started her account just two years ago and already has over 10,000 followers.

Farrugia dedicates countless hours each week to creating an engaging classroom for her students and wanted to share her ideas with other teachers who may be looking for inspiration.

Her account features a mixture of posts from classroom set-up inspiration and her favourite learning resources, through to more personal posts that discuss the challenges she may be facing in her career that other teachers could relate to.

"The Instagram teaching community is very supportive, any question I put out there through my story always gets a lot of responses to help me trouble shoot little problems that I have or give me ideas for different ways to teach different concepts," Farrugia said.

"It has led to relationships with teachers all over the world which I think is pretty incredible and exciting."

Instagram inspiration

The inspiration behind starting her successful Instagram account was not related to followers, likes or becoming a "teacher influencer" for Farrugia, but more as a platform to share her experiences.

"I was inspired by many other teacher accounts on Instagram that Pinterest searches were taking me to, I was just wanting to share some of the work I was doing and some of the resources I was creating and using that I thought may be useful to others in the field," said Farrugia.

"I'm not a fan of the term 'teacher influencer', I don't in any way think I am an influencer in that sense, I just want to share what is working and of course what isn't working in the classroom.

"I take a snap every few days and upload it, I don't take the prettiest photos and I try and show the real."

Although her account is in no way a quest for social media stardom, her significant following does come with some perks in the form of free products, which she has used to benefit her students.

"I have received products to use in my classroom in return for a post on my page, I try and share these resources out with the rest of my school so really we are creating a more effectively resourced classroom," said Farrugia.

Risk and liability considerations

The increase in public social media accounts run by teaching professionals does pose questions relating to risk and privacy factors for teachers.

IEUA-QNT Industrial Officer Vaishi Rajanayagam says teachers who run public social media accounts with content focused on the classroom do need to understand the associated consequences.

"Although it may be a seemingly innocent activity, there needs to be a lot of thought put into the establishment of such an account, including privacy factors, intellectual



Photo credit: @teaching_with_miss_annie

property matters and issues surrounding professional boundaries with students who may interact with the account," Rajanayagam said.

"It is important to seek permission from your employer before posting any images of your workplace, ensure you have de-identified yourself by not using your full name or your school's name or location and that the account does not compromise the privacy and identity of your students.

"If you are considering creating a public social media account dedicated to your employment as a teaching professional, it would be essential that you discuss this with your employer and your union first, to minimise the risk factors associated with this kind of activity."

Risks and implications to be aware of:

- privacy of students
- intellectual property matters
- professional boundaries with students online
- liability when reflecting on brands or providing personal opinion
- financial gain may affect your employment contract, and
- negative or inappropriate comments made by others on your content.



When is a wobbly chair a bonus?

Hokki, flexible stools and wobble chairs are active learning seating options now used in and out of school classrooms. These teaching aids allow students to gently rock and move on their chair or stool. Shirley Jancetic and Michelle Masterson (above left) are teachers in Catholic systemic schools on NSW's south coast. They talk with journalist Bronwyn Ridgway about the way they use these teaching aids and the success they've experienced with them.

Teachers and support staff say these versatile, colourful seating options help reduce strain on the musculo-skeletal system and help children's engagement in learning.

They are being used for general class activities as well as an aid for students who benefit from movement in order to focus and learn.

Most often used as an option for children with additional learning needs, the stool and chair encourage mobility and core strength, supporting an active learning environment where physical movement is used to assist focus, memory and cognitive development.

"At my school the wobble chairs are mainly used in our specialist classroom settings for children aged 5 to 11 years who have additional learning needs. They're used as a seating option within the classroom and students have a choice whether to sit on them or not. Sometimes a teacher might encourage a student to choose the wobble chair as it allows, even encourages, the child to move while seated," Jancetic said.

Wiggle while you work

"We have had great success with them within specialist settings; where class sizes are small and when students can choose from a variety of seating options. The particular students who choose a wobble chair are those who find it difficult to sit still. It allows students to move or wiggle while at their desk or work area, this way they can focus more effectively on their learning."

The chairs have been in use for approximately three years at Jancetic's workplace and six months at Masterson's. Costing around \$100 a chair, both Jancetic and Masterson say the cost doesn't really allow them to be immediately available in all classroom settings.

Jancetic said: "In 2018 we trialled two wobble chairs within a flexible Year 4 classroom setting with some success. However the limited number of wobble chairs in that particular classroom made them 'valued items' and a source of disruption - often outweighing the benefits that would otherwise be achieved by their presence in a classroom. Within the specialist classroom setting, the class size is much smaller, making the wobble chair a more regular piece of the classroom furniture."

Jancetic believes there are definite benefits to having a chair that gives flexibility to move. "As teachers, we have all taught students who find it difficult not to swing on their chair, who struggle to sit still and need to be moving. Wobble chairs are designed to allow the child to move while sitting and learning. They are lightweight, so ideal within a



Early days

Although not considered a controversial teaching tool, Jancetic agrees it's early days in terms of their use, testing and results. Just as there's ongoing research into how to best prepare students for their future, so too are classrooms settings evolving. That is, there has been a shift from teacher centred learning to student centred, where students and teachers share the focus.

In a student centred classroom, students take greater control in directing their learning; discussions and group work are encouraged. To accommodate this, flexible learning spaces are created. A wobble chair can be used effectively in a flexible learning space where a child could identify that the movement of a wobble chair would allow them to focus on their learning more effectively.

When first introduced to her school's learning environment, Jancetic said the limited number of chairs available caused disruption due to their popularity – all the students in the Year 4 classroom wanted to use them. But within specialist classroom settings, this proved not to be the case.

