



independent education

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independent education

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AUSWIDE

Queensland

School officers: Queensland Catholic classification review

The review of school officer classifications and pay rates in Queensland Catholic schools provides a once in a generation opportunity to deliver careers school officer members can count on.

School officers play a critical role in the delivery of quality education – and the review is the chance to build meaningful career paths and ensure long overdue professional recognition for these Queensland Catholic school staff.

The current school officer classification and pay structure was developed over 25 years ago.

Despite some amendments in specific areas, the structure essentially remains the same as that which applied in 1995 – despite the extraordinary changes that have occurred in schools and in the work and responsibilities school officers now undertake.

This review was a key priority identified by members when collective bargaining began last year. The new Queensland Catholic school collective agreements contain clear requirements for the conduct and scope of the review.

Like all negotiations, our success in the classification review will rely on member engagement and action. To learn more and add your voice to the campaign, visit: www.qieua.asn.au/careersyoucancounton

Northern Territory

Maintaining a strong voice for members on TRB

Longstanding IEUA-QNT nominee Elsabe Bott is stepping down from her role with the Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board (TRB) and will be replaced by member and teacher Louise Lenzo.

Representation of our union on the TRB is crucial to ensuring the voice of members is heard regarding the professional concerns they face.

IEUA-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said our union was incredibly grateful to Elsabe for her contribution in representing our union on the TRB for the last 15 years.

“Elsabe has shown professionalism and dedication during her time serving on the TRB, ensuring the voices of IEUA-QNT members have been heard,” Mr Burke said.

As our union’s new TRB appointee, Louise Lenzo is a highly experienced teacher and active IEUA-QNT member who believes practitioner and union representation is vital.

Louise said she hopes to contribute to positive changes and improvements in the NT education system in her role and give the early childhood education sector a greater voice through her appointment.

South Australia

Unhealthy changes for Catholic WHS Committee

The IEUSA has been on the Catholic Education Sector Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee for many years and we have consistently made valuable contributions. IEUSA Assistant Secretary, Wendy Evans, is the chair of the committee... well – until now that is.

The presence of the union is no longer welcome. We have been unceremoniously dumped from the committee because the church is disbanding it and instituting an equivalent committee with no union presence. Spot the difference!

Editorial

It has been a very big year! This final edition of IE for 2020 explores some of the big challenges we face as educators as well as celebrating our successes.

IE articles continue to provide readers with important updates on education innovation, resources and reviews, as well as legal advice. A number of articles in this edition also highlight ongoing efforts to improve equity and inclusion, and in combating disadvantage.

In the face of a Federal Government doubling the cost of humanities degrees, Mary Jo Capps AM explores the many benefits of studying the arts (p12).

One of the themes we continue to highlight is the worrying deterioration in mental health of children and young people, not only here in Australia but globally. As with most challenges however, the more we understand them, their causes and expression, the better we are at finding solutions. Despite the clear link between mental health issues and poor educational outcomes, Australian schools aren’t well resourced to provide specialist mental health and counseling professionals among school staff. High quality professional development for teachers and support staff in this area should also be resourced.

This edition of IE features a new study led by Dr Melanie Baak of the University of South Australia that gives readers a detailed insight into the mental health issues of refugee children (p9). Dr Baak finds young people from refugee backgrounds are at greater risk of mental health issues, particularly stemming from past trauma. She looks at how schools can build strategies that include families.

We also look at recent studies on increased anxiety in students, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (p24).

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The first indication that major change was imminent came from employer reps expressing issues with the union being involved, especially with the Chair being a union official.

The IEU officially expressed concerns about the interaction and the manner in which the sentiments were expressed. We received an assurance that “there is no ‘anti-union’ agenda” – however, the union is now excluded.

Nevertheless, the IEU will continue to advocate on behalf of members and monitor health and safety, and where appropriate, we will utilise right of entry provisions under the Workplace Health and Safety Act.

Tasmania

Reviewing the regulators

The Tasmanian Government has just announced a review of the regulatory framework which covers a number of education regulatory bodies. The review will look at the Office of Education Registrar (Education and the Non-government Schools Registration Board), the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, and the Teachers Registration Board Tasmania.

All three regulators are established as entities independent from the Department of Education (DoE) and are accountable to the Minister of Education. However, they are funded through an output in DoE's appropriation and all staff, with the exception of board and committee appointments, are employed as state servants by DoE.

The review discussion document says it seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- the provision of independent cross sectoral advice as it relates to the entities' existing education regulatory functions
- the strengthening of the governance framework as it relates to the entities' existing functions
- the sustainable funding of education regulation
- the adoption of better practice regulation with a focus on education outcomes.

Victoria

COVID crisis impacts pre-service teachers

While the rollercoaster journey of remote learning, significantly restricted lifestyle and heightened anxiety is taking its toll on Victorian schools and communities. Those about to enter the teaching profession have been experiencing a raft of anxieties and uncertainties that many in the teaching profession have not had to face.

Although the problem is being closely monitored by a government working group, final year Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students in either the four-year undergraduate degree or those in the second year of their Master of Teaching are facing the worry of whether they will be able to graduate this year.

Many final year placements to occur in Terms 2 and 3 have been severely affected by the impact of COVID-19 on schools, particularly as a result of the move to remote learning. The continuation of the metropolitan lockdown affecting schools well into Term 4 will continue to provide placement challenges.

While the number of required days of practicum has been reduced by the Victorian Institute of Teaching, there are still challenges in the remote learning context. A very helpful set of guidelines and suggestions has been distributed to Victorian Catholic school principals about remote teaching and meeting the practicum general requirements.

A copy of the Catholic Education Melbourne document *Pre-service Teacher Placements during the Coronavirus Pandemic* is on the union's website under its COVID-19 advice section: www.ieuvictas.org.au.

NSW

Catholic systemic and independent school negotiations

While the industrial focus in NSW/ACT has been very much on EA negotiations for Catholic systemic and Catholic independent schools, as well as pending negotiations in the independent sector, a number of major education issues have also been priorities for the IEU. These have included:

- Concerns about the rushed timeline for implementing the NSW Curriculum Review – there must be genuine engagement with the profession so that reform is not just quick but effective.
- NAPLAN review – while the IEU welcomed the NAPLAN review commissioned by NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT, there are significant concerns that the proposed Australian National Standardised Assessment (ANSA) will not be better than the flawed NAPLAN system it seeks to replace.

The IEU has responded to a proposed NSW Government review of NESA approved PD by indicating that it proudly stands by its courses. We believe that teachers require and deserve high quality professional development.

In response to ongoing member concerns about the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD), a working party has been established, further member input requested and an IEUA federal office research project sought into the validity of NCCD processes and outcomes.

The union looks forward to working with members to progress these issues which impact so directly on their work in schools.

ACT

Sexuality and Gender Identity Conversion Practices Bill 2020

Introduced to the ACT Assembly on 20 August 2020, the Sexuality and Gender Identity Conversion Practices Bill 2020 (the Bill) prohibits certain practices aimed at changing a person's sexuality or gender identity ('conversion practices').

The Bill makes it a criminal offence to conduct such practices on a protected person, or to remove a protected person from the jurisdiction for the purpose of conducting such practices. A protected person means a child or a person who has impaired decision-making ability in relation to a matter relating to the person's health or welfare. It also provides a civil mechanism through the ACT Human Rights Commission (the Commission) for people who are harmed by conversion practices to make a conversion practice complaint which, if not successfully conciliated, can then be referred to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT).

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch supports the position that inclusive schools are good schools. It is not anticipated that teachers in our sector are or will be involved in conversion therapy: teachers implement syllabuses and faith-based schools must be compliant with these expectations. For a teacher to be supportive of students grappling with sexuality and gender identity issues is to be true to their profession that is, caring for students.

Within a school setting, the union certainly would not be supportive of schools referring students on for such therapy and believe it is beyond their remit, nor is it in the best interests of students.

A number of ACT faith-based schools are resisting the haste with which the Bill has been presented and debated.

The union is concerned that the ACT Government is rushing through such a significant piece of legislation without adequate scrutiny and consideration of unintended consequences for children and families. We therefore implore the ACT Government to provide a reasonable extension of time to consider the practical and legal implications of this new law in consultation with non government school leaders.



InFocus THOMAS MAYOR

Torres Strait Islander, author, activist and unionist Thomas Mayor talks to journalist Monica Crouch about the importance of education, family and connection to culture - and the paths they've opened up for him.

A formative episode in Thomas Mayor's life came in the form of the 1998 waterfront dispute, a momentous chapter in Australian industrial relations history that led Mayor to become a union representative in his workplace. After 16 years on the wharves he became a full time union official and is now Deputy Branch Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia's Northern Territory Branch.

Mayor, who lives in Darwin, is also a son, brother and father. He is the eldest of three children, and one of his two sisters is a teacher. His father, Celestino Mayor, is a Torres Strait Islander of Philippine and Dayak ancestry and his mother, Liz Mayor, brings Polish, Jewish and English ancestry to the family.

Mayor distils his deep and diverse heritage succinctly. "I am a Torres Strait Islander born and raised on Larrakia land, who loves family above all, and who has been following my heart to do what is right," he writes in his book *Finding the Heart of the Nation: The journey of the Uluru Statement towards Voice, Treaty and Truth* (Hardie Grant, 2019).

Mayor also advocates eloquently for three changes essential to Australia's growth as a nation: a First Nations' Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution; a Treaty between the Australian Government and First Nations People; and truth telling about the nation's history.

In 2017, after then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull rejected a First Nations' Voice to Parliament, Mayor took the original Uluru Statement from the Heart canvas to the people. What he found was a welcoming nation willing to listen and ready for change. Mayor's extensive travels inspired him to write *Finding the Heart of the Nation*.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart, reproduced in full in the book's opening pages, invites us all to walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people "in a movement of the Australian people for a better future".

Here, we walk with Mayor through some important phases in his own history and hear his hopes for the future.

School days

Mayor has always lived in Darwin, where he attended Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Karama. "It was a good school," Mayor says. "And given my family lived on one average

income, I know my parents sacrificed a lot to send my two sisters and I there."

After primary school came O'Loughlin Catholic College, Karama, up to Year 8. "I kept getting in trouble for not tucking in my shirt – I was terribly skinny and I hated it," Mayor says. He then attended Sanderson Middle School and Casuarina Senior College for Years 11 and 12.

But there was a significant gap in the curriculum. "In school, I was taught very little about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – our history and culture," he says. "We were taught that Captain Cook discovered Australia and that the Indigenous peoples, in the very few mentions of us, were nomadic, and there was no pain or suffering to mention. It just was."

Something was seriously missing. "School didn't teach me about my culture," Mayor says. "On reflection, school was teaching the opposite of what I was experiencing. I was lucky compared to some kids, and I see the effect it has on some people, who are always fighting for their identity."

"We need to improve the curriculum so that Australian children learn the truth; so Indigenous children can feel accepted for who they are; and so all Australians, together, can embrace a connection to the lands and waters that is unique to anywhere else in the world – more than 100,000 years of continuous culture."

It was Mayor's father who connected him to culture, however indirectly. Celestino Mayor was born under the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act 1939 (Qld), and was among the first generation to escape the total control of the supposed "Protector" when this Act was repealed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act 1965.

"His attitude was to just work hard, not complain, and get on with it," Mayor says. "But we practised culture in our own ways. Dad taught me to hunt traditional foods, such as turtles and dugongs. I was also fortunate enough to practise and perform island dancing as I was growing up, with other Torres Strait Islanders in the Darwin community who did express culture."

Mayor is largely philosophical about his school years. "I enjoyed most of my schooling," he says. "I was still quite young when I realised that the school years are a short part of life, and compared to working each day, and all the other responsibilities that come with adulthood, school is a time to enjoy."

"I therefore have mostly fond memories of school – kicking the footy around at lunch; causing mischief and occasionally getting in trouble. There were hard times as well, mainly in early

primary. I was often teased about being a very skinny boy or being an 'Abo'. But I remember this changed once I learnt to defend myself, and when more Indigenous children joined the school."

Teachers with high impact

"I will always remember my Year 11 English teacher, Ms Arthur," Mayor says. "In a couple of the tests and assessments, I got great marks, which surprised me. I was still having too much fun! Ms Arthur told me I would write a book one day, which I thought was impossible." Fast forward to 2020, and Mayor is the author of two books, *Finding the Heart of the Nation* and the children's book, *Finding our Heart*.

"From Ms Arthur, I learnt that it means a lot to a youth's development if their strengths are identified to them and encouraged," Mayor says. "Also, if a child is taught in a way they can enjoy."

"I will always remember my Year 11 English teacher, Ms Arthur. She told me I would write a book one day, which I thought was impossible."

Mayor believes there are many ways to be an effective teacher. "My favourite and most effective teachers were both strict and relaxed," he says. "They had completely different styles and attitudes. Their personal characters and strengths were completely different."

Mayor was also aware of some of the struggles teachers face in their profession. "From what I have observed as a student, as a parent, and from listening to teachers and my sister who is a teacher, it is as much about how a teacher is resourced to do their work that can make or break how effective they are," he says.

"I believe our education system must improve student-teacher ratios, teaching tools and facilities, teaching environments and a curriculum that provides students with the freedom to learn in a caring, interpersonal and adaptive way," he says.

