

SCHOOL COMMUNITIES UNDER FIRE

Suzanne Penson, IEUA NSW/ACT General Executive Member, has been in touch with IEU members in the Lismore area who have had to cope with major bushfires.

Bushfires began on 26 October near Crestwood, Port Macquarie. Cath Eichmann started her first day as principal of MacKillop College the following Monday. By Tuesday she informed us that Year 8 camp and Year 11 retreat were cancelled due to the bushfire risk and safety concerns. The school was closed for two days the following week.

On 8 November the sky turned red. Karen Bale from St Joseph's Regional College said "It was like Armageddon" as she was driving home from PD at Coffs Harbour.

Day went to night at around 3pm, street lights were on and the air was filled with thick black smoke. Helicopters buzzed overhead every two minutes to water bomb the fires near Lake Cathie and Innes Lake. Residents were told to prepare to evacuate. 350 koalas and their habitat perished.

St Joseph's Regional College, Port Macquarie closed for five

days as they were in the centre of the emergency fire zone. Lismore CSO staff felt very well supported during this time.

Samantha Adams is a music teacher at MacKillop College. This is Sam's experience of bushfire. "I frantically packed our essential documents and a few overnight things just in case. The boys' daycare centre was surrounded by fire and closed for almost a week. With a return of fire warnings, power outages and daycare/school closures it really has been a testing term".

Remaining calm in the classroom has been key and trying to engage the students in meaningful learning experiences to keep their minds off the outside environments. Explaining that the reason our sky was orange a few weeks ago had a scientific explanation, similar to that of how we see rainbows when it's raining and sunny helped comfort students. Combined with the humour of suggesting we were living in an instagram filter helped to get us through that day"

Emma Daley is an RE teacher at MacKillop. "The fires towards Pappinbarra – watch and alert to see if they would

continue this way. Spending a couple of nights checking for spot fires and any signs of fires was exhausting. We have been most fortunate, although the fire is slowly still spreading towards us."

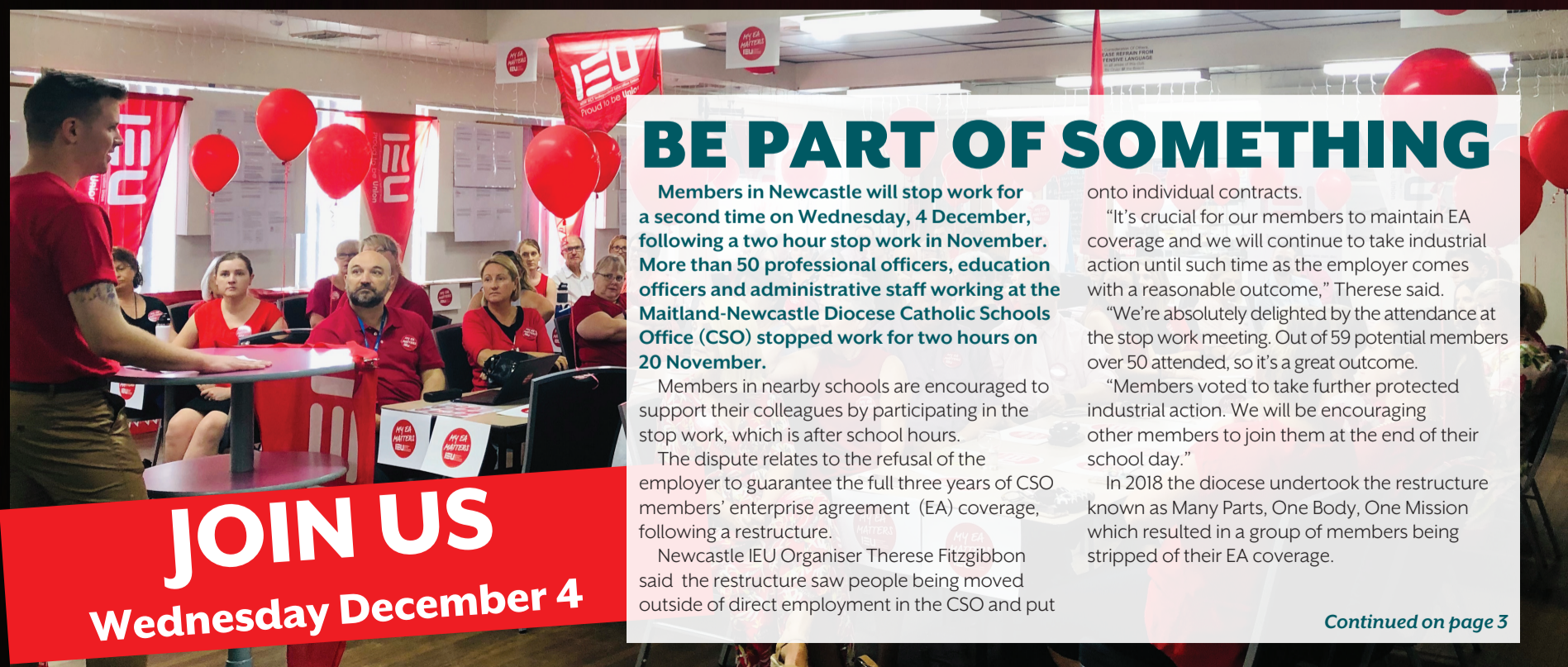
Catrina Martin, Leader of English St Paul's High School Kempsey said.

"On 8 November, the sky turned bright yellow, the colour of cellophane. It was the most eerie feeling and when my husband rang to say I needed to get home straight away at 2.30pm I knew it was bad.

"We're sandwiched between the Kian Road fire and East Carrai fire which is huge. We are living in a state of heightened awareness; watching the sky, listening for choppers, watching for embers, filling gutters and checking Fires Near Me, an app I barely knew existed a week or so ago.

"We have evacuated overnight once, which was the most gut wrenching feeling and I now have an evacuation suitcase permanently in my car and the box of photo albums stationed at the carport door.

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JOIN US
Wednesday December 4

BE PART OF SOMETHING

Members in Newcastle will stop work for a second time on Wednesday, 4 December, following a two hour stop work in November. More than 50 professional officers, education officers and administrative staff working at the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese Catholic Schools Office (CSO) stopped work for two hours on 20 November.

Members in nearby schools are encouraged to support their colleagues by participating in the stop work, which is after school hours.

The dispute relates to the refusal of the employer to guarantee the full three years of CSO members' enterprise agreement (EA) coverage, following a restructure.

Newcastle IEU Organiser Therese Fitzgibbon said the restructure saw people being moved outside of direct employment in the CSO and put

onto individual contracts.

"It's crucial for our members to maintain EA coverage and we will continue to take industrial action until such time as the employer comes with a reasonable outcome," Therese said.

"We're absolutely delighted by the attendance at the stop work meeting. Out of 59 potential members over 50 attended, so it's a great outcome.

"Members voted to take further protected industrial action. We will be encouraging other members to join them at the end of their school day."

In 2018 the diocese undertook the restructure known as Many Parts, One Body, One Mission which resulted in a group of members being stripped of their EA coverage.

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Newsmonth is published eight times a year (two issues per term) by the Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch

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Bathurst based Aboriginal Education Worker Kylie Martinez attended a five day training course hosted by the ACTU Developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplace Leaders, courtesy of the IEU.

An IEU Council member, and member of the IEU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, Kylie gathered at the MUA Sydney office with nine other unionists from a range of industries at the end of October.

The group considered "how we can get our mob involved in the union, why our mob are not involved in the union, and any obstacles that are in our way and how we can overcome them".

The group planned to go back to their respective unions and workplaces and try and get their mob involved.

"There's lots of yarning going on, lots of storytelling, which I find is what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are renowned for," Kylie said.

"We've been sharing our stories of how we came into the union and any negative and positive experiences.

"Like the history of how long Aboriginal people have been involved in unions and not known, like the Wave Hill walk off, and looking at how industrial issues affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

"We're from all different walks of life and all different unions, but it's funny how it doesn't matter where you work or what you do, the issues are still the same at the end of the day, especially with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"This is the longest I've ever been away from my family, but I'm glad I'm here. I think it's a lot to do with Wayne [the course instructor], being an Aboriginal man himself, and that's where the authenticity of the course comes from.

"I feel like we're eating the elephant one bite at a time. Which is nice, because you can't eat it in one go, but I feel the IEU is slowly chomping away at it and I like that feeling."

"It's not just some fella standing there telling you what you should do. He's a man who has lived, walked, talked the experience. He's very good, so that helps."

Visiting with IEU Secretary Mark Northam, Kylie said: "Today was coming to the IEU

and tackling some questions with Mark and Marilyn [Jervis, IEU Organiser] about what our union is doing, and what we want to do, and ways the IEU can help our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters and make sure they're okay and looked after".