Reactions from parents and colleagues to the introduction of wobble chairs was not as dramatic as expected. Some parents were curious about the chairs and their use, but the majority made no comment. Colleagues were also interested in the benefits the chairs might bring, they stimulated professional discussions and fuelled investigation about potential use and benefits.

Masterson said students at her school first thought of the stools as a novelty; they are now only used as needed or in guided groups. Masterson hasn't received negative feedback from parents and did have a parent especially request that her son use the wobble stool whenever he felt unfocused. The only negative Masterson thought was that the stools didn't provide back support which could create fatigue over time. However the wobble chairs Masterson commented, "have backs that flex and the narrowed curve between the back and seat allow the students to straddle them if it helps them focus."

When asked about the implications of introducing the chairs more widely into schools, Jancetic said from her experience, they provided an innovative alternative to traditional classroom seating options. Further, they're popular with the children and definitely help those who need movement with an active learning environment.

"It's not the conventional way but may require a change in a teachers' perspective when assessing whether a child is engaged in a learning task. I've only used the chairs within a classroom, but I don't think there is anything that prohibits outdoor usage," Jancetic said.

If you have used these teaching aids or similar, and would like to share your experiences, email the editor ieu@ieu.asn.au.

"...an innovative alternative to traditional classroom seating options. They're popular with the children and definitely help those who need movement with an active learning environment."



primary school setting; students can pick them up and move to any desired areas of the classroom for either individual or group learning tasks."

Masterson said that at her school there were currently six wobble chairs in all of the Year 5 and Year 6 classrooms, and some in their Learning Centre as well. They're used on a needs basis for individual students and they are also used for guided group cloud tables.

"I've found them extremely settling for those students with sensory needs. In Year 6 most students don't want to have sensory cushions or tactile items because it makes them feel different and because the wobble stools are available for everyone, they enjoy the freedom of being able to use them as needed," Masterson said.

For further reading:

<https://www.teachstarter.com/au/blog/flexible-seating-classroom-benefits-and-how-to/>

<https://news.curtin.edu.au/stories/wobbly-chairs-bean-bags-battle-student-obesity/>

<https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/settling-into-new-learning-spaces>

<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/health-and-wellness/burn-calories-at-your-computer-20140916-10hmv4.html>

<https://theconversation.com/let-children-move-around-stand-or-walk-in-the-classroom-youll-see-the-difference-44495>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278732994_Reducing_children's_classroom_sitting_time_using_sit-to-stand_desks_Findings_from_pilot_studies_in_UK_and_Australian_primary_schools

SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY:

Insecure work and unpaid overtime concerns

Recently IEUA NSW/ACT Branch undertook a survey of its support staff working in Catholic systemic schools and received over 700 responses - an impressive result showing support staff are engaged with their Union.

A key finding is that a staggering 92% of respondents indicated that they start work before their scheduled time, and 90% stay back. Additionally, 37% never claim overtime and 47% have been directed to take time in lieu instead of an overtime payment.

The breadth of experiences of our support staff members in schools also generated a wide range of issues in the workplace, including:

- lack of awareness of particular entitlements, such as the overnight allowance
- favouritism or nepotism in the selection of candidates
- inequity in allocations of work
- lack of transparency in appointments
- completion of PD in non work hours
- long-term rolling temporary appointments
- highly skilled tasks being under classified, and
- WHS concerns with fatigue and mental health.

One issue that is causing deep concern is the constant stress of insecure work, keenly felt by teachers' aides. Also of concern was the time some schools are taking to communicate role allocations and availabilities year by year, with decisions communicated in late December, and only via email.

Another frustration was that support staff are often not aware of their entitlements as waged workers, which is not being communicated by school leadership teams.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Vice President Support Staff Carolyn Collins said many school support staff are reluctant to request overtime payment because of the 'fear factor' that they may miss out on future employment or that they are seen as incompetent in the work they are assigned.

"If we don't speak up, we are not doing justice to our role and employers will go on thinking our workloads are adequate and will never perceive that we are overloaded," Collins said.

"In the past, paid overtime was one of those things that was 'secret person's business'. Even if you asked, nobody knew if support staff were paid overtime or where to go to put in an application.

"On a personal level, when I asked about being paid overtime many years ago for a three day overnight excursion, I was told 'we don't do that'!

"This went on for many years and finally I asked again to be paid for an upcoming excursion, and I was told 'no' and that I would no longer be required for the excursion.

"They quickly went to another more willing member of the support staff. This led to me never being included in excursions for many, many years. Excursions can be the cream in our profession, as we get to know the students and teachers on a whole different level and just changing the working environment for a day can be refreshing.

"I'm not diminishing the stresses and workload of excursions in any way.

"Due to the work of the IEU, school support staff have been recognised as a significant and integral part of school communities.

"However, this is one area that has not evolved as we would like. Time in lieu appears to be the preferred option in



schools nowadays.

"However, this may not always be preferred by school support staff as often there can be restrictions in the time frame in which time in lieu is granted. This needs to be done in consultation.

"Often school support staff are reluctant to take time in lieu as it impacts too much on assigned classes and can be challenged by teachers who are not aware of the provisions within our award.

"School support staff are not paid a huge wage and I am sure most, if not all, would prefer to be paid for the work they do, especially overtime.

"Any paid overtime or time in lieu must be directed by your principal or authorised supervisor.

"Please speak up, as our principals may not be aware of the extra workload and are more than willing to see justice done. You may get a surprise of a few extra dollars in your pay."

Log of claims

The Union is aware that some support staff have not been informed of the overtime provision or that there is an overnight camp allowance in the enterprise agreement.