"Because, as far as I can tell, even the most effective teachers are struggling because of these factors."

Again, he turns to the place of family. "It is also how a student is being loved and cared for at home," he says. "A teacher will always struggle to be effective if the student is suffering outside of school."

Precious memories

During his travels throughout Australia, Mayor made an impromptu visit to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School on Thursday Island, unrolling the original Uluru Statement from the Heart canvas for the school community to see.

"I took away with me some very special memories," Mayor says. "The principal was very kind and supportive. The teachers were excited and the kids noticed this reaction, and they responded in the same way. They asked great questions and when one of the students, Ahliyah, interviewed me as a reporter does for NITV, the visit became that much more special."

Meaningful mentors

First and foremost is family. "My parents have been my most significant influence," he says. "I admire my father's incredible work ethic and resilience. At the same time, I have learnt from his flaws, how he was harsh at times when he need not have been."

"I admire my mum's care and understanding and appreciate that she sacrificed so much of herself to raise my sisters and me."

"There was no greater influence for me. This includes when I consciously chose paths in my career or personal life that I knew they would not approve of. I think they have kept me grounded."

Then comes education. "I believe that receiving a good education has certainly influenced the path I am on now," Mayor says. "Having the confidence to write, to socialise, to use a computer and calculate how to solve a problem in an educated way cannot be underestimated for the advantages these skills provide, as compared to someone who has no such education."

Then there's the union movement. "A huge influence, absolutely, has been my education as a union member," Mayor says. "The union taught me about standing up and speaking out when something is wrong, or when there is a need for improvement. It was through the union that I furthered my writing, by taking up disputes on behalf of my comrades as a delegate."

"I learnt progressive thinking, rather than the ignorant ways of the past, especially the way men behaved. The lessons I learnt on the job, on the wharf, in the union meetings, were the most valuable to the path I am on now."

Working on the wharves

After finishing Year 12, Mayor sat an aptitude test for government traineeships and landed the very one he wanted. "I started work as a maritime trainee in 1994," he says.

"I remember the old wharves gently encouraging me to join the union. They

told me about the credit union and the superannuation as institutions the union had built that would be good for me as a young man.

"They showed me the importance of joining by example, the way we collectively handled the issues that arose around safety and pay. I joined very soon after becoming a trainee.

"I had no family activism background, though I'm sure Dad was a member of the relevant union and a Labor voter. He just never talked about it though."

In 1998 came that push to break the union that only served to make it stronger. With the support of the Howard Government, seaport operator Patrick Stevedores dismissed its entire unionised workforce of 1400, locking them out of the wharves – and their livelihoods. After a four month struggle, Patrick's move was ruled illegal by the Federal Court and the wharfies regained their jobs.

"My greatest lesson about the importance of the union came from the Patrick's dispute," says Mayor (pictured above right with United Workers Union organiser Wayne Kurnoth and NT Labor Senator Malarndirri McCarthy).

"It showed me the stark difference between the interests of employers and the government, as compared to my union.

"Before 1998, the employer was telling me they wanted to promote me to supervisor. But that dispute solidified my resolve to fight for fellow workers. I didn't want to be a boss."

How teachers can help

Mayor invites teachers in the IEU to walk with him. "It would be a wonderfully powerful action if all teachers included the Uluru Statement, the history of the struggle that made it and what it proposes, in their lessons," he says.

"I don't think this need only be for those who teach social studies. With some initiative and imagination, I am sure there are ways to introduce Voice, Treaty and Truth, even if in small parts, into other subject matter.

"A Voice to Parliament, after all, is just a representative body with democratic processes. It is an enhancement of a people's position through collectivism and structure.

"A Treaty is just an agreement. It will require negotiation, truth telling and reconciling with the past. Statistics and data will be part of an equation for an agreement. And Makarrata is a process of dispute resolution.

"And in Truth Telling, there is so much to learn. The morals and the results of when race is used as a tool of oppression. How wages were stolen, and the compounding effect of this



dispossession over hundreds of years.

"I encourage teachers to read the Uluru Statement for its eloquence and its subtle references to moments in this nation's history. Consider where the phrases, 'a rightful place', and 'born therefrom, remain attached thereto, one day return thither' come from.

"I believe that receiving a good education has influenced the path I am on now. Having the confidence to write, socialise, use a computer and calculate how to solve a problem in an educated way cannot be underestimated."

Campaign for referendum

The "From the Heart" campaign for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations' Voice to Parliament aims to get a referendum on the agenda late in the next term of federal government. While the COVID-19 pandemic is top of the national agenda for now, the campaign is still developing steadily.

"Our focus is on building awareness," Mayor says. "We know from our research that awareness correlates strongly with support. Hence, educating people in our unions and personal networks is vital at this stage.

"We must not give up, this is something that Australia must do."

Gratitude and hope

Mayor holds the teachers of the IEU in high regard. "I want to thank the IEU for your solidarity," he says.

"You were one of the first unions to take action, and this will not be forgotten. I hope that your part in this long struggle for fairness toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be something your members teach to children in the schools of a country that celebrates more than 100,000 years of continuous culture."

Advocacy Course: Voice. Treaty. Truth.

Join Thomas Mayor to learn about the history of First Nations' struggles; the Uluru Statement from the Heart; ways to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; building the skills and confidence to handle objections to a First Nations' Voice to Parliament; campaign messaging and mapping; and a chance to ask questions.

The course is open to all union members. It is run online in two 3-hour sessions:

Monday 26 November and Tuesday 27 November, 10am to 1pm

(More dates to come in 2021.)

Find out more: atui.org.au/voice-treaty-truth-advocacy-course

"I developed this course within the union movement for union members, because I believe it is unionists who can make this long overdue change happen," Mayor says.

"You can help me mobilise the mighty union movement to the Uluru Statement cause."

Struggles of refugee students

A new study led by Dr Melanie Baak of the University of South Australia has highlighted the hidden mental health struggles of refugee students in Australian secondary schools, writes journalist Jessica Willis.

The mental health issues of students with a refugee background are particularly difficult for staff and teachers to recognise due to factors such as stigma, cultural and linguistic barriers, teachers' fear of stereotyping students and difficulty identifying warning signs, according to the study.

Young people from refugee backgrounds have an increased risk of mental health issues, particularly from traumatic experiences related to: forced migration; racism; family and living circumstances; language and social barriers; and difficulties adjusting to the school setting.

Confidence to engage with diversities

The study found a major barrier to identifying and supporting students with mental health issues is navigating cultural and linguistic diversities – especially if there is a strong stigma around mental health and wellbeing.

It can also limit young people seeking help as they may have great difficulty expressing their feelings and can be worried about confidentiality.

Participants in the study noted young people may not share their issues with their families and the families may resist sharing information with the wider community.

Baak said while there can be differences in the presentation of mental health issues in these students, school staff may also not be as confident in responding to them.

“What we found from our research was that teachers were more likely to respond to certain behaviours such as silence and withdrawal, with ‘that’s because they are a refugee’, Baak said.

“So they are not responding in the same way they might with another student.

“Often there are also fears about reaching out to and communicating with families, particularly where there are cultural stigmas around mental health and not wanting students to get into trouble at home,” Baak said.

Fear of talking about trauma

The study found school staff could be fearful of bringing up past trauma if they asked about the student's mental health.

Many respondents also believed refugees' problems disappear when they arrive in Australia.

Baak said while it is important to be aware of potential past traumas, not every student has the same experience.

She said it is also critical for teachers to recognise there can be numerous current stressors, ranging from home life situations to widespread negative media coverage relating to refugees, that can cause ongoing trauma.

“What we find overwhelmingly though, if you ask a student with a refugee background about themselves they won't tell you anything they don't feel comfortable with, so you aren't demanding that they tell you every single detail about their refugee experience,” Baak said.

“But by asking them general questions like ‘are you okay?’, ‘how are you going?’, ‘what can I do to support you?’, you are opening up an essential conversation,” she said.

Building strategies inclusive of families

Overall, the study found there was a limited awareness of appropriate mental health services and referral pathways amongst school staff.

Schools can improve outcomes for students by connecting with services in the local community, particularly specialist services which are focused on service provision for culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

These connections should be developed by school staff; students should not be expected to manage it by themselves. Baak said for many of these students it is not just a case of ringing mum and dad – it requires additional ways of accessing support.

“This is where we find schools which have mental health practitioners who come in and work on campus are doing really well because they are making supports accessible,” she said.

Baak recommended a number of dedicated services across Australia, such as:

- Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)
- NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors
- AMES Australia (Victoria)
- Foundation House (Victoria).

Improved teacher training in identifying the subtle signs of mental health, as well as better care programs inclusive of families and dedicated bicultural workers, can help communication and understanding between students, families and school staff and provide links to external providers.

Strategies involving parents and families in mental health discussions may be more important than is currently recognised, the study found.



Dr Baak has been involved in refugee and migration issues, as a service provider and as a researcher, since 2004. She convenes the Migration And Refugee Research Network (MARRNet) which brings together academics, service providers and government policy makers to explore issues around migration, refugees and resettlement.

Further reading

The full study can be found in the *Journal of School Health*. Baak M, Miller E, Ziersch A, Due C, Masocha S, Ziaian T. (2020) ‘The role of schools in identifying and referring refugee background young people who are experiencing mental health issues’, *Journal of School Health*. 90: 172-181. DOI: 10.1111/josh.12862



Women working in boys schools and schools with male dominated cultures:

Are we ready for our #metoo moment?

While improvements in gender equity are slowly making changes in workplaces and society in general, our education unions work with members to tackle male dominated cultures which still exist in many schools. IEU Victoria Tasmania Branch Officers, Therese O'Loughlin and Marit Clayton have specific responsibility for gender and equity issues, including training and policy development. Here they outline the key problem areas and point to ways schools can build gender equality.

Issues of sexism and inequality in society are at the forefront of discussions about how to make our workplaces safe and respectful for everyone. A recent survey by the Australian Human Rights Commission revealed that two in five women and one in four men have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. This is not a 'women's issue', it is a societal issue and is driven by underlying inequality. Education is a key factor in initiating change and this has prompted a questioning of the culture of inequality and sexism in many boys schools and co-educational schools with a very masculine culture.

Less than a year ago St Kevin's College, a Catholic boys school in Melbourne, was at the centre of some very public scandals and allegations of a culture of sexism and misogyny which included the filming of a group of students on a tram singing a salacious chant about women. St Kevin's is not alone.

The public behaviour of these

particular boys has prompted a questioning of the continuing culture of inequality and sexism in many boys schools and co-educational schools with a very masculine culture, and an examination of what can be done to change this.

The IEU has been working with members in co-education and boys schools to examine what they are experiencing, why they think this is happening, and what are the barriers to changing culture.

Below are issues our members are talking about:

What our members working in boys schools are experiencing

- It's a boys school - get used to it
- Male colleagues stepping in to sort out the 'issue' and thinking they are doing you a favour
- There are no women in leadership
- Male voices being heard in the school - female voices overlooked
- Boys feel we are nagging, mumsy
- A boy lifted my skirt with a pencil when I was helping another student and had my back to him.

The issues women face in these work environments arise from leadership culture, appointment practices, interactions with students, with staff, with parents and the underlying culture of the school. Underpinning all of these are gender inequality and sexism and the ways unequal attitudes toward women manifest in the workplace.

Responses from members on why this is happening

- Unchallenged gender assumptions
- Tendency to favour people with the same background/experience/style as the male executive
- Too many senior male staff in the school want to be liked, mates with the boys and aren't above having a laugh with the boys at a female teacher's expense
- Desensitisation to the behaviour
- Old boy culture
- Parents enable/protect/defend
- Disconnect between teachers and leadership. Leadership team are often unaware or unsupportive of the needs and concerns of teachers
- School reflects broader societal attitudes that men are more powerful and often excused for things
- We now have more females on exec but five out of six Year Level Coordinators are male so there is a very masculine perspective on all behaviour issues
- A lack of leadership on these issues and insufficient consequences
- An ingrained culture of misogyny and underlying hatred of women in a very military based staff
- Sport is the most important thing and the rest doesn't matter as much.

It is not just in schools where these attitudes prevail. In 2018, The Australian Human Rights Commission launched a national inquiry into sexual harassment

in the workplace and the report released earlier this year, *Respect@ Work*, contains 55 recommendations around what needs to happen to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace. Recommendation 10 recommends that all Australian governments ensure children and young people receive school-based respectful relationships education that is age appropriate, evidence-based and addresses the drivers of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

What members believe are the barriers to changing culture...

- The refusal to believe anything is wrong
- Old boy mentality
- Entrenched behaviours and lack of acknowledgement that anything is wrong
- The entitled males are in power and don't want to change the system because it suits and benefits them
- Lack of leadership and structures that allow for change
- Finding male allies in the school to assist process of change
- Lack of policies and procedures in this space
- The difficulty of changing long established traditions and culture
- Good men are in every school - they need to speak up
- Blindness from those who are not directly impacted
- Women accessing leave, particularly parental leave or part time arrangements which then limits their ability to move up the hierarchy and puts the brakes on their careers. They are taken less seriously and seen as 'in and out of the system
- No systems in place to support female teachers who stand their ground and call out behaviour. They are often shamed, made to feel guilty or targeted
- Change comes from the top
- Schools are ripe for a #metoo moment.