"Coming down to the IEU has been lovely and sitting with Mark and having that one on one with him has been invaluable to me to make that connection with him. And I had those questions to ask, but it was really lovely to be able to talk about other stuff that has been on my mind and to have a voice."

Kylie said she was reassured by her experience doing the course, saying she feels that the IEU is doing well in comparison to other unions, and is continuing to move in the right direction.

"We still have a way to go, but I feel that we are tackling it, we are not afraid to take the steps and try and break some of these barriers, like with our Aboriginal Advisory Committee, our Newsmonth regularly putting articles in, having two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on Council, all these are positive steps forward.

"I feel like we're eating the elephant one bite at a time. Which is nice, because you can't eat it in one go, but I feel the IEU is slowly chomping away at it and I like that feeling."

Angus Hoy Journalist



HSC markers: New award in negotiation

While HSC markers across NSW are getting to grips with marking, both in corporate marking centres and online, the IEUA NSW/ACT has been busy preparing to negotiate the 2020-2021 Award for HSC Markers.

In particular, the union has been interested in hearing from markers about significant issues that they would like addressed. These issues will be presented to NESAs with the aim of resolving them in the new award.

Thus far, we are aware that there are concerns that regional markers are being asked to pay for their accommodation and travel

to Sydney based briefing sessions, that the online marking system has had a number of concerns and delays, and that the distribution of schools that itinerant markers cover is not always equitable.

We will raise all of these matters at the first meeting with NESAs in late November and during subsequent meetings. In the meantime, if you'd like to get involved, ask a question, or make a comment, we'd love to hear from you. Join the HSC Markers Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/134356937519954> or email Keith (keith@ieu.asn.au).



"I think it should be done with a bit of compassion and with some social justice thinking behind it."



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Members are of the strong view that the diocese will attempt to deny more members EA coverage and the members will not settle an agreement until they receive a guarantee that this will not occur.

IEU Secretary Mark Northam urged the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese Director of Schools to ensure all members are guaranteed coverage of the EA for the life of the agreement.

"Employers cannot change the rules without going through the proper negotiations," Northam said. "But it appears that the diocese is determined to strip members of their rights and entitlements".

Steven Newman, Education Officer and IEU Rep said: "We would like the wording

of the coverage clause in our EA to give us assurance that we will always be covered by the EA.

"We're worried that regardless of any bargaining that we do that, as soon as there's any change or restructure, we will be stripped of our EA just like our former colleagues.

"We want one body, one mission, one EA."

Louise Campbell, Aboriginal Education Officer said: "I find it really sad that we've gotten to this point in the negotiation.

"I think it should be done with a bit of compassion and with some social justice thinking behind it.

"My EA matters because I find, as an education officer working for the diocese,

the enterprise agreement is good for all of us.

"It will not only support some of the ideas we have put forward, but it will also support the schools.

"It will support the students and the teachers, so that our wellbeing is considered and all of those skills and knowledge we bring are top quality."

Michelle Lancey, Administration Assistant said: "My EA matters because it's the conditions that you worked for. People worked long and hard for many years to get those conditions, as in leave and pay, and we really have a responsibility to make those conditions continue."

IEU Organiser Carlo Rendina said the day of stop work action was special because it

coincided with the 150 years anniversary of unionism in the Hunter.

"150 years ago today workers in the Hunter Valley collectively decided they were going to take action for an eight hour day.

"The catch cry of 'eight hours to work, eight hours play, eight hours to sleep, eight bob a day' was coined 150 years ago.

"So these people are part of a long history, they have every reason to be proud of their union, to be proud of themselves for taking action, and proud to be part of a working collective that strives towards improving the conditions and pay of all works across the country."

IEU Rep Toby Pemberton: Happy members, happy kids



New IEU rep Toby Pemberton was able to impress his IEU organiser at his first ever chapter meeting, assembling a strong turnout and recruiting three young teachers.

Toby said giving the meeting lots of publicity and holding it in a high profile area like the staff room, had ensured a strong turnout, where everyone felt free to raise their concerns.

Toby took over as IEU rep just a few months ago at St Gertrude's Primary School in Smithfield, where he's been teaching Year 4 since 2016.

Mature influence

Previously he worked at St John Bosco Primary School Engadine, and he credits more mature staff at that school for imbuing him with a belief in unionism.

"They explained what had been fought for in previous years and why it was important to be informed and make sure

that tradition continues," Toby said.

"In order to shine teachers need the best working conditions, otherwise they get distracted by other issues. If teachers have the best conditions, then the kids win."

Cost concerns

Toby said he was able to sign up the three beginning teachers by addressing their concerns about cost.

"Many young teachers think joining the union is going to be more expensive than it actually is. I showed them my payslip and explained the benefits, the support they get if there is any trouble, and they realised it was worthwhile.

"I also talked about the benefits of professional development and support provided free by the union for beginning teachers.

"There's a bit of negativity out there about unions, but I think most people are glad to be in the union and glad it exists."

St Gertrude's has a high number of support staff who belong to the union, and that's something Toby wants to continue, as support staff often face variable employment conditions.

He recommends all chapter reps hold their meetings in high profile areas and concentrate on publicising meetings and keeping the meetings open and friendly.

"In the future, the role of unions is going to become even more vital, as rights and conditions are eroded from cost cutting and funding cuts.

"People will realise how vital unions are on an even greater scale."

Toby hopes the enterprise agreement negotiations for Catholic systemic schools proceed in the next few months without the roadblocks that accompanied the last two sets of negotiations.

NEWS

Backpay success for teacher

The IEU has assisted a teacher in a Catholic independent school retrieve a salary underpayment of \$23,517, with \$2144 in unpaid superannuation.

Upon changing schools, the teacher noticed she was on a higher salary, and wondered why she had not received that salary at her previous school.

With the Union's assistance she realised her previous teaching experience had not been properly taken into account by the previous school.

When the union wrote to the school its first response was to blame the member, "never brought any pay inconsistencies to our attention".

The school needed much encouragement from the union, but agreed to the backpay eventually.

Member's money recovered: \$31,968

A western suburbs teacher recently received \$31,968 in unpaid wages plus \$3012 in unpaid superannuation.

On engagement as a full time teacher in March 2013 (the member's first teaching assignment after graduation) the school was provided with a copy of the member's five year trained qualifications.

However, the member was classified as four year trained with pay starting at a level below the one that should have applied. Step increments were also not paid when due, and were mostly paid around nine months late.

Luckily, the union was approached and was able to rectify the misunderstanding, and retrieve the backpay for the member.

The IEU Zone

If you haven't signed up yet for The IEU Zone, you're missing out on:

- free on-demand professional development
- blogs with diverse and interesting information about working in education, and
- interactive forums where you can connect with other Union members.

There are five limited time PD courses available right now on The IEU Zone. Understanding Student Anxiety and the four mini courses of Behaviour Management will be retired from The IEU Zone on 31 December 2019. Act quickly to catch them before they're gone forever!

Also be sure to look at our other courses including voice care, various accreditation and Standards topics, book clubs, debates and much more.

In addition, check out the member education section to catch up on Union news and meetings you may have missed.

If you haven't yet created your account with The IEU Zone, follow this link: <https://www.theieuzone.org.au/index.php/cb-registration> It's free for all of our Union branch's members to join.

First IEU President for South Coast Labour Council

Congratulations are in order for IEU Organiser and newly elected President of the South Coast Labour Council, Tina Smith.

Tina is the first President of the SCLC to come from the IEU in the Council's 91 year history!

Tina has been part of an active and vocal IEU contingent in numerous campaigns and events in #Uniontown (Wollongong). Alongside her new team of Assistant Secretaries, Mick Cross from the MUA and Duncan McDonald from the Teachers' Federation, we are sure she will continue to do fantastic work representing workers in her new role.



Independent schools start bargaining

Independent schools across NSW and the ACT have issued Notices of Employee Representational Rights, the first step in the process to make new enterprise agreements (EAs). The schools are currently covered by the following agreements:

- Independent Schools NSW/ACT Standards Model (Teachers) Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2017
- Independent Schools NSW (Teachers) Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2017
- Independent Schools NSW Teachers (Hybrid Model) Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2017

- Independent Schools NSW (Support and Operational Staff) Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2017
- Independent Schools ACT (Support and Operational Staff) Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2017

Importantly, the Independent Education Union will be the bargaining representative on behalf of its members in the bargaining for new EAs.

The existing multi-enterprise agreements do not expire until 31 January 2021. The union has not had any discussions with the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) about the

content of the proposed new EAs given the fact that the current EAs have more than a year to go.

We will hold member meetings prior to the actual commencement of bargaining to develop a claim on behalf of members. More details will go to Union Reps shortly.