The Union is seeking to remedy these issues with the current Log of Claims which looks at tightening the pathway to permanency, LSL accrual equity and meaningful Professional Development.

"On a personal level, when I asked about being paid overtime many years ago for a three day overnight excursion, I was told '*we don't do that!*'"



Survey responses

Here is just a small selection from the myriad comments the IEU has received through this survey:

"While I'm not asked to work overtime, if I didn't, the work wouldn't be completed. Taking time in lieu isn't an option as the work will just continue to build up."

"I would like to add that if I do get time in lieu, I'm never allowed to take this when it is convenient for me. Most times I have been instructed to take it at the end of the year."

"Our roles as aides are never guaranteed from year to year due to funding. We don't have security and sometimes don't know how much work we have until the start of the year. I feel like we need to keep our CV fresh and up to date all the time."

"Often extra work is given with the comment. 'Only if you have time'. Or 'Can I have it first thing tomorrow morning?'. More and more tasks are added without consultation, but with expectation it will be done or the flow-on logistical consequences of these additions."

"I frequently miss breaks in order to help a learning support child who is in need or a teacher who is overwhelmed. This may be toileting, supervising eating or dealing with a meltdown or sensory issues or cleaning a classroom or discussing needs with a classroom teacher. I am not paid for this, I do it to help a child or teacher get through a day however it is becoming more expected in the workplace."

"Never been paid or had time in lieu for any overnight excursions for the 13 years I've worked for Catholic education."

"The most annoying unpaid work is the compliance training that is always in my own time and can take hours to complete; and teachers aides quite often have to prepare materials for support programs that are not provided by teaching staff and do this in our own time. We have no release time like teaching staff for this or training. I run a

gardening program for the school which is planned for and organised in my own time. This requires a few hours planning and set up time every term."

"It's an expectation to work unpaid overtime. I have witnessed this in the last 24 years."

"We do not get offers of any Professional Development whereas teachers have constant access."

"I do many hours per week at home, planning, organising work for students."

"Support staff at my school often have their 30 minutes break interrupted by students who need assistance, whether that be to assist them with a special requirement like changing their hearing device or accompanying them in a lift to recess due to their needs. The full 30 minutes isn't always able to be taken as the LSO is required to bring the class back to their room with the teacher once the bell rings."

"Working as a Lab Tech I am often required to come in early or stay back late to set up/pack up pracs, equipment for prac exams etc. I'm sure if I asked I would be given time in lieu, however, if I take that time off, there's nobody here to do my job so it just means extra work when I return. It defeats the purpose. I would much rather be paid for the extra hours that I do (to supplement our ordinary wage!)"

"I am fully aware of my rights, so I have always been treated fairly."

"I don't claim the overtime I work because I know my school can't afford to pay me. I do the overtime because I can't keep up with the workload."

Compiled by IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Organiser Lubna Haddad and journalist Sue Osborne.

The out-of-field teaching phenomenon



More than a quarter of Years 7-10 teachers are teaching out-of-field according to an Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) report, as journalist Mykeala Campanini writes.

Out-of-field teaching is not a new concept; it refers to a teacher teaching a subject for which they have not studied past first year at university, meaning they have not studied the relevant teaching methodology for that subject.

But findings from the *Out-of-field teaching in Australian secondary schools* ACER report show an increasing concern regarding the effect out-of-field teaching is having for both teachers and students.

Early career teachers are especially vulnerable to these issues as they are the most likely to be teaching out-of-field, with 37% assigned to teach out-of-field in their first two years.

Early career teaching is defined by education professionals as within the first five years of teaching, once completing their university studies.

Anna Du Plessis, research fellow at Australian Catholic University (ACU) and author of *Out-of-field Teaching Practices* has experienced teaching out-of-field firsthand during the early years of her teaching career and has since dedicated her academic research to this increasingly prevalent issue.

"The issue of out-of-field teaching practices is multilayered and involves not only implications for quality teaching and student learning, but also impact on professional relationships within the wider school community," said Du Plessis.

"Prospective teachers choose a teaching career because they are motivated to make a difference and because of their passion or interest in a specific subject or specific student age group.

"Preservice teachers begin to establish a professional identity during their initial teacher education (ITE) preparation and, in general, it takes four years for undergraduate degrees or two to three additional years for postgraduate degrees to train and develop teachers in a specific field.

"ITE preparation influences beginning teachers' readiness for teaching and how they perceive or identify themselves as teachers – as, for example, a science teacher, a physical education teacher, a special education teacher, etc.

"This is their identity when they transition into the workforce, even in the generalised context of primary schools, teachers have preferences for certain age groups and will often identify themselves as a Year 4 or Year 6 expert teacher.

"Teachers are resilient, hardworking and are willing to adjust and learn; however, ongoing exposure to highly demanding and challenging teaching environments, such as out-of-field teaching practices, can impact uncertainties about their self-efficacy, professional identity, competencies, and teaching as a career choice."

Rural and early career teachers most affected

Research shows that a majority of teachers who are teaching out-of-field are doing so as they were requested by their principals to 'help out' in a specific area, regardless of whether that is a subject area they are familiar with.

Respondents of the ACER research report acknowledged taking an out-of-field position because of a lack of suitable positions available in a particular location, so their need for work prompted their willingness to teach outside their qualifications.

There were also clear increases in teachers teaching out-of-field in rural areas, as these locations have more difficulty attracting teachers in subjects experiencing shortages such as mathematics, languages, information technology, physics and science.

The higher proportion of early career teachers working in rural locations is also likely linked to the higher percentage of first and second year teachers having to teach out-of-field.