Tackling gender inequality

The St Kevin's College union sub-branch has begun the process of addressing the cultural factors which contribute to gender inequality. IEU members are committed collectively to cultural change and to a fair, transparent and authentic process of engagement with the school.

Through a lot of work as a sub-branch, they have created two representative IEU working groups - one is a women's group, the other, importantly, includes a member of

the leadership team. These groups will report to the principal and to the consultative committee.

A recent and significant development at St Kevin's is that, for the first time in its 102 year history, the school has appointed a woman as Principal.

Cultural change will not happen overnight at St Kevin's or any other school. The challenge is how to address the issues and implement effective and long term change.

Gender equality is a human right and extends to all workplaces across the country; without it, everyone is affected as it perpetuates a culture of sexism and inequality.

Schools, as places of learning and innovation, should be leading the way in terms of providing safe and healthy communities. To do so they need to be able to recognise gender inequality and have structures in place to deal with it including prevention strategies.

For IEU members in boys schools the first step is to consult with women members. The facilitation of a Women's Rights at Work (WRAW) chat is a great way to connect with each other and to talk about the issues of gender equality and the actions that might be taken in response.

We know that schools are different and any plan about how to address issues of gender equality must take into consideration the uniqueness of that school and workplace.

What is gender equality?

Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities (the end goal). It is the equal distribution of resources based on the needs of different groups of people (the means to get there).

What are the solutions?

The solution is a whole of community approach and a commitment from leadership at all levels. There are some specific strategies that we need to build into an overall approach.

Using a gender lens

This involves assessing a given situation for gender equality issues, for example, the gender composition in decision making roles; promotions of women to leadership positions; the evidence of gender equality across organisational systems policies/procedures/practices; job descriptions and performance criteria; the availability and utility of flexible working arrangements, family and caring responsibilities for women and men.

Professional learning opportunities

Training that develops knowledge, attitudes and skills for gender equality

and the prevention of gendered violence is key. Training should have a clear purpose, reflect staff needs and be delivered in a way that enables worker participation.

Topics should cover:

- gender awareness
- gendered violence
- active bystander
- conscious/unconscious bias

Support for young men and boys

Young people are soaking in gendered attitudes and expectations from their environment and it is time to talk openly about gender in boys schools. We also need to talk to students about race, class, sexual orientation, and other intersectional issues. We want young men to know and value gender equality for themselves and for all people in their lives. It's not simply about behaving when they are outside the school gates in their school blazers. Schools are in a unique position to engage young men to achieve gender equality in both their public and private lives.

Pathways to change

There are many ways a school can make progress: publicly demonstrate a commitment to gender equity and help to engage the workforce; engage women in the consultation, planning and delivery of events, and invite women as guest speakers; hold events and activities that focus on women's leadership and voices to promote gender equality; consider linking the event to broader campaigns to prevent violence against women, such as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women/16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

A workplace culture that supports gender equity can be seen in workplaces that are aware of the importance of gender equality and respectful relationships, ready to talk about gender inequality, gender stereotypes, and violence against women. Such workplaces are:

- open to doing things differently, and
- committed to taking action to build a fairer workplace.

Creating a supportive workplace culture takes time and requires multiple and mutually reinforcing strategies. Three critical strategies that underpin workplace culture change work are involving workers, engaging leaders, and involving women and men.

We need to fix the systems and the norms that perpetuate gender inequality - and our schools are great places to start.



ARTS and minds

Leadership consultant and former Musica Viva head Mary Jo Capps AM explains why arts education is vital and calls for greater support for teachers in this rich arena. Even Einstein, she says, played the violin.

In the last days of August 2020, two significant and coincidentally related events occurred regarding the role of arts in nurturing young minds.

On 21 August, we lost one of the most influential thinkers on this topic with the death of the Sir Ken Robinson, British author, speaker and adviser on creative and cultural education. Sir Ken delivered TED's most popular talk to date; provocatively titled *Do Schools Kill Creativity?* it's had more than 67 million views since 2006.

The other impactful event was on 26 August when the Australia Council for the Arts released the results of a major research project, *Creating the Future*, which tracks attitudes to the arts and their role in our lives.

The two are connected through their messages about the urgent need to shift our thinking about how and why we value the arts. Sir Ken sought to upend what he saw as an antiquated education system, based on industrialisation's need for academic and vocational skills, but which ignores humanity's need for creative, brilliant people to be encouraged and valued.

The Australia Council reported that nearly every Australian – 98 per cent – engages with the arts in some way, whether through listening to music, reading, engaging online, attending events or engaging with the arts of their cultural background. The Australia Council concludes that the arts are embedded in the very fabric of Australian lives – they're not some add-on for the fortunate few.

"Again and again, it has been shown that active engagement in the arts improves academic and often social outcomes for students in both primary and secondary education."

Now let's think about our education system. Can we, hand on heart, say that 98 per cent of our students are encouraged to engage with the arts during their education? Are we able to honour Sir Ken's legacy with the knowledge that creativity is at the core of our education system? And if not, why not?

Better cognition in all areas

First, let's consider what is gained from an arts-rich education. The list of skills enhanced by arts education is extensive, validated by research commencing in the 1950s and reworked from every angle around the world ever since. Again and again, it has been shown that active engagement in the arts improves academic and often social outcomes for students in both primary and secondary education.

The underlying question in more recent research is reasonable: Were these students always going to get ahead thanks to privileged backgrounds? Which brings us to causation versus correlation. Two large American studies undertook to answer this.

One was the Dana Arts and Cognition Consortium, which brought together cognitive neuroscientists from seven US universities. Were smart, rich people better able to access the arts, so their results across all areas were likely to be better?

They found that, regardless of socio-economic background, an interest in the performing arts leads to higher states of motivation that produce the sustained attention necessary to improve performance. And the training of attention leads to improvement in other areas of cognition.

Zeroing in on my particular interest, the study demonstrated specific links between high levels of music training and the ability to manipulate information in both working and long-term memory; substantial improvement in numeracy and geometric skills; and more highly developed skills in reading and sequence learning.

An even bigger US study, *Champions of Change* (2000), followed 20,000 young people for 10 years to see if engagement in the arts made any difference. Again, regardless of background, young people who engaged in the arts: had better academic results; were less involved in substance abuse; had higher levels of civic engagement; and music students exhibited advanced maths proficiency and higher overall academic superiority over non-music students.

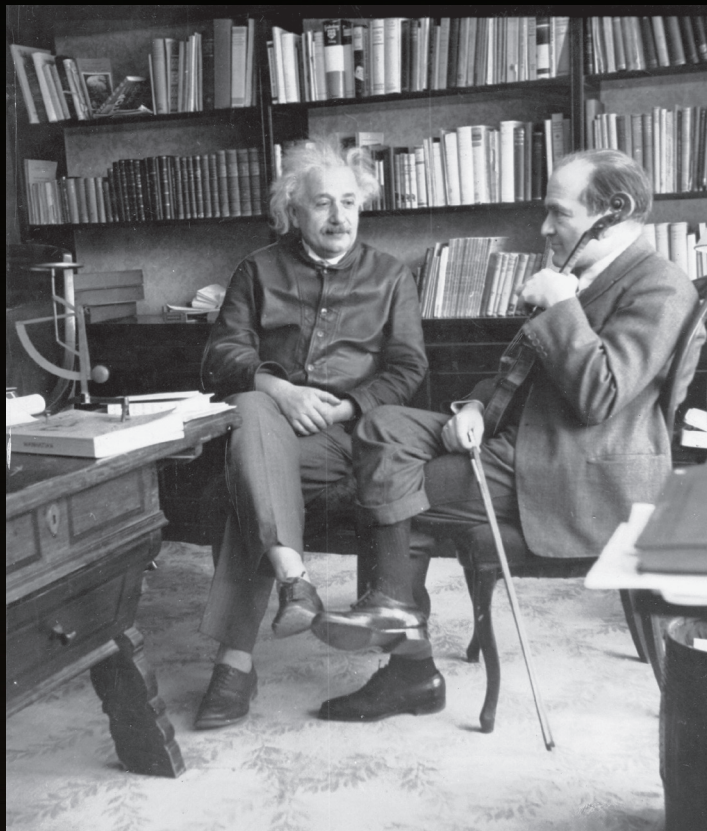
From my own experience over decades mentoring in the arts, it has always struck me that the arts offer an alternative entry point into academic study for students who are otherwise disengaged. Time and again I heard teachers talk about "that student" who was troubled or otherwise unresponsive who suddenly blossomed when they found a "way in" through the arts.

So much upside

If these reasons are not sufficient, there is also considerable community support for the arts in our lives. The Australia Council research notes that the largest increases since the last such survey (in 2016) have been in the proportion of Australians agreeing on the impact of arts and creativity on child development (63 per cent); on our sense of wellbeing and happiness (56 per cent); on helping us deal with stress, anxiety or depression (56 per cent); and on stimulating our minds (64 per cent). What's not to like?

The report went on to note that at least six in 10 Australians agree arts and creativity impact our ability to express ourselves (64 per cent); our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas (62 per cent); on our understanding of other people and cultures (60 per cent).

One in two Australians agrees that arts and creativity are important in shaping and expressing Australian identity and in building creative skills that will be necessary for the workforce. Surely these are critical factors enabling us to recover and regenerate in post-pandemic Australia?



A resounding majority of the 9000 respondents in the Australia Council study believe the arts should be an important part of education (73 per cent), with similar percentages agreeing that the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia (71 per cent) and the arts help you to understand perspectives that are different to your own (71 per cent). Surely these are the building blocks of education.

Indeed, the arts help a child achieve all manner of good outcomes beyond the arts. But the arts are important because they are good in themselves, because they are inspiring, because they make us feel and think differently about ourselves and about the world around us. That is their greatest and unique value.

Persistent impediments

With decades of convincing literature, one would think that mandating an arts-rich education is a no-brainer. Yet, there are persistent impediments to embedding the arts in education in Australia, whether at primary or secondary levels.

Overcrowded curriculum

My area of greater familiarity is primary school, but this problem does not seem to decrease as one shifts gaze to secondary school. Schools are expected to play ever-increasing roles in loco parentis, whether it be in issues of safety, health, wellbeing or social skills. The intensifying focus on standardised testing, and the impact these test results have on a school's marketability and therefore funding, is another factor that has robbed students of time they might have spent developing creative arts skills and knowledge. The reasons for these tectonic shifts are far too wide-ranging for this article, but with each additional layer of external pressure, the squeeze on the arts becomes greater. Changing this will take a ground-swell of dissatisfaction with the current balance.

Support for teachers

With music in primary schools a focus of my professional work over the last 20 years, I was aghast to learn how unsupportive pre-service training for generalists is. Small

wonder it has led to an overall lack of confidence in teachers to throw themselves into arts teaching, either intensively or as a platform for other subjects. In a seminal study for Music Australia in 2009, Dr Rachel Hocking revealed that only about 1.5 per cent of pre-service training for primary generalist teachers in Australian universities was allocated to compulsory music training. That is rather like going in to teach German having only studied it for two days. Ludicrous? Of course. But that is what we are expecting from our generalist teachers in primary schools. No wonder it doesn't rise to the top of the "must do" pile, among all the other pressures on teachers.

One encouraging sign to emerge from this COVID-19 time is the acceleration of online learning, which may help address some of this problem through well-targeted, in-service training, offering less confident teachers a new national network of mentors or "buddies".

Parental pressure over their "employability"

Even pre-COVID, educators have had to respond to community pressure for augmenting "marketable" skills in students. The emphasis on STEM subjects is understandable, but ignores the fact that even Einstein found playing his violin a necessary adjunct to his research. Dr Ian Frazer, the remarkable Scottish-Australian scientist who, with the late Dr Jian Zhou, developed the cervical cancer vaccine, insists that listening to classical music gives him the "headspace [he] needs to do his work". This binary approach of STEM rather than STEAM is everyone's loss. Our politicians have underscored this approach most recently with the proposal to double the cost of humanities degrees, implying they produce "less employable" graduates – despite the fact that more than 60 per cent of federal politicians have a humanities degree.

"It has always struck me that the arts offer an alternative entry point into academic study for students who are otherwise disengaged."

The greatest gift we might gain from COVID-19 is a re-evaluation of our priorities in every area of our endeavours. While one fear is that widespread threats to employment will lead to an ever-intensifying focus on specific vocational skills, there is a balancing reality that people will value the solace, cohesion and wellbeing they have drawn from the arts during this time. We can only hope that Sir Ken's message will finally sink in, we will reassess the role of the arts in our lives and, importantly, in our education system.

Political philosophy professor Michael Sandel, famous worldwide for his online Harvard Justice course, would surely urge us to "reclaim our collective moral compass" in the arts.

The future of Australia will be shaped by the creativity and imagination of its people. One of the top 10 search words in LinkedIn for employment is "creative". Never has the need been greater for people of resilience, for people capable of creative problem-solving, and for people skilled at dealing in abstract concepts – in other words: for artists.

Mary Jo Capps AM GAICD Bachelor of Music and MA Musicology (Toronto), Doctor Visual and Performing Arts (Melbourne - hc)

Mary Jo Capps has held senior management and mentoring roles in the Australian cultural industry for 40 years. She recently stepped down after nearly 20 years as CEO of Musica Viva Australia and is now managing a portfolio of roles as executive mentor in arts and education, chair/director of several boards, government contracts, and advocacy leadership.