The union has sought confirmation from the AIS about the schools to be covered by each MEA and the anticipated time frame for the bargaining.

Carol Matthews Deputy Secretary

Boochani free at last



Behrouz Boochani the Kurdish-Iranian journalist, writer, film maker, humanitarian activist and refugee is now on New Zealand soil after detention for six years on Manus Island.

His freedom is cause for celebration and is a tribute to Behrouz himself and unions, union based groups such as Teachers for Refugees and Unions for Refugees, the Refugee Action Coalition, the United Nations Refugee Agency, Amnesty International, and many other groups and supporters.

His papers to leave PNG were provided by the UNHCR and he has been granted a one month visitor visa by New Zealand Immigration to speak at the WORD Conference Christchurch.

Behrouz is enjoying his freedom and says he is wanting to just not be part of the process for a while. I can only imagine the love and excitement when he speaks in person at WORD Christchurch on 29 November. 1000 tickets have been sold for his event and it is sold out.

Despite his imprisonment Behrouz has spoken by mobile phone and Skype from Manus Island at many events and received numerous international awards. He represented all detainees and brought to the world their life in detention at the hands of the Australian government.

Speaking recently at the Blue Mountains Writers Festival Behrouz expressed that he does not want to come to Australia due to his treatment in detention. It is uncertain what will happen next. Questions as to whether he will seek asylum in NZ, Europe or Canada will be a case of wait and see. At the moment he appears to be putting this on hold, savouring freedom and taking a break from the struggle he has endured for so long.

Other refugees still in Port Moresby are existing in very poor conditions having been exposed to a failed attempt at community living which lasted only a couple of hours. 50 refugees are in Bomana Prison. We call on the Australian government to give them all permanent, safe resettlement. The chant of "Bring them here!" has become "Let them go!"

Talks underway with Catholic systemic employers

Formal bargaining started recently with the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (CCER), which represents 11 Catholic dioceses, in negotiations for a new enterprise agreement (EA) for teachers and support staff working in Catholic systemic schools.

Members would be aware that the NSW and ACT Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement 2017 expires on 31 December 2019.

The EA is supported by separate Work Practices Agreements in all dioceses except in Wollongong and Canberra. The Wollongong and Canberra arrangements are contained within the EA.

The Work Practices Agreements, which sit parallel to the EA, are critical documents. The elements within the Work Practices Agreements provide additional detail and understandings which are not found in the EA.

Significant matters such as class sizes, times for meetings and briefings, data collection processes, boundaries around responding to emails, and managing challenging student behaviours are some of the components.

These documents, in tandem with the overarching EA, make sense of how the work of teachers is organised and remunerated.

The key themes of initial discussions were (as set out in the NewsExtra forwarded to members):

- additional time release for professional duties – primary and secondary teachers

- salary increases
- long service leave equity for support staff
- enhancing security of work for temporary staff and casual teachers, and
- managing workload and addressing work intensification.

The IEU is seeking discussions with the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese to develop a Work Practices Agreement for our members. See the IEU website for the complete claim. IEU chapter representatives will receive regular updates as the negotiations continue.

For an update on independent schools bargaining see article on page 4.

Don't forget to have your say

The NSW Curriculum Review Interim Report has been released. Copies can be downloaded from the NESA website and public consultation is open until 13 December 2019.

IEU members are encouraged to view the report and submit any feedback to NESA.

<https://nswcurriculumreview.nesa.nsw.edu.au/home/siteAreaContent/c7c9e121-0fe3-47a2-8014-9f6fca4591ac>

Mark Northam Secretary

Update Your Working With Children Check contact details

It's vital that IEU members maintain a current email address with the office of the Children's Guardian. To not have same can lead to important notices not being received.

Russell Schokman IEU Policy Advisor strongly recommends that all union members holding a NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance ensure that all contact details are up to date with the Office of the

Children's Guardian (OCG). This includes email contact details, which the OCG frequently uses as its method of communication.

To update your details access www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check and choose the 'Update details' link. Members can also call the OCG customer service team on (02) 9286 7219.

NEWS

Next year's IEU PD

Good news! In 2020 the IEU's online courses will be able to accommodate 500 participants each time, meaning that it's very likely members will be able to book the course of their choice and not encounter a waiting list!

We've upgraded our service from 100 to 500 participants every time, quintupling our ability to provide opportunities to our members.

The ability to service more members at once also means that we'll be able to offer a greater diversity of course topics.

Currently we're seeking suggestions from members for course topics that will assist members to conduct their jobs safely, including identifying key stress points that impact members' wellness, and PD that will help improve practice thereby reducing workloads.

In the past, the Union has run courses on inclusivity, student anxiety, voice care, difficult conversations, behaviour management and cyber safety to address stressful issues in the workplace and offered courses such as smarter assessment and accreditation information to reduce workloads.

If you have ideas for professional development that focuses on our members' safety, wellness and reduction in workloads, please email pd@ieu.asn.au

Principals EA bargaining

The IEU looks forward to working with principal members to gain the best possible EA in the Catholic sector and to protect and advance the industrial, professional and wellbeing interests of all principals.

The IEU's Principals' Sub Branch met on 2 November and reiterated its strong support for the Union's enterprise agreement (EA) claim for Catholic systemic principals.

Principals continue to emphasise workload and wellbeing issues for themselves and their staff, including the impact of compliance requirements and data collection and management.

Union wins Special Education Allowance

Teacher members at St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre and the Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre have recently started receiving ongoing payment of the Special Education Teacher Allowance for teaching classes of students with a disability.

This great outcome started as an enquiry made by the St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre chapter representative Michael Loudoun. IEU Organiser Ann-Maree McEwan made a written representation to the employer pointing out that the high percentage of young people attending the centre requiring 'substantial' or 'extensive' adjustments according to definitions in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability (NCCD) 2019 guidelines warranted payment of the allowance.

The union has been informed that the payment had started along with back pay from the beginning of 2018.

The Edmund Rice Education Australia's decision to pay the allowance acknowledges that teachers in flexible learning centres are teaching young people who have complex and special requirements that expand the traditional perceptions of disability.

The allowance is payable to principals and teachers. For teachers it is currently \$3171 per annum and for principals \$2579 per annum (dependent on the number of teachers supervised).



Present Tense

New year seminar for post-secondary college members

Your union is always looking to improve its services to all members, and to that end the IEU will hold a seminar for members in the post-secondary education sector on Wednesday, 22 January, 2020. The seminar will be held at the IEU offices in Wattle Street, Ultimo, and will start at 4pm, finishing around 6pm.

The seminar will cover several areas of interests to members in ELICOS, Business and VET colleges, including the award and agreements, your legal rights and responsibilities, superannuation, and how the union might be effective in your workplace.

A reminder email will go out to members in the new year, but if you are interested in attending, save the date, and let us know on ieu@ieu.asn.au.

Rising from the ashes

The Labor Party has been keeping a low profile since their shock defeat at the Federal election in May, but leader Anthony Albanese has started laying out a few principles that will guide the Party moving forward.

Most relevant for IEU members was Albanese's announcements on industrial relations. These

pronouncements are still very much at the general stage, but he did suggest that some sort of scheme for portable entitlements was on the cards, as a way to better regulate casual work and the 'gig' economy.

Albanese also announced a plan to establish a new authority called Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), which would manage workforce planning and training, and is a development on the ALP's policy at the last election to establish a wide ranging review into the VET and post-secondary sectors.

There is still some way to go until the next election of course (due in early 2022, though possible in late 2021), and given the results in May, there is of course no guarantee of a change in government, but it is pleasing to see the Opposition emerge from their post-defeat funk and engage with policy again.

Agreement update

Your Union continues to seek benefits for members, most notably in the area of enterprise bargaining. Currently, the IEU is bargaining with several colleges, including Navitas English Services, Navitas English ACT, EC Embassy English, WSU The

College, and Sydney English Language Centres (SELIC). We hope to see these settled over the summer.

The Fair Work Act includes provisions around 'good faith bargaining', under which an employer can be compelled to start bargaining if it can be demonstrated that a majority of employees (or section of employees, such as teachers) want that to happen. To find out how that might work at your college, contact your union on ieu@ieu.asn.au.

Season's greetings

This will be the final Present Tense for the year, but we will be back in 2020 with more news and updates on your sector. We wish all members a merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Kendall Warren Organiser

Putting Members' Interests First (PMIF) and Protecting Your Super (PYS)



Traditionally there has been much apathy surrounding members' understanding of super, and even more when it comes to life insurance, total and permanent disability and income protection insurance provided through super. However, new legislation has been passed that has the objective of protecting members' super balances from costs related to unwanted insurance cover. So this article is a heads up.