"Beginning teachers are the most vulnerable when assigned to positions for which they are not suitably qualified; this is not to say these teachers are not fully qualified – they are often highly qualified – but the issue arises when they get assigned to teach outside these qualifications," Du Plessis said.

"They are still developing confidence to manage the multilayered aspects of the teaching and learning context; their professional identity development is still 'delicate' and greatly depends on their lived experiences within a specific position and context.

"Concerningly, research also shows beginning teachers who are assigned to out-of-field positions most often also have to manage larger student cohorts and the most challenging classes, owing to existing staff having first choice of preferred classes or subjects."

Out-of-field teaching and student learning

The concern about the effects of out-of-field teaching also extends to students, especially those in technical subjects who are being taught by a teacher who is unqualified in that area.

"Teachers teaching in out-of-field positions acknowledge that they do not have the depth of content knowledge, year level or subject specific pedagogical content knowledge needed to guide students towards high-order or critical thinking," Du Plessis said.

"They shy away from in-depth content knowledge discussion because of their restricted knowledge in the out-of-field subject.

"Out-of-field teachers find it highly challenging, if not impossible, to adjust, develop and implement the

“Beginning teachers are the most vulnerable when assigned to positions for which they are not suitably qualified.”

curriculum of an unfamiliar subject at the same level they would implement a curriculum in which they have suitable qualifications or expertise.

“This difficulty with depth and sound knowledge construction impacts students’ learning experiences and achievements within their current year level and can have ripple effects on their learning in following years.”

Research has also indicated that students who are in junior technical classes with an unqualified teacher are less likely to pursue that subject in later years.

Managing out-of-field teaching

Many researchers agree the phenomenon of out-of-field teaching will likely remain, but how it is managed will make the difference between it remaining an issue as opposed to creating a positive learning environment in out-of-field taught classes.

“Acknowledging the occurrence of out-of-field teaching practices, the implications they have for classroom and school contexts and what they mean for out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences and students’ learning experiences is a step towards effective management of the phenomenon,” Du Plessis said.

“My belief is that acknowledging and noticing the out-of-field teaching phenomenon should also entail actions that address its implications.

“The particularly high expectations for teachers to deliver quality teaching and to be quality teachers are not unreasonable.

“However, if teachers continue to be assigned to teach subjects or year levels outside their field of qualification or expertise without access to well focused support or professional development opportunities, out-of-field teaching will continue to create issues for any improvement of quality education.

“This is because the issue is closely linked to strategic workforce planning, improvement of which involves a critical look at the demand and supply needs of the workforce and teachers’ professional development for our school leaders.

“The issue of out-of-field teaching in schools also needs development regarding how school leaders and out-of-field teachers and their colleagues are enabled to invest in guiding and professionally developing teachers who are out-of-field.”

Research shows that school leaders who demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the challenges and implications of out-of-field teaching for teachers’ lived experiences and students’ learning experiences tend to engage in ongoing one-on-one discussion with these teachers.

“These professional interactions offer out-of-field teachers a safety net within which they feel recognised, valued and can maintain their professionalism,” Du Plessis said.

“On the other hand, research also indicates that out-of-field teachers often feel isolated and are left to ‘swim or sink’.

“Research shows that existing ‘generalised’ professional support and development sessions or workshops rarely address out-of-field teachers’ specific needs.

“Employers’ acknowledgement of the out-of-field phenomenon as a complex, demanding and challenging teaching situation will pave the way for targeted action to be taken, such as focused professional development and mentoring opportunities specifically designed for teachers in out-of-field teaching positions.”

There are reports of positive experiences linked to out-of-field teaching, but these are only made possible when a variety of factors combine, such as the teacher’s interests and passions as well as the support they are offered by their school and school leadership.

“Teachers who have a passion and interest in subject areas outside their field of qualification demonstrate positive dispositions towards these out-of-field teaching situations,” Du Plessis said.

“In these cases, despite being assigned to teach out-of-field, their own passion and interest in the teaching area stimulates their full engagement in professional learning and development and gives them motivation to grow into an expert or specialist in that field.

“It is noteworthy that teachers admit that it takes between three and five years before they feel like or perceive themselves as an expert in a field for which they did not have ITE training.

“An ongoing effort to have our ‘finger on the pulse’ of the out-of-field teaching situation in our schools will support the strategic planning of a stable teaching workforce.

“In my view as a researcher, the out-of-field teaching phenomenon will probably always be part of the education environment, but how we manage the phenomenon will make a tremendous difference to the improvement of quality education for all students.”

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The benefits of a therapy dog in the school setting



Growing research into animal-assisted therapies has seen an increase in the implementation of therapy animals, such as dogs, in the educational setting. Journalist Mykeala Campanini digs into the details.

Recent research has shown therapy dogs can reduce stress in physiological ways by reducing the stress chemical cortisol in the brain and triggering the release of oxytocin, which plays a positive role in social bonding.

The presence of a therapy dog in a school setting has also been linked to improvements in school attendance, student confidence levels and increased motivation to participate in learning activities.

Shalom College in Queensland is one of the first schools in the state to experience the benefits of having a

therapy dog firsthand, after introducing their school dog Milo in late 2018.

Claire Stallard, a teacher at Shalom College and Milo's owner, plays the role of his handler while he completes his duties around the school.

"Milo came into the position of school dog unintentionally after he accompanied me to work one day for a vet appointment and attended a physical education class," Stallard said.

"It was during this class he inadvertently was put in a position where he calmed down a very distressed student, and it was from there we looked into the role he could play as a more permanent member of staff at Shalom College."

Milo has now been the school therapy dog for over 10 months, with a range of day to day duties that involve both in-

class and playground involvement with the students.