Photo - James Grant

In 2010, she became the first female president of the Sydney Business Chamber since its inception in 1825 and served as Director of the NSW Business Chamber. She was awarded the inaugural Creative Partnerships Australia Arts Leadership Award in 2016, an honorary Doctor of Visual and Performing Arts from the University of Melbourne in 2017, and Member of the Order of Australia in 2019 in recognition of her services to the arts and to business.

Her work is focused on her passion for enabling the next generation of leaders, with a particular interest in emerging female leadership in both arts and education. mjcapps.com.au

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Reflections of a **mentor**

IEU journalist Emily Campbell spoke to member Ken Murtagh OAM about the importance of school students having balanced lives and getting involved in extracurricular activities.

For almost 50 years, Murtagh has taught generations of youth at local high schools in Maryborough, part of Queensland's Wide Bay region.

In June, Murtagh was named a recipient of the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list for his tireless dedication to education and mentorship – one which has been focused on supporting students to take on extracurricular activities in order to facilitate their learning and development.

Importance of extracurricular involvement

Murtagh understands not all students thrive in an academic setting and that their involvement in sport, volunteering and other pursuits outside the classroom can lead to improved behaviour, self-esteem and learning outcomes.

To help facilitate this for his students, he has always been heavily involved in extracurricular activities and is a long-time organiser of the sports program at St Mary's College.

"After working at St Mary's for a couple of years, I ended up taking over these responsibilities from another teacher and running the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program," Murtagh explained.

The Duke of Edinburgh (DOE) scheme is an international youth development program open to those aged between 14 and 24.

"The Duke of Edinburgh founded the program in 1956, in response to a number of kids in the UK living in tenement blocks forming gangs and delinquency.

"Prince Philip wanted to get the children involved in something constructive, give them some direction, help increase their self-esteem and get them to achieve something positive," Murtagh said.

Murtagh said as part of the program, participants must step outside their comfort zone and complete character-building challenges to achieve a DOE award.

"They have to complete activities such as an expedition, where they go hiking outdoors and community service, like volunteering at a charity," he said.

"The students also get to learn a new



skill over a period of time and show their commitment to it, and they've got to do some physical recreation, whether that be organised sport or something else."

Participants first receive the bronze award and as they accumulate more hours, they progress to silver then eventually a gold award.

"Anyone who gets involved, especially those who end up achieving a gold award, if they hand that in along with a resume, people will recognise them as a self-motivated young person," Murtagh said.

"It's a way for students who aren't necessarily motivated in school or doing well academically to excel and increase their self-esteem.

"Getting those students back in the classroom when you return from camps, they treat you totally differently, because they've now experienced you outside a classroom context and they've succeeded out there, so your relationship improves.

Volunteering builds character

According to Murtagh, the DOE program has a positive impact on students and especially benefits those with behavioural challenges and other difficulties.

"There are instances where I've been advised not to take particular students on the DOE camps due to behavioural issues, but I say 'no, I've never banned a student in all the 34 years I've been involved'. Usually they're having such a great time they don't think to act inappropriately or misbehave.

Murtagh's views are consistent with research into out-of-school activities and their effects on students, which

finds such pursuits are highly beneficial. Participation in extracurricular activities is shown to develop leadership skills and teamwork abilities, improve social skills and decrease the instances of substance abuse and behavioural problems in students (Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2014).

Teacher's encouragement essential

Murtagh says one of the best things beginning educators can do is to get involved and support students' involvement in extracurricular activities.

"Once you get a rapport with the students, the teaching component of your work becomes so much easier," he said.

"For many students, what they do outside the classroom is just as important, if not more so than how they go in class, because they learn resilience and practical life skills to set them up for the future.

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Closing the Gap:

Historic national agreement



The National Cabinet, the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks, pictured above) have signed the historic National Agreement on Closing the Gap, taking the country in a new direction to improve life outcomes among First Nations People, writes journalist Jessica Willis.

The new National Agreement is a pledge from all governments to fundamentally change the way they work with First Nations communities and organisations through four Priority Reforms that were overwhelmingly supported during the community engagements led by the Coalition of Peaks late last year.

Muriel Bamblett, Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung woman and Chairperson of SNAICC – the peak body representing First Nations children and family services nationally – said having First Nations voices represented in the development and implementation of the agreement shows where we are as a nation on the road to reconciliation.

“To have [First Nations] people represented for the first time from every state and territory and in sectors where we have been really challenged in the past to have a seat at the table with ministers and decision makers is great,” Bamblett said.

“Throughout the journey we have really had the governments listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; what the important issues and targets are; and what reform principles need to be worked into any agreement.

“This agreement was signed off by all levels of government including local governments which are essential as they also have an obligation to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“So we were really pleased that we got 16 targets and we got agreement to the four Priority Reforms, which I believe are key to the targets.”

Four Priority Reforms key to directing change

- 1 Developing and strengthening structures so that First Nations people share in decision making with governments on Closing the Gap.
- 2 Building formal First Nations community-controlled service sectors to deliver Closing the Gap services.

- 3 Ensuring mainstream government agencies and institutions that deliver services and programs to First Nations people undertake systemic and structural transformation to contribute to Closing the Gap.
- 4 Ensuring First Nations people have access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information to monitor the implementation of the Priority Reforms, the Closing the Gap targets and drive their own development.

These Priority Reforms commit governments to new partnerships with First Nations communities across the country; strengthen community-controlled organisations to deliver Closing the Gap services; address structural racism within government agencies and organisations; and improve information sharing with First Nations organisations to support shared decision-making.

The National Agreement includes new ‘partnership actions’ – joint actions that all governments will take to give effect to each of the Priority Reforms – and ‘jurisdictional actions’ – additional actions to be undertaken within each jurisdiction taking into account state and territory circumstances.

All four Priority Reforms will have a target to measure government action in these areas which will be reported on annually.

New mechanisms are embedded in the National Agreement to ensure continued political ownership and accountability; that progress is publicly monitored; and that Closing the Gap remains a national priority.

This includes formal opportunities for First Nations people to have an ongoing and direct say on how the policy is working.

‘New’ targets to Close the Gap

The National Agreement also establishes 16 national socio-economic targets in areas including education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters, and First Nations languages.

The targets bring focus to new areas important to the lives of First Nations people and will help to monitor progress in improving their life outcomes.

Bamblett said some of the new targets are ambitious but that some states and territories are already close to achieving them.

"In regard to the education sector, targets three, four, five, seven and sixteen are important," Bamblett said.

These are:

- Target 3: By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full Time Schooling early childhood education to 95%.
- Target 4: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55%.
- Target 5: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.
- Target 7: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%.
- Target 16: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

Bamblett particularly noted the last target was an often-overlooked factor that benefits students of all backgrounds when implemented.

"The value of learning and embedding First Nations language into the classroom is often overlooked; however, where it does occur, we see the improvement in engagement, academic performance and in NAPLAN scores," Bamblett said.

"When children who are proud of who they are, when they see and experience their culture in the classroom - their engagement in learning improves because it includes them," she said. What is needed now, she said, is consistency in committing to change across Australia as well as appropriate funding.

Education targets on track but long way to go

As reported in the last edition of *IE*, of the previous targets only two were deemed to be 'on track' at the beginning of 2020 and both related directly to the education sector.

Bamblett said the hard work done in the education sector was the result of both top down and grass roots efforts but there was still work to do in terms of ensuring all schools are safe learning spaces for First Nations students.

"In some areas it is driven by really strong Aboriginal leadership, really strong policy, advocacy and engagement with community and schools.

"If we could get a consistent approach that would be good; however, I think when we do develop a plan for one place, we can't assume it will work everywhere.

"It's about looking at and understanding the uniqueness of the [local First Nations] community and their relationship with education.

"What does education mean to them? How do we apply it? And particularly, you go to some of those rural communities - what does education look like there? What models work there?

"We've seen so many amazing schools embracing culture but there are still many schools not doing it."

Bamblett said these schools needed to start challenging racism, stereotypes and unconscious bias.

Changes cannot be tokenistic

A major challenge for the Australian education system when it comes to embedding First Nations culture, is to do so in a meaningful way rather than a tokenistic one.

Bamblett said that to close the gap in education, it takes more than "hiring an Aboriginal person to work in the school" when the policies and practices in place do not align with reconciliation.

She explained that schools need to build strong

relationships with First Nations parents, community groups and elders.

"Have them working with and for the school community, celebrate significant days and acknowledge racism embedded in the curriculum, when it's shown in the classroom and challenge it," Bamblett said.

"A lot of people don't think that children experience racism but it happens and it needs to be addressed.

"Now we have the internet there's no excuse not to be informed and educate yourself.

"The internet gives so much valuable information and resources for all ages.

"Teachers need to be open and it really comes down to the values and attitudes of the individual teacher.

"This doesn't mean be radical - it means being accepting of students for who they are and making the classroom safe for Aboriginal children and all children."

To read the full National Agreement on Closing the Gap, please visit <https://coalitionofpeaks.org.au/new-national-agreement-on-closing-the-gap/>

A note on language: The IEU uses the term First Nations people at the request of our Yubba Action Group; however, we do not change how First Nations people refer to themselves in respecting their right to self-determine.

First Language Instruction in schools

A new campaign launched by the IEUA-QNT Yubba Action Group seeks to ensure First Language Instruction in schools and early childhood education classrooms, as a means of actively promoting reconciliation and working towards Target 16 of the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Nintiringanyi, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Teaching Employment Strategy developed by First Languages Australia, has been a crucial body of research in helping to inform our union's discussion and position on First Language Instruction.

Although most jurisdictions recognised the need for trained First Language teachers, very few have committed the funding and resources required for First Language Instruction programs.

The 2017 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicated 215,453 students in Australian schools identified as First Nations.

The research also noted the number of First Nations students attending non-government schools is rising.

Results from Australia's 2016 Census show one in ten First Nations People reported speaking an Australian Indigenous Language at home.

Despite these numbers, First Nations Instruction in Australian education remains the exception, rather than the norm.

One of the major barriers identified in implementing First Language Instruction programs is the shortage of teachers and support staff who can provide instruction in First Languages.

Our union supports the right of individual students to access the curriculum in their first language and as part of this campaign will continue to explore options to address this issue as well as exploring case studies where First Language Instruction programs have been successfully implemented.

Building capacities and capabilities: the role of learning support teachers

Teachers and school officers who specialise in supporting inclusive education for students with additional learning needs have key roles across all sectors of the Australian education system. Journalist Jessica Willis talks to two IEU members and learning support teachers about their roles and how they support school communities.

Sue Mitchell and Annette Campbell (Campbell pictured opposite, centre, with colleagues) both hold the role of Support Teacher: Inclusive Education (ST:IE) in a Queensland Catholic primary and secondary school respectively.

Collectively they have more than 70 years of teaching experience and just over 30 years' experience in learning support teaching.

Mitchell said the role of learning support teacher was extremely varied, especially between different schools and sectors; however, they all revolve around supporting students with diverse learning needs.

"In Catholic schools in Queensland, ST:IEs are responsible for supporting students with learning differences and students with disabilities, which makes it a huge role," Mitchell said.

"In Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) schools, ST:IEs are now considered to be specialist teachers and we are teachers who have developed knowledge in a special interest area."

Campbell adds that a key role of learning support teachers should be building capacity (in students and teachers) as well as holding schools accountable for, and challenging, inclusion practices.

"It's crucial that we are able to educate our peers around contemporary practices in inclusion," Campbell said.

"Specialist teachers in learning support can hold schools accountable and challenge practice – and this is a positive thing."

Crucial skill sets

Mitchell believes it is important for teachers considering going into such a specialist role to have an empathy for students with diverse learning needs.

"[Learning support teachers] need to understand why a student learns the way they do and have the skills to investigate barriers to their learning difficulties," she said.

"They need to have a deep understanding of learning difficulties,

learning styles and specific disabilities as well as have good observation skills to determine what is happening for a student in the classroom.

"They need to be able to put together the learning profile of the student and be able to determine the best supports for the student to access curriculum and be positive about learning," she said.

Mitchell explains it is also crucial to be able to work in partnership with everyone across the school, particularly classroom teachers, and be able to maintain strong relationships with students and their families.

"[We] are required to develop working relationships with admin, teachers, school officers, specialists, outside agencies and families.

"Specialist teachers in learning support can hold schools accountable and challenge practice – this is a positive thing."

Widespread support

Learning support teachers work best in collaborative partnerships to support students in the classroom and for their learning.

Campbell agrees the ability to foster positive relationships is a key skill for learning support teachers.

"We support our students, our teachers and our parents – everyone in the school setting," she explains.

"You have to go in understanding that everyone has a role to play, so we need to value everyone's input into the student's learning.

"Parents and classroom teachers are a great source of wisdom – they are at the coalface with students and have great ideas about how to cater for them.

"And students themselves, as the main stakeholder, they should have voice and choice," Campbell said.

Mitchell said each stakeholder brings skills and knowledge which need to be respected.

"When classroom teachers involve [us] in their classrooms on a regular basis, [we] are able to develop relationships with the students, work in the classrooms and observe more closely," she said.

"Teachers are very astute about their students but they are not always able to see everything that happens in their classrooms, that is why the ST:IE being in the classroom regularly becomes an important, specialist pair of second eyes.