PMIF

This legislation has passed both houses and the commencement date is 1 April 2020. The key provisions of the reform are that the trustee cannot provide "opt-out" insurance for any member if:

- the member is under the age of 25 and begins to hold the product on or after 1 April 2020, or
- the balance of the product is less than \$6000 and has not been \$6000 or more on or after 1 November 2019.

Funds are required to write to members by 1 December 2019 to advise them that their insurance will be cancelled on 1 April 2020 if they have not taken the active choice of opting-in to their insurance cover.

Funds must also notify new members who have joined between 2 November, 2019, and 1 April 2020, that their insurance will be cancelled if their balance remained below \$6000 throughout the period and they have not opted in.

Default cover can only be provided to new members joining from 1 April 2020, after:

- the balance has reached \$6000
- the member has reached age 25, and
- the member has opted-in to cover beforehand or is in an occupation identified by their trustee as 'dangerous'.

PYS

This legislation came into effect on 1 July 2019 and essentially provided for the transfer of low balance inactive accounts to the ATO, some change to fees and cancelling insurance for inactive members. An 'inactive account' is

generally defined to be an account for which no contribution or roll-over has been made for the past 16 months, subject to some exemptions for certain 'positive acts'.

To do list

- read your super communications carefully. If you're not paying attention, you could lose your insurance cover, and
- members who have already acted to maintain their insurance cover under PYS will have to act again by opting-in under PMIF legislation if their balance is less than \$6000.

Superannuation funds will soon be writing to members under both the PYS and the PMIF legislation advising them what they need to do to maintain their default insurance cover. Where the communication relates only to PMIF legislation, this will generally mean asking members to opt-in.

Personally I find a certain irony in the titles to both pieces of legislation: NGS Super has always protected members' super and has always put members' interest first! And I have seen thousands of NGS Super members and their dependants benefit from the automatic provision of insurance in times of death, illness or injury.

And to close off the year . . . according to a survey conducted by the Governance Institute of Australia, the 2019 Ethics Index, industry super funds have reclaimed their title as Australia's most ethical financial institutions.

On behalf of the Trustee, the Fund's Management and staff, we would like to wish you a happy and safe holiday season! Our best wishes to you!

Bernard O'Connor NGS Super Company Secretary/
Manager Insurance and Complaints

(Important information: The information in this article is general information only and does not take into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before making a financial decision, please assess the appropriateness of the information to your individual circumstances, read the Product Disclosure Statement for any product you may be thinking of acquiring and consider seeking personal advice. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Any opinions are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of NGS Super.)

Education excellence recognised in NGS Super Scholarship Awards

The NGS Super Scholarship awards will see six recipients embark on a range of professional development courses focused on enriching student wellbeing, upskilling in vital areas of learning, innovating student workspaces and forging connections with overseas schools.

The awards, now in their ninth year, recognise the staff of non government schools who are actively working on their career development, while also contributing to their direct communities and the wider education sector.

Six scholarships to the value of \$5000 each are awarded annually to NGS Super members to help them commence a professional development course, project or initiative of their choice.

Laura Wright, Chief Executive Officer of NGS Super, congratulated all those who applied for the awards, and gave thanks for their efforts in bettering the sector.

"We know that teachers are incredibly hardworking and we are so proud to be able to support them achieve their dreams in any capacity."

The NSW winners are:

Yvonne Terweeme, Teacher, Bethany Primary School

Yvonne is a teacher at Bethany Catholic Primary school and wants to develop her knowledge and skills to better serve the Indigenous and wider community. Yvonne will use her award winnings to undertake a Stronger Smarter Leadership Program, where she will increase her leadership capabilities and work towards her goal of incorporating Indigenous language into the programs and culture of her school. Yvonne has initiated contact with the CEDP Indigenous unit Jarara to plan and implement ways that her community can support a remote Indigenous school in Wilcannia NSW.



Yvonne Terweeme



Adem Aydogan



Andrew McMillan



Carla Gagliano

Adem Aydogan, Teacher, Amity College

Adem has a keen interest in humanitarian work and STEM and has found a way to combine the two. He will use his scholarship to travel to Papua New Guinea with his students to run a series of robotics workshops at a school he has an established relationship with. While students work together with their global peers, Adem will upskill local teachers in using robotics kits and teaching strategies and plans to donate a robotics kit to the school. Adem hopes this will set a precedent for future work.

Andrew McMillan, Teacher, Frensham

As a STEM coordinator and Design Technology teacher at Frensham, Andrew is committed to getting more girls interested in STEM based subjects, to broaden their prospective career opportunities. Andrew will use his scholarship award winnings to travel to Adelaide to be a guest judge at The Subs in School Technology Challenge, a program run by Re-Engineering Australia, where he will have the opportunity to immerse himself in all aspects of the challenge and deepen his knowledge of underwater robotics.

Carla Gagliano, Teacher, Masada College

Carla is passionate about best practice pedagogy to ensure that all her students have authentic and engaging experiences. Carla will use her scholarship award winnings to undertake two online courses which will explore the power of playful learning for junior students and the benefits of a maker centred classroom. Once she has completed these courses, Carla will begin developing a dedicated maker space at Masada College, and plans to connect with other schools in her community so they can share learnings and experience the space firsthand.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Just a final check in from the membership team before we finish for 2019. Renewals have been emailed, except for those members who haven't supplied an email contact – your renewal was posted on 19 November 2019.

All members should have received a renewal in one of these formats by mid-December 2019, if you do not receive a renewal please contact us via phone or email (membership@ieu.asn.au, 8202 8900, press 1).

Please take a minute to read the details below and as previously advised only return the renewal if needed.

You don't need to return the renewal if your payment method is automatic (payroll deductions, direct debit, automatic credit card) and there are no changes to your professional or personal details in 2020.

We'd really like to hear from you if you're changing your workload next year, taking leave in 2020, retiring, moving workplaces, your payment method is not automated (credit, BPAY), you're moving to a new house in 2020 or you need assistance to submit the renewal.

It's important you are up to date financially, and we have the right chapter details for you.

The office will close on 20 December 2019 and membership will return on 9 January 2020.

You can still send emails to membership@ieu.asn.au during this time but we thank you in advance for your patience as our response may be slower than usual until we clear the holiday back log.

Thank you again for your support in 2019 and we look forward to assisting you in 2020.

Anna brings youthful enthusiasm

Young and enthusiastic IEU Rep Anna Luedi joined the union when she was still at university.

"It was only natural for me to join as my father had always educated me regarding how necessary and important unions are to support a healthy democratic political system. It's the smart thing to do," Anna said.

She became the Rep at St Mary's Catholic Primary School North Sydney in 2018 and in 2019 was elected to a position on IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Council's general executive team.

Personal approach

"I am continuously discussing union membership with my chapter and often personally approaching new staff as well as casuals in our school about being a Union rep. In subbranch meetings we collectively encourage more delegates to Council. I usually mention the IEU support for accreditation, PD and legal support when necessary.

"Increasingly, workload is having a massive impact on teachers' wellbeing. The class sizes in Catholic schools are

large, the learners' needs are diverse, the support for these learners is not consistent and the meetings related to data, programming and IEPs are ever increasing."

Best strategies

Anna thinks the best strategies to encourage colleagues to join the union include personal discussions highlighting how the union is supporting teachers, possible problems that might arise where they will need support from the union and why their workplace needs strong membership density so as not to forgo entitlements such as holidays.

She said the challenges for organising and campaigning includes complacency about the need for union membership.

"My advice for reps trying to organise in their workplace would be to keep at it and always speak personally to non members. Ask what is holding them back from joining and then address those specific issues. Ask other vocal, political members to have those discussions."



Holidays for high school teachers?

This is an opinion piece. The views expressed are the personal views of the authors and do not reflect the views of any organisation we are associated with.

Before you begin reading this, it is worth noting that this article was written about workload, and was delayed due to teacher workload demands.

Have you ever organised your own holiday? Then you have some insight to the life of a secondary teacher in Australia in 2019. You've researched your destinations; priced hotels, flights and transfers; and identified the attractions to visit and scheduled the activities you will undertake on this trip. Perhaps you've generated a spreadsheet to manage costs and an itinerary for your family so you're all on the same page and can enjoy an awesome trip. A rewarding and enjoyable experience for the organiser and the participants. So what has this got to do with teaching?

Over our collective 20 plus years as secondary teachers, we've been the recipients of the usual barbs and banter about the hours we work and the holidays we have and how easy our job is. We've been asked several times by our non teacher friends what it's like to be a high school teacher and we've always struggled to paint a proper picture of life as a secondary teacher.