"Milo comes along to all of my lessons both in the classroom and practical physical education classes. He also attends playground duties, visits with students at break times, as well as meetings with staff and parents," Stallard said.

"During the classroom lessons, Milo roams freely, sitting with different students at different times, having a snooze or giving a hug where it's sometimes needed.

"During the more physical classes, Milo also finds a way to be useful, such as during tennis matches where he dutifully retrieves out-of-bounds balls for the students."

One of Milo's most important roles is that of providing emotional comfort

to students; if there is a student upset at school Milo will provide company during a visit at the school's Student Services building.

"Students who are having a tough day emotionally especially benefit from Milo's presence and it provides that circuit breaker to their feelings at a particular moment that can change the day for the better or provide some relief from their stress," said Stallard.

"He has the ability to bring even the quietest of kids out of their shell, as they want to talk about their own pets while giving Milo a pat and cuddle and it allows them to open up as they feel comfortable with him."

All members of the school community have reported positive reactions to Milo's presence and his inclusion in learning activities has resulted in more constructive behaviours from students, especially those who are more challenging from a behavioural point of view.

"The students interact very positively with Milo and this enhances moods and behaviour rather than detract from it; those students who can, at times, be a distraction are positively influenced by Milo to behave in a more appropriate manner," Stallard said.

"Collectively all our students are on the same page about Milo; they look forward to seeing him, they look out for him and they all relish the attention when he singles them out for some attention."

What are therapy dogs?

It is important to understand the difference in roles between a therapy dog and a service dog, both of which may be found in an educational environment.

A service dog's main purpose is to provide equal access for someone with a disability; they are protected by law in regards to their presence in certain animal-restricted areas and are trained specifically for an individual and their disability such as visual or hearing impairments, seizures, mobility issues or diabetes.

Therapy dogs have a less defined role, generally they are used to provide emotional support through animal assisted therapy which can come in many forms.

They are not protected by the same laws, meaning they can be refused access to animal restricted areas and activities such as using public transport.

What does the research tell us?

Dr Christine Grove is an Educational and Developmental Psychologist from the Faculty of Education at Monash University, who has trained her own dog, Bronson, to be a therapy dog.

Bronson works in both educational

and clinical settings to help children overcome their fears.

Dr Grove is also undertaking research with her colleague Dr Linda Henderson and a team of Master of Educational/ Development Psychology research students at the university, in relation to how therapy dogs impact student wellbeing in educational settings.

"Our research is predominantly school focused, given our research team have educational backgrounds in educational psychology and teaching," Dr Grove said.

"We are looking particularly at animal therapy interventions in the school setting and how therapy dogs can support school psychologists – and how they can be used as part of a therapeutic toolkit for coping and supporting students' to self-regulate their emotions."

Therapy dogs can play a significant role in the school setting as part of a wellbeing program, where the dog has a distinct purpose such as supporting students with anxiety and stress.

Their role in this scenario is to improve rapport between students and the handlers or psychologists; the presence of the therapy dog creates excitement for the student and, therefore, they have a positive connotation with the therapy session and are more inclined to attend and actively participate.

"Students who are having a tough day emotionally especially benefit from Milo's presence and it provides that circuit-breaker to their feelings at a particular moment that can change the day for the better."

"As we know with adolescents in particular, sometimes asking for help is hard and so therapy dog intervention is a way to make this more appealing, as well as to teach pro-social skills," Dr Grove said.

"You can also use therapy dogs for communication; kids can talk to them and the dog doesn't react they just listen, so you can practice different ways of how to communicate around challenging topics."

Research shows that the presence of a therapy dog can also promote students' attendance at school, as students are more likely to attend class if they know they will see a therapy dog there.

"Therapy dogs can also be used more informally, such as welcoming students and creating a more friendly and interactive environment," Dr Grove said.

"Most students can benefit from interacting with a therapy dog as they are supportive for people dealing with

general stress, including students who may have challenges in the classroom.

"While therapy dogs in themselves do not directly improve students' grades, they may have a secondary impact that improves academic outputs such as if students are more likely to come to school and some research suggests students are engaging more when therapy dogs are present."

Introducing a new therapy dog

Even when therapy dogs are being used by schools in a more informal way, Dr Grove emphasises the importance of a two-way communication model between the school administration and the broader school community during the initial introduction of the dog to the school environment.

"It is essential to have clear communication with the school community and with parents and carers around the inclusion of the therapy dog, giving them an opportunity to provide commentary about the dog coming in, discussing the process and voicing any concerns.

"It is also important to have a wellbeing and inclusion policy that includes the therapy dog in it, stating what the dog's purpose will be and why the therapy dog is coming to school and when.

"The policy should also have a risk assessment in place so that if something happens, the school has an outlined response, as well as a clear process for any issues or complaints."

Therapy dogs may be introduced as long term participants in the school environment, such as attending regular classes or being used as part of the school's wellbeing program, or they may be brought in for assistance in a short term crisis capacity.

"Therapy dogs can be effective when used during critical instances, such as if there is a fatality at a school, as well as in ongoing interventions and treatments in schools in the setting," Dr Grove said.

"Our research is attempting to determine if it helps having a therapy dog as part of the student wellbeing team or not.

"It is a really exciting space and hopefully within the next year we will have some more research published in this fast-moving field, where research is catching up with practice."

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A snapshot of teachers and their work - Australia and the world



The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is an international, large scale survey of lower secondary school teachers, school leaders and the learning environment in schools. IEU Victoria Tasmania Branch Assistant Secretary Cathy Hickey reports on the similarities and differences in the 2018 data for Australia and the OECD country averages on a number of key issues, including demographics, workload and professional development.