"I have always believed the classroom teacher is the first person parents speak to about their child's needs.

"Teachers need to develop good communication and openness with parents, in order to discuss their concerns.

"When teachers and ST:IEs have solid working partnerships, parents can see the considered support being given to their child.

"ST:IEs have an important role to play with families.

"They support the classroom teacher by being an advocate for the student to the parents as well as from the parents to the school," said Mitchell.

NCCD impact

The implementation of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) has had a major impact on teaching and workload.

While many teachers acknowledge that it brings inclusive education to the forefront of teaching practice, the administrative burden and inconsistent support given by both employers and the government have taken a toll.

Campbell believes the NCCD has done a great job of highlighting the need for personalised learning and has had a positive impact for students; however, she acknowledges that with teachers already time poor, extra time and support are greatly needed.

"It's made schools look really closely at the ways they cater for students with a disability," she said.

"It is really propelling us to meet our obligations under the disability standards for education, so that's fantastic. It is also a more logical way to fund students with a disability because it is entirely based on the frequency and the intensity of the adjustments being made, meaning the harder you work for a student with a disability, the more funding the government is likely to give you.

"It's forced a lot of teachers to look at their own personal practices and cater



in an authentic way for students.

"It is a difficult process though because the administration takes a lot of time and it's meant to be part of normal practice.

"Teachers are doing it but are really struggling to find the time to record and store their evidence. This is a shame because teachers work with goodwill; it's their default setting. They try hard to make sure students are included in learning and are catered for.

"However, what we find is that teachers are having to enter the data in their own time because they are time-poor: we want to do the right thing by our students and schools, but it takes time."

NCCD: professional and union issue

Inclusion of students with additional needs is an integral element of contemporary education, but quality inclusion requires the provision of adequate support and resources for teachers, inclusion support staff and students.

Employers must take a proactive approach and meet NCCD demands by implementing adequate infrastructure and realistic time provisions for teachers.

This should be distinct from usual planning, preparation and correction time and general, regular or scheduled staff meetings.

Schools must also establish clear processes through which staff members can raise concerns if they believe the demands of the NCCD are not being adequately resourced.

Employing additional school support staff to assist in the administration of the NCCD would be an effective way of dealing with the workload.

Our union commends those school principals who have already intervened with measures to ameliorate the increased demands.

Where requirements of the NCCD are significantly affecting members, IEU members need to work collaboratively with their IEU Organiser to address the situation.

Not about 'fixing students'

Both Mitchell and Campbell said the role of inclusive education has evolved over time and moved away from the degrading concept of 'fixing' students.

Mitchell said thankfully this attitude has diminished and learning support teachers are welcomed into classrooms to truly support students and classroom teachers; however, there was still work to be done to ensure all teachers fully understand the complexities of learning support teacher roles.

"ST:IEs are often expected to deal with the behaviour management of students - and we are often asked to take classes if relief staff are not available," Mitchell said.

Campbell added that schools need to be respectful of diversity and understand that many students have complex disabilities.

"We need to work from a strength-based approach and respect that all students bring great things to the classroom.

"All kids can learn and are learners."

She said intervention provided by learning support teachers was a powerful tool and when using an evidence-based program learning can be remediated and students can work well back in the classroom.

"[The education system] needs to stop approaching school as a product and let teachers focus on the process

of developing critical skills and knowledge," she said.

"This means ensuring classroom teachers have access to training and the ability to use professional judgement so they become skilled practitioners catering to the needs of their students.

"The consequence will mean that students who genuinely need learning support teachers are able to access our help, rather than those who do not need it," Campbell said.

Recognising specialist skills

The IEU believes inclusion is more than finding a place for a student in a school - it is about determining appropriate and well-resourced learning environments, support practices and access to services which will ensure quality education for students with disability.

What is clear from both Mitchell and Campbell is that learning support teachers are specialists in the teaching profession.

Their work requires a great deal of expertise and this must be recognised and rewarded appropriately.

Campbell believes schools are seeing the best and brightest teachers taking up the challenge to work in inclusion and support.

"This role is powerful when it's backed up by teachers who have exceptional skills in the classroom.

"It's a privileged role and a great place to work - you get the great company of fantastic practitioners who want to serve the community, advocate for students and have a genuine belief in inclusion," Campbell said.



Learning from Indigenous education successes in flexi schools

The Yarning Circle

Flexi schools offer a real alternative for Indigenous students, writes Dr Marnee Shay.

I am an Aboriginal educator and researcher. My maternal connections are to Wagiman Country but I was born in Brisbane and raised in South East Queensland, where I live today. I was working as a youth worker before I went back to study to become a qualified secondary teacher. It was my background as a youth worker and my cultural identity, that drew me to teaching in flexi schools. I worked as a classroom teacher in flexi schools in Noosa and Logan then went on to become the teacher in charge in Inala, where I worked with the community and the Queensland Police Service to establish what is now the Inala Flexible Learning Centre.

Flexi schools are schools for young people who have been disenfranchised from mainstream education settings. Generally, there are two different types of flexi schools or programs in operation. The first are longer term options where young people can complete Year 12 or equivalent and aim to change the approach of education to meet the needs of young people. The second are shorter term options (sometimes annexed off a mainstream school) which aim to support the young person to re-engage full time into a mainstream school setting (te Riele 2007). My teaching experience was in the former; longer term options aimed at approaching education differently – and this took me down a path of exploring what the implications at these schools are in Indigenous education when I embarked on research study through my Master of Education (Research) and later a Doctor of Philosophy (Shay 2017).

Successfully teaching disengaged youth

When I commenced my research journey my mind was full of memories about the stories of the young people I was privileged to work with, many of whom were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. I remembered working with young people who had not attended school for years prior to engaging with us at the flexi school. Yet, some would attend almost every day with us and appeared to enjoy school and learning again. I remembered all my experiences in working with resilient, intelligent, and strong young

people that challenged all of the preconceived ideas society has about young people who are 'disengaged'. There were endless stories of young people who loved learning but couldn't attend mainstream school because they were being bullied, experiencing racism, couldn't afford school uniforms, didn't enjoy the structure of a typical school timetable – and many more reasons. I knew of successes we had achieved in practice with young people who had exhausted every other avenue they had available to stay at school. We often worked with young people who had been formally or informally excluded and through their own words would not be doing anything if the flexi school did not exist.

In starting to look at what research about flexi schools existed, I found quickly that there was a scarcity of research in flexi schools generally, and little evidence of any research being undertaken by Indigenous researchers or by researchers who had practitioner experience in those settings. I also found that obtaining data on Indigenous student enrolments and Indigenous staff numbers was extremely difficult, which I found to be quite odd when you consider how much data is available with relation to Indigenous Year 12 completions, Indigenous attendance, and Indigenous literacy and numeracy outcomes through the Close the Gap reporting each year (Australian Government 2020).

Key research findings

Some of the key findings from my Master's and doctoral studies include:

How leaders in flexi schools are doing Indigenous education (Master's study):

Demographic data showed that the average Indigenous enrolment across nine flexi schools was 31%, with 30% of the staff in flexi schools also Indigenous. Whilst small scale, this finding showed that disproportionately high numbers of Indigenous people are engaged in flexi schools as a school provider and employer (Shay & Heck 2015).

There was a reported strong willingness from school leaders to engage in self-directed learning in relation to Indigenous cultures; however, there was also limited evidence of how these understandings were implemented with relation to

Indigenous education in their flexi school (Shay 2018).

The voices of Indigenous peoples undertaking educative roles in flexi schools (PhD study): Indigenous staff are undertaking complex and important roles in flexi schools and through the employment of Indigenous staff, flexi schools acquire much needed local cultural knowledge and capital to support the high numbers of Indigenous students.

There were issues of race and racism present in flexi schools, although participants in this study reported lower incidents in comparison with studies of Indigenous staff in mainstream settings.

The biggest concern expressed by Indigenous flexi school staff is that there is an over-reliance on cultural activities or celebrations in embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives across all areas of the school including the curriculum.

Since completing my research qualifications, I have continued to work with a number of flexi schools nationally in exploring the relationship between Indigenous education and flexi schooling contexts. In 2018 a colleague and I published an article in *The Conversation: How flexi schools could help close the gap in Indigenous education*, where we outline the implications of flexi schools in the policy goal of closing the gap in Indigenous education (Shay & Lampert 2018). We outlined that flexi schools appear to be having a positive impact in keeping Indigenous students engaged in schooling. One critique we offer though is the great responsibility that comes with working with such high numbers of Indigenous young people, especially when we know that many of these young people are experiencing multiple layers of challenges.

Importance of building relationships

We know that flexi schools have more of a focus on relationships, are young person-centred and are focused on a more inquiry led curriculum (Shay & Lampert 2018). Many of the approaches flexi schools have used to successfully engage a large cohort of Indigenous young people can be applied in mainstream settings. We know although there are still many gaps in how schools are taking up policy changes such as the inclusion of two professional standards related to Indigenous education in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 1.4 & 2.4 (AITSL 2017) and embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives through the national cross curriculum priority (ACARA 2016), some schools are doing great work.

In response to supporting high numbers of Indigenous young people, some flexi schools have been doing exemplary work in Indigenous education for some time. A current project funded by Edmund Rice Education Australia and UQ is exploring what excellence in Indigenous education is or could be. We are doing a number of case studies on flexi schools and mainstream schools where we are capturing examples of excellence put forward by Indigenous and non-Indigenous school staff. At one flexi school in Far North Queensland, some of these excellent practices were identified as:

- employment of Indigenous staff at a rate of almost 50 per cent
- embedding of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives across all curricular areas
- use of local Aboriginal languages in both school signage, whole of school meetings and generally
- development of cultural programs for all students (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, communities and peoples
- presence of Indigenous artworks, design and stories in all aspects of the school – including on school shirts designed by young people.

I am very privileged to continue to work with flexi schools in my research work as well as in Indigenous education more broadly. The biggest question I will continue to explore is whether we should continue opening more flexi schools or focus on fixing the mainstream education system so there is no need for them to exist.



Dr Marnee Shay, is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Queensland's (UQ) School of Education and Senior Research Fellow at the UQ Centre for Policy Futures. Her research interests include Indigenous education, youth studies and alternative schooling. In this article, Dr Shay discusses her experience working as a teacher in flexi schools and her research into why flexi schools are so successful at engaging disenfranchised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education.

Editors' note: Keep an eye out for a new book on Indigenous education Marnee Shay is editing with Professor Rhonda Oliver, *Indigenous Education in Australia: Learning and Teaching for Deadly Futures*, published by Routledge, due for publication late 2020.

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Does 'duty of care' apply to support staff as well as teachers?

Education support staff are increasingly aware there can be legal consequences for the things that happen in the course of doing their jobs. Students get hurt. Parents get angry. People get sued. Senior IEU Victoria Tasmania Industrial Officer Denis Matson explains what you need to know as a member of the support staff, and your obligations.

Parents and students are more aware of their rights and the world is becoming more litigious. Parents see their children as consumers with contractual rights. All of us are more conscious of discrimination, bullying, health and safety laws and breaches of the 'duty of care'. Add in the intensification of work and the ever-increasing dangers of trying to do too much in too little time and it's clear why we are seeing more litigation. While there is a lot of case law about teachers and schools, there is not much about support staff.

The river has many tributaries

Support staff need to be aware of the many sources of their obligations. The legal framework you work within includes your contract of employment, the Award or Agreement that covers you and the employer's policies. It also includes a plethora of legislation covering equal opportunity, discrimination, occupational health and safety, privacy and so on. However, with all this documented legality, it's

actually the common law of negligence that is the source of most of the cases that go to court. The extent of support staff 'duty of care', how that duty might be breached, and the consequences are not written into any Act of parliament. As a common law concept, negligence is set out in case law determined by courts. Support staff need to understand what courts think is 'negligent', as opposed to what a 'reasonable person' would have done.

Duty of care and negligence

If you are told to do something that you consider might be dangerous or inappropriate, you should apply the 'lawful and reasonable' test. You do not have to comply with any employer instruction which is either unlawful or unreasonable. When an employee was instructed to back up a truck that he was not licensed to drive, he could have (and should have) refused – the direction was unlawful. He backed over and killed another employee. While he was initially held liable for negligence, on appeal the court found the employer liable. The instruction should never have been given.

But in many cases support staff are not acting on explicit instructions: they are required to exercise their own judgement and make decisions on the run. For support staff to be found negligent, the plaintiff (usually a parent) must show that:

- the student was owed a duty of care
- the duty of care was breached
- the breach caused the injury
- the injury was not too 'remote' and
- the usual defences to negligence do not apply.

Duty of care

It is unarguable that schools generally owe students a duty of care and that staff are responsible for carrying this out. Readers may have heard of the 'non-delegable duty of care'. While some schools try to scare staff with the 'non-delegable' bit, it is actually the school that cannot delegate. That is, while the school must employ competent staff to care for students, it cannot escape liability by saying "we employed skilled people to do that". Barring a quasi-criminal level of negligence, the school will always be liable for injuries resulting from the actions of its staff. What you need to do is what a reasonable person would do.