The holiday experience we described earlier is a great analogy for life as a high school teacher in 2019: teaching a secondary class in any subject is a bit like organising a holiday, but imagine, instead of organising the trip for a few family members, you are organising it for 30 passengers (teenagers), many you may have never met or laid eyes on before, some of whom have already been to the destinations you are planning to go, some that don't want to go at all, and some who for any number and variety of reasons will find it extremely challenging to attempt the trip.

So in addition to researching the destinations, transport options and organising activities for the trip, you have to also research the 30 passengers that you will be travelling with to ensure you understand all of their needs for the trip so that they all get the most out of it. In addition to producing the spreadsheet for costings and the detailed itinerary for the trip, you must also document all of the adjustments for the trip for every individual passenger who needs an adjustment for the said trip. This can range from catering for various dietary needs through to physical or mental capabilities.

As well as planning for each trip, you also have to go on each trip as the tour guide, gaining the trust of the thirty participants on the trip, helping throughout the trip when they are feeling down or overwhelmed, celebrating on the good days and encouraging on the days when they feel tired, 'over it' or simply bored. You

have to keep notes on each individual in case you need to call for backup or specialist help during the trip, or in case the trip is not up to someone's standard and they decide to sue the travel company.

Each teenager on the trip also needs to produce a holiday book of their time on the trip, so the tour guide needs to assist them with this, giving them feedback if they missed an important part of the trip, perhaps even revisiting attractions or activities, while at the same time, others on the trip may need additional stops or more in depth activities to make the trip worthwhile for them, so the tour guide puts these in place too. Sounds a busy job right?

Well let's throw in the need for the tour guides to provide the parents with a written report and a face-to-face meeting twice during the trip on each individual passenger's performance, and the trip doesn't stop for these reports or meetings to come to reality. Are you exhausted reading this yet?

Here is the kicker though: high school teachers don't have one trip to plan each year, they plan six or seven trips simultaneously each year, often with thirty different passengers on each trip, very different destinations to visit, and passengers joining and leaving the trip throughout the year. Then there is the government that adds well meaning requirements for trips that say your trip through Italy and France must have a stopover in Antarctica, or passengers must take a second or third trip to London, even though they've been to all the attractions already!

Now imagine that the same government(s) decide to test the passengers, but instead of testing how much the travellers learnt about the places they visited, they instead spend big dollars on testing to produce data on how efficiently they boarded the plane or how well they packed their bags.

Further to this, the Tour Guides' Association of Australia requires you to complete and log 100 hours of professional development or training over five years to show that you are competent in planning and executing a trip, regardless of how many you've already completed.

Perhaps a way of improving the quality of future trips would be to increase funding to train and develop more tour guides, thus reducing the amount of trips any one tour guide needs to plan and execute at any one time. Less trips for any one tour guide means that tour guides can focus more thoroughly on the participants on the smaller number of trips they are responsible for.

We think we need a 'holiday' now, along with our fellow hardworking and passionate 'tour guides'.

IEU members Peter Collins and Marco Cimino



Myanmar activist Naw K'Nyaw Paw, General Secretary of the Karen Women's Organisation, visited Canberra recently.

Canberra APHEDA activist group invited IEU Organiser Lyn Caton to an informal lunch and discussion to meet and talk with this inspiring and influential leader.

K'nyaw Paw was born in Thailand, and as a young child grew up in one of the seven refugee camps which run the length of the Thai/Myanmar border.

She began working for the Karen Women's Organisation in 1999 and was elected General Secretary in 2013. The organisation now boasts a membership of more than 65,000 people.

Karen Women's Organisation is a feminist, indigenous rights, community based organisation that plays a leadership role in the struggle to bring democracy and human rights to Myanmar.

It focuses on capacity building, increasing and amplifying women's voices and influence, as well as providing services to women and children.

K'nyaw spoke about the importance of early years learning and her organisation's request to fellow unionists to come and work with her members, promoting early childhood education.

The current democratic political situation, instead of facilitating better support, care and service for women in Thai-Myanmar, has inhibited progress for women and K'Nyaw is using this APHEDA sponsored speaking tour to enlist wider support for the communities she represents.

Lyn Caton Organiser



Building community connections

Hosted by Holy Family Primary School at Emerton on 23 October, the 2019 western Sydney women's forum, Building Community Connections: A focus on Aboriginal students and families, built upon the success of other IEU regional women's gatherings held this year in Kiama, Bathurst, Newcastle, Coffs Harbour and Armidale.

With a focus on Aboriginal student and staff issues, the forum featured as guest speaker Julie Waddell (Lead Teacher, Jarara Indigenous Education Unit CEDP) who is an Aboriginal teacher whose heritage is from the Kamilaroi People of far northern NSW.

In her role in the Parramatta Diocese, Julie is a proud member of a team which is building upon the foundations of Jarara to develop support and opportunities for students, families and communities.

Julie believes that there have been some wonderful opportunities where CEDP students have been able to engage via literacy, art, song lines, artefacts, games and leadership experiences.

Central to Julie's perspective is that cultural awareness is built with explicit professional development for staff and that such awareness is not an occasional event but is embedded into the daily life of schools.

In all aspects of her life and work, Julie reiterates the influence of her mother who she describes as 'the heart and soul of our family.' As Julie told the forum, "Mum had a strong sense of social justice and would go without to help others".

In the words of a forum participant, the "IEU Western Sydney Women's Forum was a rich opportunity to network with colleagues with specialised interests, and the Aboriginal focus this year was particularly uplifting".

"Storytelling is a significant aspect of Aboriginal culture and it was humbling listening to Julie Waddell share her journey. In a similar manner, as women in education, telling our stories has the ability to bring us together in understanding; from where we have come and the direction in which we are going in the union. These exchanges of experiences and professional dialogue are the essence of the forum."

Another participant expressed her appreciation that the forum was a great way to network with other women to express social justice values and to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, families and the broader community. "I really value the IEU's commitment to social justice, equity and inclusion."

Appreciation is expressed to the Holy Family IEU Rep Janet Marie, the principal John Spradbrow and other staff for hosting the event which was also supported by IEU Executive members Tricia Murnane and Tina Ruello.

The IEU western Sydney women's forum unanimously endorsed a resolution calling upon Parramatta Diocese to re-establish a Workplace Gender Equality Committee with IEU participation to ensure that issues of gender justice, equity and inclusion receive appropriate recognition and action.

Discussions have since occurred with CEDP in regard to re-establishing such a committee next year.

In 2020 the IEU will hold its Women's Conference on 14 August and will also continue to host International Women's Day and other events as appropriate to protect and advance the interests of the Union's over 75% women members.

SCHOOL COMMUNITIES UNDER FIRE



Continued from page 1

“Our school has been closed three days in the past week due to the threat of bushfires and the smoke pollution, this has meant students haven’t been able to attend excursions or sporting events and the Year 12 Graduation has been postponed. Two Year 12 students who sat the Chemistry exam on Monday had been evacuated and one of them had spent the weekend prior fighting bushfires near his home up river.

“Others I work with have had it much worse than me with damage to their properties, lost stock due to burnt fences and no power or water and barely any phone reception for the past week.

Jodene Barnett of St Paul’s Kempsey recounting her experience: “34 degrees, hot westerly wind blowing ash and charred leaves through the grounds and orange smoke filled the air with a sense of panic. Many of the town folk were dressed in their finery, sipping chilled champagne awaiting the late afternoon running of The Kempsey Cup blissfully unaware of the danger that lay ahead. Within a few short hours many properties, homes and lives were destroyed as the inferno raged through the Bellbrook and Willawarrin area.

“We were all feeling it. One of the last conversations I had was with a kid that lives in the Main Street of Willawarrin. I didn’t find out until Thursday that he and his family had successfully defended their home from the fire.”

On 15 November Port Macquarie had the worst air quality in the world. The air quality index for Port Macquarie was 3807, New Delhi 817, Beijing 192 and Sydney 57.

The Environment Department warned residents to stay indoors. At lunchtime schools were advised to evacuate. Residents are vigilant as the bushfire season has just begun and the current situation could change at any time.

TMB and Teachers Health are offering support during these difficult times. See <https://www.ieu.asn.au/news-publications/news/2019/11/support-schools-and-early-childhood-centres-during-bushfire-alert>

“Remaining calm in the classroom has been key and trying to engage the students in meaningful learning experiences. Explaining our sky was orange a few weeks ago had a scientific explanation helped comfort students.”

Photos courtesy of Jodene Barnett, Emma Daley and Suzanne Penson



SCHOOL COMMUN



Drought takes heavy toll

Wendy Baldwin has children in her care who have no idea what rain is. She knows of toddlers living on farms who've outgrown mud boots that have never been worn.

"We were talking about Pepper Pig the other day, and jumping in puddles, and one of the children asked what that was," Wendy said.

"It sprinkled for a few moments the other day. A two and half year old boy asked me 'what's that'."