The TALIS survey is carried out every five years in 48 countries/economies and randomly selects 200 schools in each country (20 teachers and one school leader from each school).

It asks teachers about their working lives in schools covering everything from their school environment and how they interact with colleagues to their teaching practices and participation in professional learning. It also covers the experience of school leaders. While there are a number of similarities in the findings, the figures (right) also highlight some interesting differences.

Career and professional issues

One interesting difference was that teaching was the first choice career for 58% of teachers in Australia and for 67% (70% of women, 59% of men) in OECD countries and economies participating.

However, in terms of why they joined the profession, around 90% of all teachers in the survey (at least 93% of Australian teachers) cited the opportunity to influence children's development or contribute to society as a major motivation.

Some particularly worrying data was the low percentages of novice teachers (in their first five years) who were assigned a mentor (37% in Australia and 22% average OECD)

In terms of professional development, teachers across the OECD report that professional development based on collaboration and collaborative approaches to teaching is among the most impactful. Teachers in Australia seemed somewhat more satisfied with their training and a higher percentage reported a positive impact on their teaching practice (92% compared to OECD 82%). However, the same lack of PD opportunities was identified by Australian and other OECD countries - in developing advanced ICT skills, skills for teaching in multicultural/multilingual settings and students with special needs.

While school leaders across countries have a higher level of educational attainment than teachers (63% holding a Masters

compared to 44% of teachers), the number undertaking specific leadership training is low, with the Australian percentage much lower than the OECD average. 54% of principals (30% of Australian) completed school admin/principal training. 54% of principals (43% of Australian) completed instructional leadership training.

A key aim of TALIS is to help policy makers review and develop policies that promote the teaching profession and the best conditions for effective teaching and learning. This first volume entitled *Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners* was published in June this year. A second volume of the 2018 TALIS Report, *Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals* will be published in early 2020.

How does Australia compare?

Demographics (%)	Australia	OECD Average
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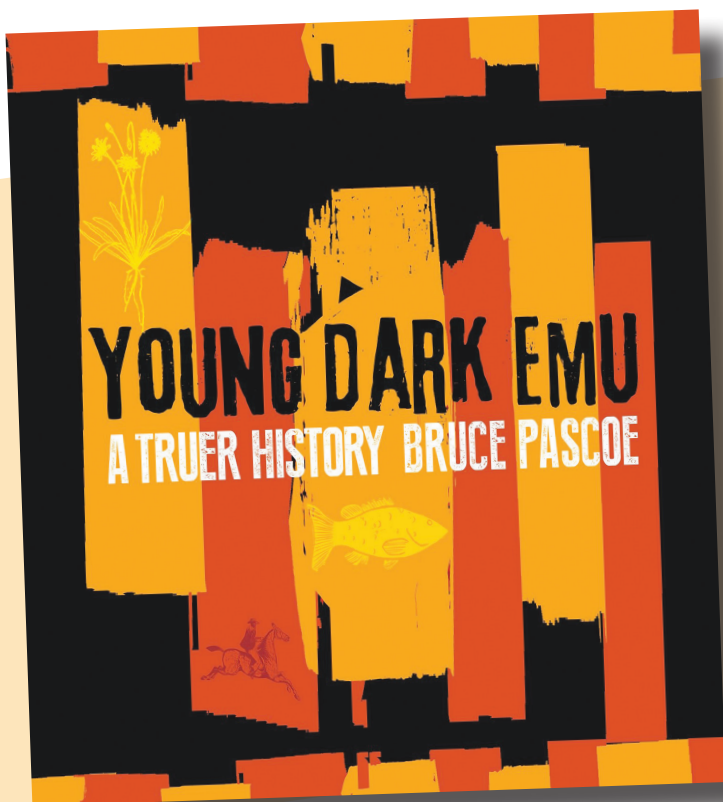
Female teachers	62	68
Female principals	40	47
Teachers aged 50 and above	30	34
Principals aged 60 and above	19	20
Average age of Teachers (years)	42	44
Average age of Principals (years)	51	52

Workload

Average weekly working hours	44.9	38.8
Average weekly hours on non teaching tasks	25	18.2
Average weekly hours teaching in class	19.9	20.6
Increase in hrs in average week (2013-2015)	2.1	0.5

Other % comparisons

Principals reporting students regular bullying others	37	14
Teachers reporting regularly calming disruptive students	60	65
Classroom time spent on actual teaching/learning	78	78
Teachers assessing students by observing and immediate feedback	89	79
Teachers with at least 10% special needs students (formally identified/diagnosed)	29	27
Teachers report collegial support in new ideas	84	78



Review:

Dark Emu and Young Dark Emu, A Truer History

There's a persistent belief, not just in Australia but around the world, that when white settlers first began arriving on this continent it was virtually unaltered by human hand, journalist Sue Osborne writes.

It's widely accepted that the Indigenous inhabitants consisted of nomadic hunter gatherers who did not live in settlements.

Bruce Pascoe's groundbreaking *Dark Emu*, first published in 2014 by Magabala Books, turns all this around by prosecuting a persuasive case, backed by research and evidence, that Indigenous Australians farmed their land, lived in villages, built permanent houses, harvested cereals and built complex aquaculture systems.

Young Dark Emu: A Truer History, published this year, also by Magabala Books, is a children's version of *Dark Emu* accompanied by photographs and drawings.