Where it gets messy is how far that duty extends – beyond the school grounds and into what sort of events? First the courts apply the test of 'proximity'. In *Bathurst v Koffman* a 12 year old student walked about 400 metres to the bus stop after school. Students from another school threw stones and injured his eye. The court found the school liable and said:

"... if it is plain to the school that, immediately outside the school

premises, there is a busy and therefore dangerous road, the school will ordinarily have an obligation to shepherd pupils of a young age across the road. But if, in the course of walking from school to home, the student has reason to cross a busy road two kilometres from the school, it does not follow that the obligation of the school to take precautions for the safety of the student will involve that it shepherd the student across the road."

Proximity can relate to time as well as physical distance. In *Geyer v Downes* a student was badly injured by a baseball bat while she was crossing the schoolyard before school. The playground was open but the accident happened before it was supervised. The principal claimed in his defence that no duty of care was owed until school had officially started but the High Court rejected his claim. It was held that allowing children onto the school grounds before 9am was an acceptance of the duty. Apparently the known presence of children on the school grounds is sufficient to establish proximity.

Next the court looks at 'foreseeability'. In *Watson v Haines* a 15 year old boy with an unusually long neck was paralysed playing rugby league. The Department of Education was held liable. The court said that the student should not have been in a forward position because of his long neck which was broken during a scrum. This emphasised the need to be extraordinarily careful in exercising your duty of care; that a breach can arise from any 'foreseeable injury'. The risk was not 'fanciful' and the type of injury was foreseeable and proportionate.

In *Giliauskas v Minister for Education* an 8 year-old was mauled by a bear on a zoo visit. The court looked at the age of the children, the cost to the school of providing more supervision and like factors to determine that the injury was foreseeable and held the Department of Education liable.

Breach

Whether there has been a breach of the duty of care comes down to the 'reasonable person' test. The court may consider factors like the likelihood of injury; the seriousness of the injury; the effort required to remove the risk and the utility of the conduct. In *Rich v London City Council* the court observed that "You can supervise as much as you like, but you will not stop a boy being mischievous when your back is turned. That, of course, is the moment that they choose for being mischievous." That is, if a reasonable effort would not have prevented the injury then there is no breach.

There have been cases dealing with application of first aid and breaking up fights that indicate that the courts consider the experience of the employee and take a fairly pragmatic view of whether there was something that the employee should have thought of or done that would have changed the outcome.

It is unarguable that schools generally owe students a duty of care and that staff are responsible for carrying this out.

Causation

The court asked in *Geyer v Downes* (above) whether appropriate supervision would have prevented the injury: would rostering teachers in the playground before school have prevented the girl being hit by the bat? The court found that it would have, because the girls had been instructed not to play ball games before school, so supervision would probably have meant no ball games, so no injury. By contrast in *Getani v The Trustee of the Christian Brothers* a pupil was injured when, running through the corridor, he tripped over a school bag. The school had instructed students to leave bags on top of lockers and not in the corridor, and pupils were instructed not to run. Disciplinary measures were taken when pupils breached these instructions. The court held that the accident was foreseeable, but the plaintiff failed to prove that taking preventative steps (like better supervision or alternative storage facilities) would have prevented the risk of his injury. Likewise in *Warren v Haines* a known bully picked up a 15 year old girl and dropped her on her tail bone in an unsupervised area in school. While the court accepted that the school had a duty to provide adequate supervision it found that the injury occurred quickly, so there was no opportunity for a teacher to intervene.

Remoteness

Here the court asks whether the kind of damage that was done was reasonably foreseeable or could not have been anticipated (was 'remote').

In the long-neck rugby case (*Watson v Haines*) the court found that the broken neck was a foreseeable injury. In *Warren v Haines* (the girl dropped by a bully) the court decided that the type of injury was foreseeable if it was not 'far-fetched or fanciful'. It said that if the type of injury is not foreseeable then there can be no duty of care to guard against it.

Defences

The usual defences to a negligence claim are unlikely to have much application in schools. Typically, a court will consider whether the injured person contributed to their own injury, or whether they voluntarily assumed responsibility for the risk. Because the school has the 'non-delegable duty of care' and has authority over the students these defences are not of much assistance.

Who gets sued?

Plaintiffs have to consider not just who is at fault, but who can pay if they win. Schools hold the 'non-delegable duty' and are required to hold professional indemnity insurance. Schools are also required to indemnify their staff against legal suits against them arising from the performance of their duties. In short, if someone is going to sue for an injury they will sue the school. Individual staff may be joined to the action but will generally be covered by the school's insurance. The IEU in many states (including Victoria and Tasmania) also takes out professional indemnity insurance to protect its members.

So what do you do?

Don't panic. The chances of you being sued are very slight, especially if you follow your school's policies. Identify risks and raise your concerns in writing. Report hazards and record incidents.

Print out and keep records (if you are stood down, the first thing you lose is access to work emails).

Request appropriate training. All of these actions go to proving that you acted like the proverbial 'reasonable person'. If you feel 'uneasy' about it, don't do it. Ask yourself whether you would be happy to tell your principal what you are doing. If not, don't do it. If you are happy to, then tell him/her - in writing. Then, if there is any doubt, you have taken the first giant leap towards proving your actions were reasonable.

Increased anxiety in students - what recent studies tell us

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly brought into sharp focus the issues of youth mental health and how schools, parents and the broader community can better understand and support this population cohort. IEU Victoria Tasmania Assistant Secretary Cathy Hickey takes a look at some recent research findings and recommendations dealing with youth anxiety, and points to some useful resources.

What's happening to Australian youth?

YouthInsight, the market research arm of student advocacy service Student Edge has been undertaking regular surveys of Australian young people to monitor their understanding and sentiment towards the COVID-19 situation in Australia.

Its survey in May this year of over 500 young people found that concern was starting to ease but remained high at 70 percent. In addition, 40 percent of young people are concerned about their mental health.

According to the research the top three issues causing concern for young people are the health of their family (64 per cent), their studies (61 per cent), and the economy (55 per cent). These top issues have remained consistent over the three surveys to that date.

Positively, the recent survey showed that more young people reported feeling happy than in previous YouthInsight surveys (up from 34 percent to 42 per cent). However, the majority of young people are still feeling depressed (56 per cent), anxious (57 per cent), and afraid (53 per cent) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. See table below.

The organisation ReachOut provides digital mental health support for young people and has reported that they had seen a 50 per cent increase in demand in the first five weeks of lockdown. From the information collected through its research and online peer support forum they report that even as restrictions continue to ease, concerns shift from fear and anxiety to uncertainty about the future. There remain plenty of unknowns on the horizon for young people such as job security, financial and study stress.

For interested IE readers, the ReachOut website provides practical support, tools and tips for young people and their parents.

Global picture of youth anxiety

A separate global study by University of Queensland, through its Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) Life Course Centre, found that 14 per cent of teenagers are experiencing suicidal thoughts (ideation) and nine per cent have anxiety over a 12-month period. Mental health problems such as suicidal ideation and anxiety in adolescents are a major public health concern globally.

An important finding of the study is that while suicidal ideation and anxiety are prevalent among adolescents, there is significant global variation. Mental health issues are known to be under-reported in many low to middle income countries because of social stigma, religious or cultural taboos and inadequate health resources. Also highlighted is that 36 of the 82 countries that participated in the study have no specific health policy.

Researchers examined data collected from over 275,000 adolescents aged between 12 to 17 years across 82 low, middle and high income countries. Those most at risk were older teenage girls from low income backgrounds with no close friends. The study shows that while many adolescents around the world, irrespective of their country's income status, experience suicidal thoughts and anxiety, there is a high variation between different continental regions. Teenagers from Africa had the highest rates of suicidal thoughts at 21 per cent, while the lowest was in Asia at eight per cent. The highest rate of teenage anxiety, at 17 per cent, was in the Eastern Mediterranean region, while the European region had the lowest rate at four per cent.

The study identified that a higher level of parental control was positively associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing suicidal ideation and anxiety. In addition, the odds of experiencing suicidal ideation and anxiety were higher among adolescents who had experienced peer

...establishing
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YOUTH FEELINGS ABOUT COVID-19

Negative feelings				Positive feelings			
	March	April	May		March	April	May
Concerned	78%	77%	70%	Unconcerned	22%	23%	30%
Depressed	66%	64%	58%	Happy	34%	36%	42%
Anxious	62%	58%	57%	Calm	38%	42%	47%
Afraid	60%	55%	53%	Unafraid	40%	45%	47%
Panicky	56%	48%	50%	Indifferent	44%	52%	50%

Research May 2020

conflict, peer victimisation, peer isolation and reported loneliness. Parental understanding and monitoring were strongly associated with reduced mental health problems.

Parental and peer support key

A key finding of the study is the confirmation that parental and peer supports are protective behaviours against suicide ideation and anxiety. Peer-based interventions to enhance social connectedness and parent skills training to improve parent-child relationships are critical. The report stresses that the strong association between parental and peer relationships on adolescent anxiety and suicidal ideation should inform national policies to improve population mental health. Culturally appropriate interventions that modify the parent-adolescent relationship and promote the adolescent's individuation-separation whilst maintaining parental monitoring and understanding may also promote mental wellbeing in adolescents. Similarly establishing school-based programs or community activities that increase peer connectedness may also help reduce distress, anxiety, and alleviate progression to suicidal ideation. Adolescent suicide ideation and anxiety prevention strategies should include female specific initiatives, family and peer relationships which are sociocultural specific and sensitive.

Understanding Anxiety in Students

In the March edition of *IE* this year we featured an article written by IEU member Kathryn Harvey entitled *Anxiety and Students*.

In Harvey's article she gave a comprehensive outline of what anxiety in adolescents looks like, its symptoms and causes. She highlighted that in Australia, one in 14 adolescents meets the diagnostic criteria of an 'anxiety disorder'. She explained that intermittent and situational anxiety is normal and can occur prior to exams, public speaking, or when faced with a threat or danger. While anxiety can improve performance, for some individuals however, anxiety becomes excessive and significantly affects day to day living.

Harvey's article outlined the 10 top signs of anxiety in students – emotional changes, social changes, physical changes, sleep difficulties, changes in school performance, assuming the worst, perfectionism, tantrums, school refusal and panic attacks, and explained that a worrying consequence of anxiety in adolescents and children is its negative impact long term.

IE readers are encouraged to refer to Harvey's article which gives us hope in assisting our students with some practical ways to support them. She stressed that it is vital to be non-judgemental, calm, reassuring and most importantly, to listen – talk to students, tell them if you have noticed any changes and what you are concerned about. Let students know you are there to support them.

Other youth wellbeing resources

In this period of COVID-19 some very useful resources have been developed to assist schools and parents to support young people in dealing with anxiety and other mental health issues.

In a recent video presentation, *Riding the Corona Coaster*, well known expert Dr Michael Carr-Gregg explores how the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen next may impact students, families and staff in school communities. He examines increasing concerns regarding mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and substance abuse among young people, and emphasises the importance of promoting help-seeking behaviour and reducing stress levels at home. Carr-Gregg also provides tips for parents/carers on looking after their wellbeing during this challenging time.

Carr-Gregg presents us with some very sobering statistics which bring home why schools need to be employing student wellbeing staff and supporting their teachers and education support staff to develop skills and knowledge to support their students and the school community.

Did you know?

- 33.7% of 15 to 19 year olds have a mental health issue
- 92% of children and young people do not meet guidelines for physical activity
- suicide is the biggest killer of Australian youth
- only one in three teens are getting enough sleep
- there has been a 20% increase in girls self-harming over the past decade.

Riding the Corona Coaster is one of the special reports available through the new online resource SchoolTV which is available to schools via an annual subscription. This online platform focuses on youth wellbeing and provides a raft of informative video presentations, including interviews with health specialists, case studies and other resources.

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<https://youthinsight.com.au/news/covid-19-coronavirus-yourh-understanding-and-sentiment-wave-3/>

www.lifecoursecentre.org.au

au.reachout.com

schooltv.me



Top



tips:

Get that job and advance your career

Steve Whittington, IEU Victoria Tasmania Officer has a wealth of experience in running workshops and webinar presentations on writing a CV, job applications and honing interview skills for jobs in the education sector. Whittington gives his 10 top tips here.

Preparing to land your next role is more like completing a Rubik's Cube than an orienteering course. In the latter, you can choose your own direction, checkpoint order and pace to suit your strategy. With the former, you have to complete some strictly defined moves in the right order according to your cube's pattern at that point.

Make a wrong move and it throws your whole game into disarray.

1. Direction

So, your cube is in disarray and you want to know your starting move. Well, firstly, you need to know what direction to head off in. As with the start of any journey or process, you have to know where you want to go before you make a move. In the education sector, it is highly likely that you have a strong sense of purpose, which will certainly aid you in defining this step. Simon Sinek has a great TED talk called *How great leaders inspire action* where he proposes that world renowned organisations and highly successful individuals start by asking 'why' they do what they do rather than 'what' they do or 'how' they do it.

In a teaching context this might equate to inspiring the next generation

of scientists or helping early primary students build the resilience they'll need throughout their school journey. This contrasts markedly with the 'what' ("I'm an English Teacher, mainly for Years 8 to 10") or the 'how' ("I make sure I sit them in name order and do a spelling test every Monday morning...")!