For 27 years Wendy has been a teacher for Gwydir Mobile Children's Service, based in Moree.

She's part of a team of two teachers and nine educators who travel 1000kms in two Land Cruisers each week taking the mobile preschool service to remote farming communities.

Hosted in schools, community halls and tennis clubs, the preschool is a lifeline for isolated families struggling with drought and never ending dust storms.

But Wendy has concerns for the service's future. As families give up and leave the land, attendance is dwindling, and she fears the Department of Education might cut funding.

This would be a mental health disaster, Wendy said, as the service is often the last port of call for the suicidal.

Wendy said she has a number of families who she is "watching very carefully" because of suicide risk.

She has no training in dealing with such issues. "I have been through seven droughts, so I have some skills. But I worry about other teachers out there in mobile service.

"Early childhood teachers are part of the community; they are farmers themselves. Teachers often feel responsible for the whole family, they take on the worry, the guilt. My advice is not to try and take on everyone's problems."

Wendy would like to see the IEU introduce more mental health support for its members in rural and regional areas, in the form of online training on self-care and mental health.

Wendy said city based people have trouble understanding what it is like to live with years of drought and dust, and advice such as 'take a break' does not cut it.

"How do you take a break when you're hand feeding lambs? There is no escaping this. Every day you wake up and it hasn't rained. Everybody is just busted. They shrink into themselves, away from each other, their kids."

In order to get people reconnecting, the service has organised teddy bears' picnics, concerts, working bees and talks to try and get people off the farm. They organised Peter Greste, the journalist, to give a talk recently.

"It was great because people started talking about politics and other countries instead of the drought for once," Wendy said.

"I worry about the toll its takes on early childhood teachers, but schoolteachers and principals as well. They wonder if their school's still going to be there in a few years."

"I worry about the toll its takes on early childhood teachers, but schoolteachers and principals as well. They wonder if their school's still going to be there in a few years."

Many families who have been on the land for several generations have left because of mental health pressures. Wendy said the physical and mental health problems from the current drought will resonate for years.

"We've been breathing in dust for two years. It's a fine

layer on your skin, clothes, house. The Land Cruisers break down. The optician told me 50% of his work is clearing dust out of people's eyes. I reckon we'll be hearing about lung cancers in a few years' time.

"The mums are being broken apart losing their gardens. It's all they have. The plants are dying due to lack of water and starving kangaroos eat them. The school where we meet has a small garden, and it's covered in kangaroo droppings because they come in every night trying to find food and water.

"The kids are bathing in bore water which is bad for the skin. I was talking to the other mobile service out west and she said after years of teaching the kids healthy habits, they've had to start giving them cordial because the water tastes so bad.

"One day people are going to look back at this and fall over in a screaming heap."

Despite the tragedy, Wendy is optimistic about the future of her community, and believes it will bounce back.

"I get angry when I hear talk on the ABC about farmers needing to adapt. Farmers do nothing but adapt and have been adapting for 50 years. As soon as it rains we are ready, we know exactly what to plant and when.

"When it's a good season it makes you weep at how spectacular it is. You drive through paddocks of wheat knowing that it will feed people in Iraq, England, Africa. It's a privilege to be part of that. When the sunflowers are high against the blue sky and the grass is up to the cattle's bellies, it's breathtaking. All we need is rain."

Sue Osborne Journalist

COMMUNITIES UNDER FIRE

Support across sectors



St Joseph's Parish Primary School Condobolin has an enrolment of 105 students, with more than half our families off the land.

This long drought has contributed to widespread crop failures, livestock losses and continuous dust storms. Many country towns are experiencing a shortage of water and this is becoming quite a concern as there is little rain predicted in the near future.

Our school has been very lucky to receive some generous donations from other schools who have been thinking about their fellow students in the country.

St Joseph's Alstonville held a Do it for Condo Day. All the students from St Joseph's Alstonville dressed as farmers and raised funds for our families.

They also donated \$2000, with which we purchased Stay in Town Gift cards. Each family was given a gift card to purchase

items within the township of Condobolin, supporting the local businesses.

St Joseph's Auburn also donated \$1055. This money was used to buy local gift cards. We are extremely grateful to both schools for thinking of their country cousins.

Normally you don't see roos except at dawn and dusk – now we see them any time of the day, they have come out of the hills and are in the paddocks, eating the last of the tall dead grass in huge mobs. They are even coming into town, eating any grass or plants they can find. They are desperate.

The families and students of St Joseph's continue to remain positive and support each other. It is certainly a hard time for many people, however we are remaining optimistic and keep praying for rain.

Jude Ryan Principal

Bush losing its families

Drought issues affecting schools, families and communities are a major concern for many principals in regional and rural areas, with some schools losing families who relocate to seek employment elsewhere.

The union acknowledges the resilience and creativity of members in their workplaces in dealing with the effects of the drought and the many practical expressions of support which are already occurring, such as fundraising efforts to benefit drought affected schools.

An example of such support is St Joseph's at Alstonville on the North Coast which held a Do it for Condo Day which raised funds for Stay in Town gift cards. Families at St Joseph's at Condobolin were given a gift card to purchase items within the town, thus supporting local businesses

which are also suffering because of the drought. St Joseph's at Auburn in the Sydney Archdiocese also contributed the Condobolin local gift cards scheme.

As an industrial organisation committed to the protection of members' employment, the IEU welcomes the provision by some Catholic dioceses and independent schools of fee relief for families to help alleviate costs and maintain enrolments and also the Federal Government's recent announcement of school fee assistance for drought affected families. The IEU trusts that members' employment will be protected and the union will work with members and employers to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Pam Smith Principals Organiser



Cyclists ride with hearts on their sleeves

Sydney cyclists joined together in November to show their support for communities in NSW Central West that have been struck by the worst drought in over a decade.

'Drought Ride' organiser Shane Mattis, grew up in Forbes and knows from family and friends the hardships rural communities are facing. Now a Sydney based sports consultant and media strategist, Shane teamed up with Joanne Palazzetti, Director of Turbo Studio, to put out the call to city cyclists about the plight in the bush, the event and fundraiser. They urged cycling mates to sign up sponsors, join in and use their pedal power to ride 380 kms in the Central West for two hot November days.

Planning began early this year, when Shane and Joanne consulted with local communities for advice on accommodation, food supplies and locations for ride breaks. The local CWA networks organised food and drinks as well as advice where best to stop, shop and stay throughout two big days of riding.

Fifty cyclists and their support crew travelled through severely drought affected country - Molong, Cudal, Eugowra, Forbes, Gooloogong, Warrenderry, Canowindra and Grenfell, staying in local hotels and motels, eating at cafes and spending as they passed through. The aim was to bring some financial assistance and demonstrate the Australian spirit of bringing together different communities in time of need.

Each rider committed to raising \$1000, then they rolled in their sponsorships. The Drought Ride has raised over \$85,000 to date and more is expected.

"It was a privilege to be part of The Drought Ride, driving as one of the support crew," said Bronwyn Ridgway, IEU Communications and Media Officer.

"I know from teachers and support staff who live and work in locations affected by extreme weather conditions, that day to day life is very hard for everyone. Teachers see students and their families struggling financially and mentally through this shocking drought.

"Travelling through the Central West, paddocks were devoid of feed and stock; so much stock even blood stock has been sold off as drought conditions roll on week after week, month after month, year after year. The money raised by each cyclist on The Drought Ride aims to help people in the communities we travelled through; 'Beat the Breakdown' is working to ensure that all money is well distributed."

See how you can help <http://beatthebreakdown.com.au> and <https://www.facebook.com/buyfromthebush/>

Labour bites



Money magically manifested

25,000 Chicago teachers and support staff returned to school triumphant, after an 11 day stop work that became a showdown between their union and the city's new Mayor.

The mayor and her appointed school board had barely budged in the 10 months of bargaining leading up to the strike, presenting what they claimed was their best offer just days before the strike was due to start. On day three of the strike, the mayor said there was no more money, sending a letter asking Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) to end the strike.

However, on day 10, the mayor managed to find more money as they brought forward a tentative agreement that includes \$1.5 billion USD in combined additional spending over the course of the five-year agreement.

Wins include better class size enforcement, more nurses and social workers guaranteed, step raises for veteran teachers, bankable sick days, special education wins including specially trained substitutes, and more. (Source: Labor Notes)



Duterte regime intensifies attacks against union movement

Over 60 union organisers, human rights defenders and activists were arrested in politically motivated raids on the night of 31 October, in the Philippines province of Negros.

The Duterte regime's renewed crackdown against unions and civil society organisations in the country has included raids against Education International affiliate organisation, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT).

Several ACT offices were raided by the police and at least one ACT provincial coordinator was arrested in the latest wave of crackdowns.