Dark Emu was shortlisted for the History Book Award in the 2014 Queensland Literary Awards, the 2014 Victorian Premier's Award for Indigenous Writing, was the winner of the Book of the Year in the 2016 in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and the winner of the Indigenous Writer's Prize in the 2016 NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

Heavily relying on diary entries of settlers from the time, both books are a catalyst for a revisionist discussion of the way we view our history. It also makes us question our modern agriculture practices and attitude to the environment.

Pascoe shows how Indigenous people had been growing crops for eons without causing the catastrophic degradation that the introduction of cattle, sheep and other feral species

and crops has caused. For example Pascoe writes: "Kirby and Beveridge found vast acreages of rushes that the Wati Wati were harvesting and nurturing. The reeds looked like large fields of ripe wheat: and nearer, where they had burnt them, it had the appearance of a splendid crop just before it comes into ear. This was a managed system, and the management had produced a scene familiar to European eyes".

"This was a managed system, and the management had produced a scene familiar to European eyes."

The descriptions of homes and settlements are even more remarkable than the agriculture described. Did you know Indigenous Australians made their homes from stone?

"Foundations and walls are still visible despite the pilfering of their stone for European dwellings and dry walling, 200 years of damage by cattle and sheep and the sudden advent of uncontrolled fires."

Pascoe continues: "Early reports from settlers and colonial administrators such as Robinson refer to buildings where over 50 people gathered, but the most common size was a dome

three to five metres across and two metres high. When a family had more children, extra rooms were added, other larger structures underwent subdivision by internal walls".

Pascoe also argues that the common assertion that Aboriginal people were "socially backward" because they did not use pottery for food and water storage is incorrect. He said there is lots of evidence of the use of clay vessels. Aquaculture is also described at length, including huge fish traps, the efforts to conserve breeding stock of fish and the use of locks, weirs and dams.

Young Dark Emu is not a 'dumbed down' version of *Dark Emu*, it is a different book intentionally written for a younger audience but drawing on the same evidence. It has more emphasis on character and story but makes the same points, showing examples of permanent housing, and living in villages: "Historian Rupert Gerritsen lists numerous reports by explorers and early settlers who saw large villages. Mitchell refers to the banks of the Darling where: the buzz of population gave the banks at this place the cheerful character of a village in a populous country".

Pascoe, from the Bunurong clan, of the Kulin nation, makes no bones about the fact he is out to right a wrong and set the records straight. With the two books now available to suit most age groups, they ought to be a must for any classroom, as they are sure to provoke lively discussion, and make us all question our received understanding of our history.

What could be more important than making sure students appreciate, understand and celebrate their complex national identity?



A sustainable transition to **RETIREMENT**

Starting his career in a small Catholic secondary college for boys in Sydney, IEUA-QNT member Col Grant never anticipated he'd still be working in education past the customary retirement age, journalist Jessica Willis writes.

Grant has spent most of his teaching career at Villanova College in Brisbane, specialising in Geography and Environmental Science – and he is now making use of his expert knowledge in a non teaching role as part of a transition to retirement.

"From the start of this year, I have begun supply teaching and working in a non teaching position referred to as Environmental Compliance," Grant said.

"Supply teaching allows me to maintain contact with students and staff, while providing valuable service to the college.

"Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si*, places an obligation on organisations such as ours to develop a culture of care,

sustainability and stewardship which includes the protection of our world.

"The environmental role gives me the opportunity to follow interests I have built up over the years, working on matters I believe to be important, along with supporting the environmental initiatives of others."

Some of Grant's work is 'on the ground' while the rest involves developing policies and considering ways the school can adapt for better environmental protection, such as shades for students and classroom cooling.

Rewarding transition pathways

While it is still early days working in this position, Grant finds it heartening that there is a general determination to do what can be done among staff and students, and a willingness by administration to explore options put forward.

"This term we have switched printer and photocopy paper to 50% recycled

sources, thereby reducing demand for new fibre [from trees]," Grant said.

"We are about to make the change to recycled coloured paper, which is less expensive than new paper.

"Senior students have also been replanting herb garden beds in nearby church grounds for use by priests and parishioners.

"Following on from this, it is hoped that next term there will be workshops for staff on organic gardening, and that the results of these will eventually supply herbs and greens to food preparation classes."

Grant is also working with a team of others towards a campus wide recycling project for paper, cardboard and drink containers and exploring options for reducing electricity usage.

"A rather complex and wide ranging project," he said.

"This project is of considerable challenge and still needs 'smoothing-out' as is the case sometimes in such a large and busy school.



Herb beds
St James
29 May 2019

Photos courtesy of Col Grant

"It requires the ongoing efforts of the whole school community including grounds staff, teachers and students.

Making the transition

Under the National Employment Standards (NES), employees who have completed 12 months' continuous service have the right to request flexible working arrangements in certain circumstances.

One circumstance is where an employee is aged 55 years or older.

Transition arrangements vary depending on an employee's individual needs and circumstances, but can include:

- job sharing
- reduced workload
- working partial days
- non teaching roles
- accessing special leave arrangements in the lead up to retirement, and
- deferring salary or purchasing leave under the collective agreement.

Options for transitioning may also vary between different collective agreements.

Grant's transition arrangements were implemented after one-on-one discussions with his principal.

This included four years of part time teaching which Grant concluded at the end of 2018 before beginning his current role.

"Since beginning my transition I have kept in regular contact with my principal to keep the communication open and up to date", said Grant.

"At each change of my employment conditions we have had an open discussion in good faith with a specific agreement signed by both parties.

Grant said these arrangements have formed a well controlled conclusion to his teaching career and he would like to see availability of transitional retirement arrangements formally included in collective agreements.

"I would like to see transition to retirement separated from other flexible work clauses in the collective agreement as I believe that heading towards retirement is an entirely different form of employment when compared with other flexible work arrangements," he said.