2. Gap analysis

After defining your purpose, you need to do a bit of a gap analysis. This involves some pretty brutal introspection about your strengths and weaknesses, what you enjoy and what you try to put off. Try to consider your values, skills and attributes as a portfolio of properties that makes you a valuable employee. The more you refine your key strengths, the more likely you are to appeal to the right employer. You want to sell yourself as the 'missing jigsaw piece' rather than the round peg to go in any round hole. It will make your entire application come to life, give it shape and a sense of rarity as opposed to just another teacher application for just another teacher vacancy. Sell them the role you want to fill rather than try to mould yourself into the shape they think they want. It changes your application strategy somewhat (see Tip 5) but it will pay dividends.

3. Take stock

Let's take stock. You have a sense of passion and purpose and have learnt how to articulate to others what you

excel at, whilst having sufficient self knowledge to avoid tasks that you don't like and don't want to do. That's starting to sound a bit like a brand. The next step therefore is to treat the portfolio we discussed in Tip 2 like a mini-business that needs to perform a branding exercise. Therefore, just like Coca-Cola, Qantas, Apple, Toyota, Kylie Minogue you need to define:

- your brand values (what you believe in)
- your brand attributes (how you perform)
- your brand promise (what your employer can expect of you)
- your target demographic (who will benefit most from your skills)
- your price point (graduate or highly accomplished?)

You can start to see that there's a lot more to this process than merely banging out a stock-standard CV and cover letter and SPAM mailing it to as many potential employers as possible. Yes, it's time-consuming, but once you embark on this journey (more of an adventure really!), it's a process that will stay with you for your entire career, rather than just for the next job. As with the top brands in the world – think Nike – it is best to keep your CV simple, easy to understand and describe and most importantly, inspire a sense of purpose and passion. Just do it!

4. Key documents

Your Rubik's Cube is nearing completion and we're in the critical phase. It's now time to ensure your key



Preparing to land your next role is more like completing a Rubik's Cube than an orienteering course.

documents are up to scratch. We need to put our brand down on paper so we can start to let people know how good our product is. There are myriad CV templates online, and that's fine if you just want to blend in. Your best bet is to choose a layout that suits what you want to say, and structure the content in the same way a magazine editor puts together a Christmas special edition. How can you ensure your publication gets into the most hands possible? What are your headline stories? What are your key skills and attributes? If you are changing careers, what transferable skills are you bringing from your previous roles? CV, cover letter and key selection criteria advice is too extensive to cover in detail here. It is probably best to seek out workshops from your IEU branch or other PD providers.

5. Promote

Like an amazing website that never gets any traffic, it's no good having an awesome brand that nobody knows about. Therefore, Tip 5 is to get out and promote it! Grow your 'fan base' through:

- networking
- online (LinkedIn really is the best platform)
- authoring papers and journal articles
- presenting at your subject association conference
- union activities.

It sounds scary at first, and for most teachers, self-promotion is an uncomfortable prospect. However,

if you remind yourself that you have something rare and special to offer - no matter what that may be - then it would be rude not to share it around a bit, right? The more people who witness first-hand your knowledge and passion for your next role, the more 'brand ambassadors' you will have.

6. Who you know

Following on from Tip 5, it pays to remember that perhaps more than ever, it's not what you know but who you know. Some recruitment agencies claim that between 40% and 60% of jobs are not advertised. We know that teaching roles in government schools must be advertised, but even that doesn't guarantee that leadership doesn't have an existing 'preferred candidate' in mind. Before you start networking, and consistent with the strategic imperative of this entire journey, divide your contacts into 3 columns: A, B and C Grade according to your relationship with them and their potential to help you on your way. For example, your A Grade contacts are those whose mobile or email you have and can comfortably call up and ask to chat about your job strategy. The downside is that they probably won't be able to advance your thinking much. Conversely, your C Grade list are possibly 2nd degree connections - a colleague of a friend or colleague of yours - and may take some convincing to give up their time. However, if your story is compelling enough, this list contains the people with the most

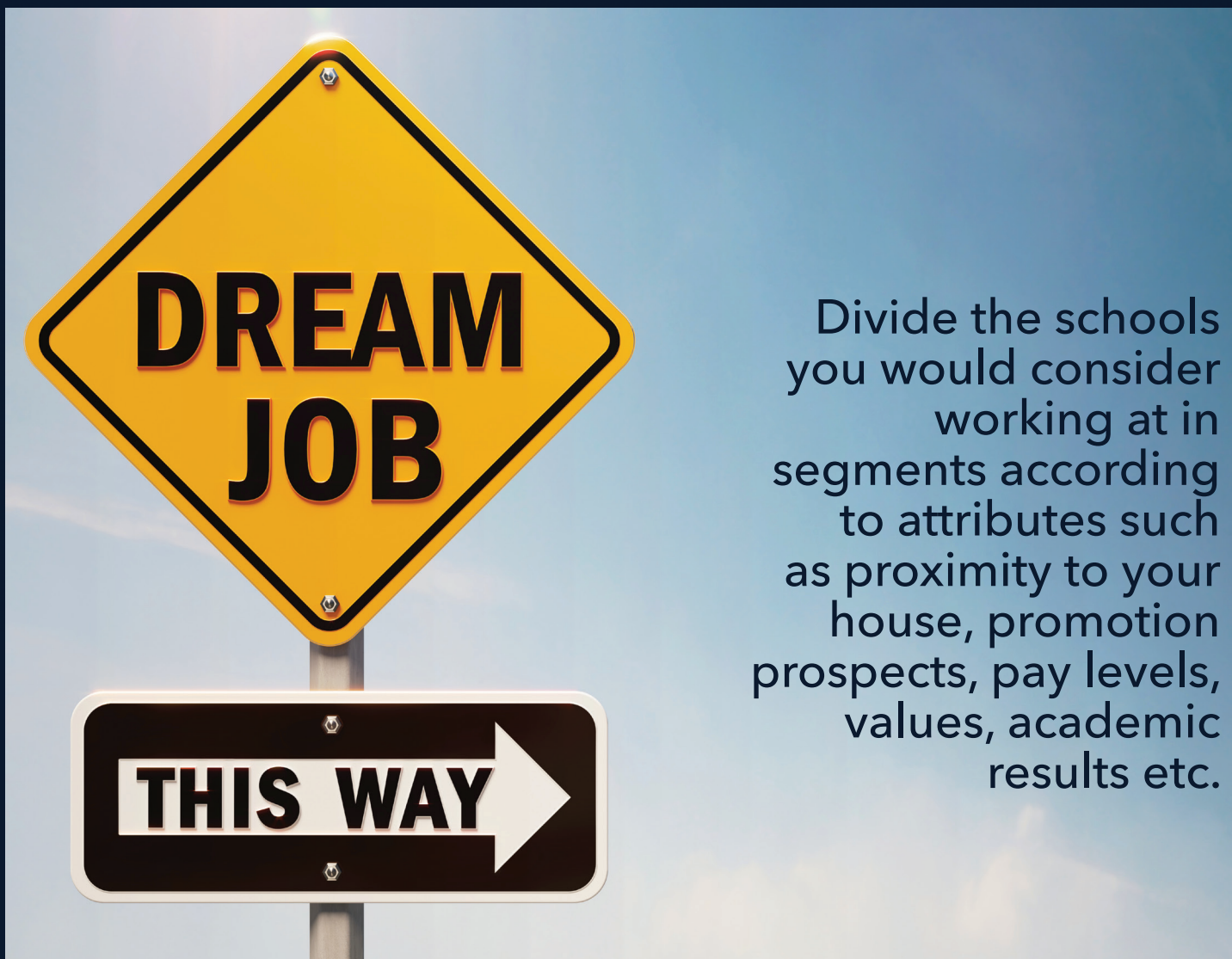
influence, and high-level contacts, to give you the breakthrough you are looking for.

7. Be strategic

As you will have gathered now, and to go back to the Rubik's Cube analogy, you must be strategic! It doesn't matter what your strategy is, as long as it's consistent with your objective (Tip 1). There are two fundamental job seeking strategies: Dartboard and Rocks. Let me explain.

Dartboard: Divide the schools you would consider working at in segments according to attributes such as proximity to your house, promotion prospects, pay levels, values, academic results etc. Then target your applications only to the ones that match your skill set. If your academic qualifications are above average, target a high performing school. If you are sporty, apply to schools with a compulsory co-curricular program. If you are religious, make sure your target schools share your values.

Rocks: You just need a job. Any job will do. Preferably closer to home, but if you have to travel so be it. In this case, applying for jobs is like turning over rocks, one at a time. Under one of the rocks is a cheque for \$65,000, but you don't know which one. It might be under the very first one, or it might take you a few weeks to turn over another 147 rocks until you hit pay dirt. Your consolation? For every empty rock you turn over, you are one rock closer to the golden ticket.



Divide the schools you would consider working at in segments according to attributes such as proximity to your house, promotion prospects, pay levels, values, academic results etc.

8. Know where to look

Whether dartboard or rocks (and it doesn't matter which, there's no judgement here), you need to know where to look. Online is obviously the go, with SEEK the single largest job website in Australia (approximately 72% of all jobs). There are a few other school-specific websites such as Smart Teachers, Teachers.on.net, TES.co.uk and also a few teacher agencies such as Tradewind, SANZA and ANZUK, most of which focus on fixed term replacement positions. All Catholic and independent schools have both a sector wide website as well as an employment page on their own website. Print media is still valid in regional centres as well as the capital cities, with the most prestigious leadership roles appearing in the national press. Finally, recruitment agencies are alive and well in this space, so do a bit of research and find out if your local (target) schools use an agency or perhaps add this to your discussion points in your networking.

9. Interview time

Great! So, you've been invited to interview! Now all bets are off and it's back to zero, albeit with only two

or three other candidates running against you for that coveted position. The one single piece of advice that I have provided to people over the many years helping them with career advancement is to watch Amy Cuddy's TED talk *Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are*. I have used her suggestions to good effect for over ten years, and people have reported back to me the difference they have made in a variety of stressful situations, not just job interviews. Enough said.

10. Congratulations!

Boom! You get a phone call, "We'd like to offer you the position". Congratulations! All your hard work has paid off. This single next step could be the difference between struggling to pay rent and eating smashed avocado at Sunday brunch. You reply enthusiastically, saying you are delighted but stopping short of verbally accepting the offer. Ask for a written offer of employment and say you'll have a read and get back to them. You are now in the box seat and the power has shifted in your favour. Once you receive the document, have your local IEU branch check it over.

Do your homework on the salary. Does it stack up? Should you receive a premium for the Masters degree you worked hard for? Is it an ongoing position? Is the classification correct? Have they taken into account the additional co-curricular work you've agreed to take on? Better still, you have two or more offers! In this case, make sure you're comparing like with like. Just because one position offers more money it doesn't make it the better offer. How many hours will you be teaching? Will you have a home group? How many weeks' holiday do they have? Knowledge is power and life is too short to make a wrong move at this point in the game. It's better to take a little more time to make an informed decision than to rush in and take the first job on offer.

Hopefully these tips help you on your life journey. If you've found it useful please let me know. Connect with me on LinkedIn and share some of your challenges and/or successes along the way. Most of all, stay true to your brand and good luck!

The Australian Curriculum **UNDER REVIEW**



**TIME TO
EVALUATE**

In June this year the country's education ministers agreed to a review of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum. The Australian Curriculum has been in place since 2015 and to varying degrees shapes and underpins the curriculum in Australia's states and territories.

According to the Terms of Reference agreed by the federal and state ministers, the review undertaken by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is aimed at refining, realigning and decluttering the content of the curriculum within its existing structure. It will be underpinned by the most recent national statement of education goals, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019).

ACARA is undertaking international comparative work and has a number of work groups including a Reference Group and a team of subject matter 'experts and practitioners'. State and territory authorities are to undertake specific activities to engage their respective stakeholders.

Unfortunately, ACARA has not involved the education unions directly in its specific reference group but at the state and territory level the IEU branches will be actively involved to ensure that their members are represented and heard.

The IEU has raised for many years that, particularly in the primary years, the Australian Curriculum is overcrowded and agrees that many schools and teachers want a curriculum that in addition to being less crowded, provides flexibility and scope for greater depth of learning, and one that provides more meaningful connections within and across its three learning dimensions - learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

Aim of the review

- refine and reduce the amount of content across all eight learning areas with a priority on the primary years, and to focus on essential or core concepts
- improve the quality of content descriptions and achievement standards by removing ambiguity and 'unnecessary' duplication, and ensuring consistency and clarity of language and cognitive demand
- rationalise and improve content elaborations to ensure they are fit for purpose and suggest to teachers the most authentic ways to treat general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities when teaching the learning content
- improve the digital presentation in line with agreed content changes and user experience requirements.

Scope of the review

- all eight learning areas for F to Year 10 with Mathematics and Technologies reviewed first
- particular attention to the F to Year 6 curriculum in order to reduce overcrowding and provide manageability and coherence in the primary years
- Chinese, French, Italian and Japanese will be completed first, with the 12 other languages completed by 2023
- the elective Years 9-10 Australian Curriculum: Work Studies will not be included in the review.