The repression operations are ongoing, and ACT fears that more of their members could be targeted.

The union had to close offices to ensure the security of its staff, members and officers.

The anti-union climate has caused unionists, teachers and academics to fear for their rights and safety. (Source: Labour Start)



Domestic workers resisting slavery in Lebanon

Lebanon, a country with a population of six million, currently has more than

250,000 migrant domestic workers. As the Lebanese sponsor is key to the foreign worker being allowed to stay and work in the country, the control the former can exert over the latter is inordinate.

While Lebanese families have grown increasingly reliant on this foreign workforce, overwhelmingly composed of women, the country's employment legislation has remained purposely unregulated, allowing the exploitative system of sponsorship known as kafala to prevail.

Reports by Amnesty and Human Rights Watch have shown that abuse toward this workforce is endemic, with a shocking death rate of two domestic workers per week.

For years local activists and solidarity organisations have been protesting against these conditions with demonstrations, general strikes and street rallies, but have so far failed to guarantee concrete action against the abuse.

This is Lebanon, a small volunteer based organisation based in Canada, came up with a new tactic to achieve justice: naming and shaming abusive employers on social media. At first this tactic was simply ignored by employers. But as This is Lebanon's Facebook page grew in popularity, it has become more effective.

According to the organisation's founder Dipendra Uprety, himself a former migrant worker in Lebanon, This is Lebanon would have no reason to exist if migrant workers were able to genuinely access the country's judicial system.

With This is Lebanon's increasing publicity, a result of their continuing success, has come criticism from segments of the Lebanese public, accusing them of unjustly defaming employers as well as damaging the reputation of the country. Despite their controversial tactics, they are one of the few groups who have managed to bring tangible change to the lives of migrant domestic workers while raising awareness within Lebanese society of the injustices implied in the kafala system. (Source: New Internationalist)



McStrike comes to 10 Downing Street

On November 12, striking McDonald's workers in the UK went to 10 Downing Street to disrupt business as usual. Their demands: a living wage, union recognition, and an end to sexual harassment on the job.

Workers from six McDonald's restaurants gathered across from the UK Prime Minister's office at 10 Downing Street to demand a £15-an-hour 'real living wage', fixed contracts, union recognition, an end to lower wages for workers under 25, and eradication of the pay gap between men and women.

The campaign has been ongoing for the last three years, with the striking workers gaining support from Jeremy Corbyn, and other leaders in Britain's Labour Party.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell also stood with the strikers, and is reported as saying "We are not asking for the world, we are simply asking that workers be able to share in the wealth they help to create." (Source: Jacobin)



I am currently on my second exchange in Alberta, Canada. The experience, both professional and personal, is hard to equate. The friends I have made in both countries through the exchange program has enriched mine and my family's lives.

Professionally, I have learned so much from working in a different system, different ways of doing things (playground duty at -30°, new curriculum, and my Aussie-ness to another batch of kids.

It has invigorated my teaching and set me up to be a better teacher (so I hope).

The teacher exchange program may not be taken up by many people but it is an extraordinary professional learning opportunity that cannot be filed against a cost benefit analysis.

Well maybe it can: the cost of running the program is far far less than sending one teacher on PD for a year.

Both the home school and the exchange school benefits from new people coming in, even if is only for

the year. Support of teacher exchange benefits the students, their teachers and schools. Win, win really.

I am coming to the end of the year, and there is still so much to do. We have travelled far and wide, and currently am enjoying the early arrival of winter... snow in September freaked out even the locals. Did get a snow day though!

The weather has settled, the harvest is in and Thanksgiving Canadian style has been celebrated. I know that the next few weeks will fly as reports need to be written, Christmas concert prepped and put on, being organised to leave, being organised for my returning partner – however all the effort is worth it.

The best advice is to move beyond 'one day I would like to do that' to 'let's get the paper work started' for amazing professional learning and the adventure of living in another country for a year.

Bernadette Baker On exchange from St Mary's Cathedral College to Lethbridge Ontario.

Exchange memory

In 2018 we decided to mark 20 years since our exchange with a 'big trip' to our town Porrentruy, in the French speaking part of Switzerland.

We renewed friendships with former colleagues and neighbours and saw the changes brought by the intervening decades. One child and her fiancé joined us for this trip down memory lane.

Staying in a tiny medieval village at the end of summer was so perfect!

One friend has since come to Australia twice and, bringing family members and exploring the places she had visited when she was in her early 20's, when the outback was truly the outback.

So, the cultural exchange worked both ways!

Recent bushfires have motivated contacts there to keep in closer touch than they may otherwise may have done and the better technology available now makes communication so much simpler.

So, this is a belated thank you to the union for enriching so many lives... I was the only exchange teacher who went to Europe that year and of course as a French teacher I was in heaven in such a fabulous, historically rich place.

If this year's teachers have a fraction of the joy and fun I experienced, they will find themselves enriched beyond measure.

Denise Thomson On exchange to Switzerland in 1999.

After reading these exchange stories and if you are keen to apply for an exchange in 2021, email helen@ieu.asn.au with an expression of interest or call Helen on 8202 8931 or 1800 467 943. If you did apply for an exchange for 2020 and were unsuccessful in finding a suitable match and wish to have your application reactivated, please also email or call Helen Gregory.



The Van Dyck exchange experience

The Van Dyck family from Newcastle were interviewed by Midhurst Magazine in Canada about their exchange experience. Here is the article.

MM: So, you've now been in Canada for 10 months. How has the experience been overall?

Van Dyck Family: Well it's been amazing and overwhelmingly positive experience in every way. The travel, the scenery, the culture, the local communities, the schools, the change from life-as-usual at home . . . it's all been fantastic

MM: Natalie, tell us about your teaching experience at Terry Fox?

Van Dycks: From day one the staff were so welcoming and supportive. They all have such a positive attitude to teaching and it's easy to see how this creates a great environment for the kids to learn in. Thankfully, they also performed the role of translator and without their intervention, my kindergarten kids would be going home with Australian terms like jumper (sweater) and gumboots (rainboots) and would be pronouncing 'teacher' as 'teacha'. I've also been blessed working alongside the world's hardest working DECE who tirelessly assisted me with all aspects of the job. This made the transition easier for everyone and provided continuity and stability for the kids.

It's been an interesting experience to compare and contrast the education systems in Australia and Canada. I really love the efficient use of time here which gives kids more time in their class. Having K – 8 in one school is a wide spread of ages and Terry Fox provides opportunities to integrate the older and younger grades which nurtures leadership in the older children and creates positive experiences for the younger children.

MM: And how did Scarlett enjoy going to school at Forest Hill

Van Dycks: Scarlett started school partway through Year 4 in January this year. So it was a bit of a learning curve for

her, but she has managed to fit in pretty well. The school was extremely accommodating and made the transition easy for her. She really enjoyed not having to wear a school uniform for the year! She started Year 5 in September and will commence Year 5 again at home in January 2020 which is when our school year starts in Australia.

Scarlett missed her friends at home and looks forward to reuniting with them in Australia, but she's already talking about a return visit to Midhurst next year to reunite with her new friends here.

MM: So Scarlett, what been the highlights of your year?

Van Dycks: I really loved Canada's Wonderland and Times Square in New York City where we saw Aladdin on Broadway. I've made lots of great new friends here that I'll miss when I go home. I really love how the kids in Midhurst all play in the streets and parks after school.

MM: So Adam, what did you do to occupy your time here in Midhurst

Van Dycks: At home I was involved in managing engineering consulting groups, so this year was a chance for me to depart from business-as-usual and do something a bit left field. Within a couple of weeks of landing here, I was working at Snow Valley as an assistant snowboard instructor. This was an amazing experience and I couldn't believe I was being paid to snowboard – something we usually spend a lot of money to do. Natalie and Scarlett both enjoyed skiing with me after work and on weekends and we made a lot of great friends there that we still catch up with now. Scarlett even spent a couple of her "snow-days" patrolling with me on the hill – a true novelty for a kid from Australia.

In the summer and fall, I then worked as the starter at Barrie Country Club. Golf is also something that I enjoy, so this was a great way to keep busy, whilst meeting all the members (many of which live in Midhurst) and making new

friends. Not to mention being able to play the course in my spare time. Again, this has been a great experience and both of these jobs have been a fantastic way to get involved in the community and meet new people. It's given me great insight into the important role that both Snow Valley and BCC play in the local community. Almost everyone I talk to about Snow Valley has their own story of how they learned to ski there or their kids worked there too.

MM: So what advice would you have for anyone else considering leaving home for an adventure like this

Van Dyck's: Well – just do it if you can. Life is too short to live in one place and getting out of your comfort zone like this isn't always easy, but the upsides far outweigh the downsides. I think that we will go home with new friends, broader horizons, open minds and itchy feet – ready for the next overseas experience.