Three other staff members at Villanova are transitioning to retirement, two by working in their preferred areas (middle school art and vocational pathways) and one in general teaching – all with reduced loads.

Grant said the whole school has benefited and each teacher has gained a renewed sense of professional satisfaction.

"Staff satisfaction raises as stress levels fall, expertise can be harnessed in different and interesting ways and school cultural memory is extended."

Union can help

As a Union member, the IEUA-QNT helped Grant explore different options available for transitioning to retirement.

"Our IEU officers and other Union

members have helped me to clarify issues involved in seeking transition to retirement at my school," Grant said.

He also said that being an active member of the IEUA-QNT Branch Executive and Equity Committee exposed him to a broader range of views on transitioning to retirement within the education sector views he would not otherwise have had.


How to apply for flexible working arrangements

A request for flexible working arrangements must be made in writing and set out the details and reasons for the changes sought.

Employers are required to respond to the request in writing within 21 days and may only refuse on reasonable grounds.

As a member of our Union, our industrially trained staff can provide assistance in:

- understanding the process of transitioning to retirement
- advising specific leave or transition to retirement entitlements that may be outlined in your agreement
- reading through and providing advice on your application, and
- support and assistance, including pursuing a dispute where possible, should your application be rejected.



Podcasts. Everyone is either listening to, making, or evangelising about their favourite one. They range from cute to challenging; informative to inspiring; educational to escapist. The best ones might do the lot. With so many voices in the space vying for your attention, it can feel overwhelming. That's where we come in, with a curated selection of the finest listening material for your ears and brains.

Dissect, by Cole Cuchna, is our first recommendation. *Dissect* is a serialised music podcast, picking one contemporary album per season and analysing one song per episode measure by measure, word by word. The anatomy of an album. Cuchna orients the series as existing within "a world creating and accessing more content than ever before... a scrolling culture, hurriedly swiping through this infinite swath of content that seems to replenish without end." *Dissect* was created with a mind to counter this cultural shift.

While it hasn't yet received the same level of cultural ubiquity as the now infamous *Serial* podcast series, *Dissect* is nevertheless acclaimed. Featured in the iTunes Best of 2016 Podcast List, named Best Podcast of 2017 according to *Quartz*, appearing in *Time Magazine's* and *The Guardian's* Best Podcasts of 2018 lists and topping the *New York Times'* Best of 2018 list, *Dissect* has certainly earned your attention.

Music nerd

From humble beginnings in 2016 as a self-professed music nerd's passion project, recorded late in the evening after a full day of work and once his wife and newborn daughter had gone to sleep, *Dissect* has fulfilled a niche for lovers of music, lyricism, poetry and cultural anthropology. Over its life, *Dissect* has illuminated the artistry and cultural impact of contemporary musical masterworks including *To Pimp a Butterfly* by Kendrick Lamar, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* by Kanye West, *Blonde* and *Channel Orange* by Frank Ocean, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* by Ms. Lauryn Hill, and most recently *Flower Boy* by Tyler, The Creator.

In interviews, Cuchna has estimated that he spends around 20 hours on each 30-something minute episode, meticulously researching artist biographies, influences, past interviews, and deconstructing lyrics and musical production techniques. Cuchna has described the format of this niche undertaking as modelled off *The Great Courses* university standard audio and video lecture series. In an interview with *The Fader* magazine, Cuchna makes the case for placing recent great works on par with the great works of history; Beethoven, Mozart and Bach. "What I'm trying to do with *Dissect* is reframe people that we don't think about on that level yet," he said.

WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO: DISSECT

"I'm trying to fast forward that historical process . . . here's my best guess at what albums are going to stand the test of time, and why they're going to stand the test of time".

Hip hop insight

Cuchna has a degree in Music Composition and Theory from California State University and uses his considerable knowledge of music, and personal passion for contemporary music to infuse his analysis with depth, accuracy and most of all, accessibility. Unpacking these great hip hop records (and they are all hip hop records so far) with college lecture authority and insightfulness, Cuchna makes a case for the contemporary sounds of hip hop to finally receive serious academic spotlight and acclaim.

In the same *Fader* interview, Cuchna reflects that "I also think hip hop and urban music in general is not seen as a form of high art. Like to our parents or something. And me basically applying the same analytical skills that I would to a Beethoven symphony to *To Pimp a Butterfly* is me showing the merit of hip hop in general, on the same level as symphonic works".

The musical landscape has shifted, and hip hop has risen to surpass rock as the world's most popular musical genre, and its stylistic influences are ubiquitous. In 2018, Kendrick Lamar became the first rapper to win a Pulitzer Prize for Music, indeed he was the first musician from outside the classical or jazz worlds to win the award.

Recognising the artistic brilliance of his work, the judges of the award described his 2017 album *DAMN* as "a virtuosic song collection unified by its vernacular authenticity and rhythmic dynamism that offers affecting vignettes capturing the complexity of modern African-American life."

The idea of culturally relevant teaching, "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings 2009) has been widely accepted in educational discourse but is often put into practice infrequently or improperly. When properly deployed, hip hop literature can be "a powerful tool for helping students to develop skills in critical analysis... recognis(ing) their power as creative, poetic, valuable, instructional, and cultural texts, worthy of academic study." (Kelly 2013)

Even if you're not a 'hip hop head', Cuchna's deep analysis including musical theory, artist's perspective context and critical input will appeal to teachers, students and music nerds alike. It's worth a listen.

Angus Hoy Online journalist IEUA NSW/ACT Branch

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"I also think hip hop and urban music in general is not seen as a form of high art."

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