MM: Any final comments?

Van Dycks: We'd like to thank The Canadian League for Educational Exchange and the Independent Education Union for making the whole adventure possible and simplifying the process of moving overseas. We would also like to thank Newcastle Grammar School and Terry Fox Elementary for accommodating this adventure. Finally, a huge thanks to all those wonderful people in Midhurst and beyond who have been incredibly hospitable in sharing their homes, cottages and community with us. It's these interactions that have made the experience special and so much more than you can get from a typical holiday overseas.

Natalie Van Dyck On exchange from Newcastle Grammar School to Barrie Ontario.



David Mamo, Christian Brothers High School Lewisham (CBHS Lewisham) receives his 30 year membership badge



Donna Widdison presents Bill Price of Christian Brothers High School Lewisham (CBHS Lewisham) with his 30 year membership badge



Charles Hill and Stephen Yeomans of De La Salle Catholic College Ashfield receive their 30 year badges



Secretary Mark Northam presents Marie McTavish with flowers on behalf of the Hunter Valley Sub Branch for her commitment to the work of the union and members



IEU Rep Seamus Farrell presenting Anna D'Amico with 30 year badge with IEU Organiser Berna Simpson at Holy Spirit Primary School Nicholls, ACT





Giveaways special – our literary members

Our members have been busy putting pen to paper

Gregory Baines, a History teacher at Merici College in the ACT has published *The Nail House* with UK publisher Fairlight Books.

Gregory spent 13 years teaching in China and has used his experience in his novel, which explores the rapidly changing Chinese culture.

Nail house is a Chinese term for when an owner refuses to sell out their home to a developer.

In the novel, a white Australian comes to China to represent developers, who want a traditional man to be removed from his home. In the process, the Australian falls in love with the old man's daughter.

Gregory said the character of the daughter is typical of many young Chinese caught between traditional ways and the rapidly emerging new more globally influenced culture.

When he first moved to China, Gregory lived in a 'third tier' city, relatively undeveloped, with people still riding around on bicycles wearing Mao suits.

But the city began changing at a phenomenal rate, and Gregory said he became "addicted to change".

"I would return to Australia for a holiday and everything was the same, so I stayed in China."

Gregory met his Malaysian wife there and eventually returned to Australia when they started a family.

"The experience of feeling lost in another country has influenced my writing. Chinese culture is very complicated, and relationships and roles are different from in the west. The characters in the book are figuring this out from their various perspectives."

Gregory said Chinese culture is fascinating with lots to offer that is not being fully appreciated by Australians.

"It's good that we have a heightened awareness of foreign interference in our country, we have been a bit naive about that in the past. But the US has done horrible things in other countries and interferes with foreign powers to a great degree."

"I think the focus on China has some xenophobia behind it and we relate to Chinese culture only in terms of security, which is a real shame."

The Nail House is available online:

<https://www.asiabookroom.com/>

<https://www.fairlightbooks.co.uk/the-nail-house/> or www.amazon.com

We Were Reos Andrew Bigwood is a History teacher at Hennessey Catholic College Young and, in conjunction with his father, Richard, has self-published *We Were Reos*.

Andrew said the book began as an attempt to reconstruct his father's fragmented recollections of his time in Vietnam.

"As a child I had a pretty poor relationship with my father. It's a common theme among the children of Vietnam veterans, which I came to understand as I matured and undertook studies in military history," Andrew said.

"It was not until I announced my intent to research

and write my undergraduate honours thesis on the 'Americanisation' of wartime experiences for Australian veterans of Vietnam that my father and I began a journey of reconciliation that culminated with the publication of *We Were Reos*.

"After the submission of my thesis (and a trip to Vietnam) my father and I sat down to record his memories and put together this book."

"It took some time to reach fruition simply because (as with all oral history is) his recollections were, at times, incomplete or disjointed, so when the skeleton of the book was written and laid out I handed it over to my father, who was getting ready to retire, so he could 'fill in the gaps' that were missing."

"He then spent the time researching and contacting old army mates so as to add to the text and fill in missing names, places and dates. We launched the final publication at NSW Parliament House in 2011."

Andrew began teaching in 2004 after retraining from a 10 year career in nursing.

"I was always a passionate historian and teaching gave me the opportunity to share that passion with my students."

"I have worked at various schools around Western Sydney including several years at an 11-12 senior college and some time at an Islamic school before ending up here at a Catholic school in rural NSW."

"Although the direction teaching has taken has changed dramatically in recent years, sharing my love of history and literature with my students remains my driving force."

We Were Reos is available through various online sites.

Newsmonth is able to offer members a chance to win one of these books in a giveaway.



Email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the giveaway you are entering in the subject line and your name, membership number and address in the body of the email. All entries to be received by 15 January 2020.

At the Ann D Clark lecture earlier this year, Teachers Mutual Bank together with the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) announced a new award in honour of the inspiring work of Ann D Clark.

The three \$2500 award grants are designed to reward and recognise programs in the Parramatta Diocese schools that are making a positive impact on their students' lives above and beyond the curriculum.

The in-school projects set the foundations for learning, and increase wellbeing for children requiring the most assistance, helping them feel safe and supported in the school environment.

Meet the winners:

St Agnes Catholic High School, Rooty Hill – Wellbeing Program

The six tier program was implemented to address the mental health needs of students at the school. It has been successful in increasing the students' sense of belonging and connection to others, while also helping them 'connect back' with their families and community.

Features include a mental health wellbeing space, lunch club, Indigenous mentoring group, technology club and a girl's resilience and big sister program.

St Finbar's Primary School, Glenbrook – Learning Through Play

Using children's' innate learning styles, the program challenges Stage 1 students to make sense of the world

and learn and address conflicts through play.

The holistic program integrates cognitive relationship and sensory experiences through seven zones, individually selected by students, which include dramatic play, construction, collage, science and nature, writing, reading and numbers.

The school has seen an 83% decrease in behavioral incidents, a two band improvement in literacy for the most vulnerable students and increased inclusiveness for neuro-diverse children.

St Joseph's Primary School, Kingswood – Shared Vision for Attendance

With the need to improve attendance rates, St Joseph's introduced a whole-of-school community approach. Tailored for each student's needs, the program called on caregivers to help ensure good attendance and the children also rose to the challenge.

Since the program was introduced, there has been an improvement in NAPLAN results, behaviour, safety and a more than 20% increase in attendance rates over the past four years.

These schools will use their \$2500 award to undertake further training, upskill other staff and acquire further resources for their projects.

To learn more visit: tmbank.com.au/AnnClarkAward



Recognition for schools making a difference

Early childhood conference attendees given clean bill of health

The Workers Health Centre is a not for profit charity established in 1977 by affiliated unions to provide independent rehabilitation services for injured workers.

As part of the Workers Health Centre role for union members, free health checks were provided at the IEU Early Childhood Conference in August and 33 delegates were screened. The health checks included blood pressure, pulse, weight, height and blood glucose level.

High blood pressure usually does not have any symptoms and is one of the most common health conditions. It can lead to serious problems such as heart attack, stroke or kidney disease. This is why visiting your GP regularly to have your BP checked is important.

Body mass index is an indicator of a person's body fat and identifies whether a person is at a healthy weight. This is critical to lower the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain cancers.

High blood sugar levels can indicate a person is at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, which also has no signs or symptoms. Two million Australians have pre-diabetes and are at high-risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular (heart and circulation) disease.

Further information was discussed regarding current treatments and conditions, medications, family history

and risk factors, current lifestyle, age related issues and mental wellbeing. If risk factors or untreated conditions were identified, these were discussed, resources were provided and a follow up plan developed to see their GP or a specialised service provider.

Overall the IEU delegates were healthy and knowledgeable about their health and see their GP regularly.

There were a few discussions regarding concerns for their male partner's health. Fact sheets were provided for Type 2 diabetes, sleep apnoea, stress and changing lifestyles to share after the conference.

Further health information and resources are available from:

- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/>
- [healthyliving/body-mass-index-bmi](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/blood-pressure)
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/blood-pressure>
- <http://www.workershealth.com.au>

To make a referral for an injured worker to the Workers Health Centre, please check their website at <http://www.workershealth.com.au>, or call 02 9749 766.

Community calendar

Do you have an event you'd like to share with other IEU members?

A school reunion, social justice event or professional development? Or something else you'd like to share with members? Let us know and we can advertise it here as a free service. Next publication date of Newsmonth is 10 February 2020.

Email your event to newsmonth@ieu.asn.au



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Quarter Page (125mm x 170mm)	\$660.00
Half Page (250mm x 180mm) (landscape).....	\$1210.00
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4200 (09/19)