Key directions

ACARA, in undertaking the review process, says it is looking to identify how the content of the curriculum can be refined, realigned and decluttered and has a number of specific foci in each of the main areas:

- Learning areas or subjects including reviewing, aligning, decluttering and improving the content descriptors, achievement standards, and content elaborations
- General capabilities, including revisiting and improving 'where necessary' the learning continua such as for critical and creative thinking and literacy and numeracy, improving the relationship with the learning area content, removing repetition of content between the General Capabilities and the learning areas, and
- Cross-curriculum priorities, including revisiting and improving if necessary, the organising frameworks for the cross-curriculum priorities with reference to current research, decluttering the content by improving the relationship with the learning areas and replacing the current 'icon tagging' for cross curriculum priorities with a more user-orientated approach.

Key dates

July - December 2020: discussion of revisions by review teams
February - June 2021: two 10-week public windows on proposed revisions to the curriculum
July - December 2021: revisions finalised and endorsed by Education Ministers
Early 2022: revised curriculum available on a new Australian Curriculum website.

Further details of the review are available on the ACARA website www.acara.edu.au/curriculum.

The Terms of Reference document provides specific detail of the proposed areas of review and aims. Compiled by Cathy Hickey Assistant Secretary IEU Victoria Tasmania.

Podcasting is the new black



As we navigate our days in this time of pandemic, podcasts are a way in which our culturally starved souls can be stimulated, challenged and entertained. They are also proving to be a platform that artists can use to express themselves. Anyone can produce a podcast. It can be anything you want it to be. Use it as an audio 'soap box' or a platform to educate and inform. A quick search of available podcasts in iTunes will demonstrate the ocean of content available, Peter Eysers writes.

What is a podcast?

Basically, it's an audio file you can upload to the internet that can then be accessed by consumers worldwide. The beauty of podcasts is that they can be consumed at your leisure - travelling to work, at the gym, long car trips, doing the ironing - you decide when and how you want to listen. And the majority of them can be accessed free. Think of it as streaming for your ears.

I was inspired to create my podcast *Stages* to record the oral histories of many of the artists I've had the pleasure to work with or whose work I have admired. There seemed to be a dearth of arts content in podcasting in Australia, so podcasting afforded an opportunity to make my own contribution.

I talk with anyone whose role requires them to connect with an audience. Included in this are conversations with arts educators. I have been able to feature practitioners like Robin Pascoe who is currently the President of the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association, Dr John Saunders who is Education Manager at The Sydney Theatre Company and Jane Simmons, the Student Drama Officer at The NSW Department of Education and Training. Content has extended to acting and singing teachers from our leading drama schools and training institutions such as NIDA, WAAPA, VCA and ACA.

In working with students who are invested in a drama education and who might be keen to pursue a career in the arts, I am mindful of showing them that there are many pathways to achieving this dream. My conversations with diverse practitioners, whether they be designers, dancers, directors or actors, provides a great lesson in what can be accomplished with resilience, perseverance and through unexpected routes.

Try it - students love it

Creating a podcast audio file is proving to be an inspired way that teachers are conjuring new forms of assessment; and students love it. It's a perfect way to harness writing and oral skills.

I was inspired to create my podcast *Stages* to record the oral histories of many of the artists I've had the pleasure to work with or whose work I have admired. There seemed to be a dearth of arts content in podcasting in Australia, so podcasting afforded an opportunity to make my own contribution.



If you haven't yet discovered the joys of podcast, I encourage you to investigate what's available in the podcast directories that exist in iTunes and Spotify for a start.

Dip your toe in the water – you're bound to find a podcast that fits your style of listening, in a professional capacity or others for mere entertainment. You might even clock up a few professional listening PD hours.

Here are a few education oriented podcasts for you. My subject has embraced the platform with Drama NSW presenting its own podcast to address syllabus content and to hear from classroom teachers. I'm sure your KLA might have one too. If not, why not begin that journey.

Available education podcasts:

- *Teacher's Education Review* – won the Career and Industry award at the 2019 Australian Podcast Awards. It is an Australian podcast that explores issues and practices in education from the perspective of classroom teachers.
- *TED Talks Education* – Educators, Researchers and Community leaders from around the globe share stories and visions
- *Teachers Talking Teaching* – two teachers talking education, pedagogy and current practice
- *K-12 Greatest Hits: The Best Ideas in Education* – an American offering of segments hosted by the Executive Directors of the nation's 14 leading education associations
- *Every Student Podcast* – Mark Scott introduces a series of conversations with educators who are delivering quality teaching and learning to improve life opportunities for every young person in their care.
- *The Educhange Podcast* – for the doers in schools, people who are coming up with ideas to make things better for kids
- *Subject specific* – Drama NSW have produced the Drama NSW podcast – a podcast for students, teachers, practitioners and anyone interested in Drama. Interviews with those working in the industry, educators and past students to assist in a focused look at areas covered in the Drama NSW syllabus and the broader drama world.
- *The Drama Teacher Podcast* – another offering from the US that covers everything from putting on a school musical to teaching ideas for a host of theatre and drama topics.



The Stages podcast is available from iTunes, Spotify and Whooshkaa.



Peter Eyers
Head of Drama SCEGGS
Darlinghurst
Podcaster

Peter Eyers began his podcast journey at the beginning of 2018 with a program called *Stages*. The podcast was developed to record conversations with creatives about their craft, career and creativity. His guests are sourced from colleagues from time working as an actor. The podcast was recognised with the Best New Podcast award at The 2019 Australian Podcast Awards.

Peter is a graduate of The West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and now works as a drama educator. He was Head of Acting at The McDonald College of Performing Arts for 13 years. He is presently Head of Drama at SCEGGS Darlinghurst in Sydney.



SEIZE THE ADVANTAGE

- don't ever stop that music!

Anita Collins is Australia's leading music researcher, TedEd presenter and consultant to ABC documentary *Don't Stop the Music*. Pat Devery talks with Collins and writes about her research and her work.

As a young teacher Anita Collins found herself responsible for the high pressure musical formalities which accompanied the end of year graduation

ceremonies at her school. Once the tension of the opening procession and national anthem had been concluded, however, she would find herself, in her words, "a bit bored, to be honest – so I started a little game".

That game would not be unfamiliar to many music teachers across the nation, namely, keeping a record of how many students from the band or orchestra were called up on stage to receive an academic award.

Invariably Collins would find that seven or eight of the top prize winners in each year group either had a previous or continuing and significant involvement in music.

Australia's top music researcher

Little did Collins know these musings would take her down a path to becoming Australia's leading music researcher,

Invariably Collins would find that seven or eight of the top prize winners in each year group either had a previous or continuing and significant involvement in music.

delivering a TedEd presentation which to date has close to nine million views, being the consulting academic on the hit ABC documentary, *Don't Stop the Music*, and now publishing her most recent book, *The Music Advantage*.

The book is a compilation of Collins's work over the last two decades, drawing on the latest international

neurological research to reveal the extraordinary and surprising benefits to children of learning music.

The music advantage, it seems, kicks in right from the time we are born. Current research indicates that babies actually begin decoding language via the same neurological processes they use for music. Where once it was presumed that musical ability had a strong connection with mathematical proficiency, it now appears that music activity is more

closely related to, and may in fact assist in, the acquisition of language.

Intuitively this makes sense. A baby is clearly unable to discern what a word actually means, but they can understand meaning through the musical elements of rhythm, pitch, contour, and timbre of the way in which that word is spoken to them.

"They use sound to identify the important things, like who



are their primary carers, who is part of their family or tribe," says Collins.

"One of the most effective mechanisms humans have to convey that information is through song."

Research is also highlighting how a child's capacity to maintain a consistent beat is a strong indicator as to their readiness to learn how to read.

"Music and reading are actually complementary and overlapping processes inside a child's brain," says Collins. "Enhancing musical development benefits reading development."

Structured and sequential music learning activities, the research tells us, also provide the foundation for the important school ready skill of paying attention and memorising information.

Transformative power of music learning

Collins herself has been privileged to have witnessed the beneficial impact of a dedicated music program in schools across the nation, especially in many of our poorer or disadvantaged areas.

"Reading skills, along with any other skills including executive function and social skills, are often found to be lower in children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"Studies show that when music programs are implemented in schools in disadvantaged areas, students' reading levels seem to improve significantly and rapidly".

The transformative power of music learning was made blindingly clear to the viewers of the *Don't Stop the Music* documentary and Collins is hoping that school leadership teams and policy makers will also start to sit up and take notice.

Music relates to higher performance

Change is beginning to happen, according to Collins, and visionary and informed school leaders are seeking her help to implement programs in their schools. And the research strongly suggests that students of all ability levels and from all socio-economic backgrounds can benefit from such programs.

According to Collins, the research shows that, across

all schools, "participation in school music, especially instrumental music, was related to higher exam scores" and these achievements "were of considerable magnitude".

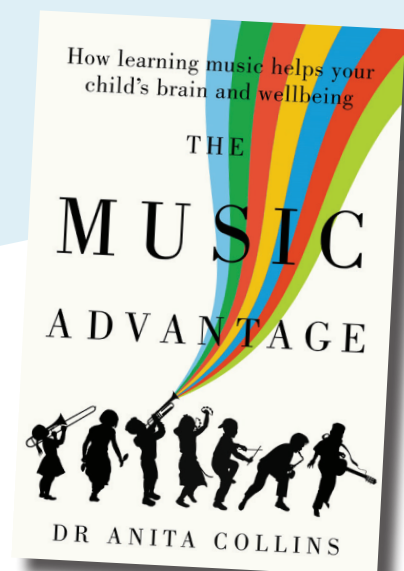
"Highly engaged instrumental music students were, on average, academically one year ahead of their peers."

As the field of neuro-music research is in its relative infancy, Collins expects that the body of evidence supporting the beneficial impact of music education will only continue to grow.

In our increasingly evidence based world maybe it is about time the policy makers took a look at the research and ask themselves the question, 'What if every child had a music education from birth?'

As the late, great Richard Gill used to say, "every child deserves a musical education". Anita Collins would back that up by saying, "and the scientific evidence is firmly supporting that view".

The Music Advantage: How learning music helps your child's brain and wellbeing by Anita Collins is published by Allen & Unwin, September 2020, paperback ISBN 9781760875886



Patrick Devery is a Professional Officer with the Independent Education Union of Australia, NSW/ACT Branch and is the General Manager of the Australian School Band and Orchestra Festival, of which Dr Anita Collins was recently appointed Patron. To hear Devery's interview with Dr Collins, go to the IEU Zone www.theieuzone.org.au

Where would teachers be without their union?



Teaching was very different in the 60's, almost unrecognisable from the schools of today - large classes, very few resources, no ICT, no photocopiers, low salaries, poor conditions, no maternity leave, no superannuation and of course, no union for teachers in NSW Catholic schools, writes Liz Finlay.

Schools were run by religious orders and the 'lay teachers' were often untrained or were completing their teaching qualifications at night.

In 1966 the Catholic Teachers College at North Sydney offered a one year teacher training course which became two years in 1968. The transition year between one and two year trained teachers was 1967.

I was appointed to St Simon Stock Girls School Pendle Hill, run by an order of Maltese Dominican nuns. It was later to become Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary at Greystanes.

During 1967, aged 19, I taught Year 2 from July to December with 67 students and received \$15 per week. Most teachers were paid by the parish and received about one-third of the salary paid to state school teachers.

The school was only one stream and there were 84 children in Kindergarten. It was a church school which meant that every Friday everything had to be removed, so that the classrooms would be ready for Mass.

I was fortunate enough to be given a room in St Simon Stock Boys School, now St Paul's Greystanes. Known as "the dungeon" it was used as a storeroom and was in very poor condition. There was a lot of rubbish, broken tables and chairs and little else.

Fortunately, my father was a church and school builder and my aunt was a Josephite. The tables and chairs were repaired, and Mum and I painted the room. Dad grabbed useful bits and pieces that schools were throwing out. My aunt gave me a blackboard, two statues and most importantly, two large boxes of chalk, one white and one coloured and so began my teaching career.

On my first day the principal gave me my teaching resources, a stick of white chalk and a feather duster. I was told to return the small bit of used chalk and I would be given another.

Luckily, I had boxes of chalk and the promise of more when needed.

As enrolments in Catholic schools grew, more lay teachers were employed and dissatisfaction with salaries and conditions also grew. In the late 60's teachers established the Catholic Institute of Teachers (CIT) and in 1968 the Sydney Catholic Education Office began the administration of schools.

Emergence of a union

There was an existing teachers union and teachers in Catholic schools began to join the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA) and that influx of new members brought about significant changes.

In 1969 the AMMA applied for an award for teachers in non government schools to achieve wage parity with state school teachers. This happened over the next four years and saw our wages double, and in some cases triple.

Qualifications became important so many teachers were upgrading at night from two to three to four to five year trained. In 1971 we were involved in the first industrial dispute over cleaning of classrooms and from then on cleaners were employed and we were not required to sweep our classrooms after school each day.

In 1972 the AMMA became the Independent Teachers Association (ITA).

Our Lady Queen of Peace was expanding rapidly as poultry farms gave way to housing estates and by 1972 a new school had been built. There were four streams, and at one time it was the largest catholic primary school in New South Wales.

In 1977, I represented the ITA in a case against the Catholic Education Office for remuneration for teachers in unpaid promotional positions. It was a harrowing day in the Industrial Commission but we won.

A fight for rights and wages

After 22 wonderful years I decided it was time to move on when one of my Year 3 students informed me that I had taught his father. Those years had brought about amazing changes in wages and conditions as a result of committed union members prepared to act in solidarity and fight for their rights, wages and conditions.

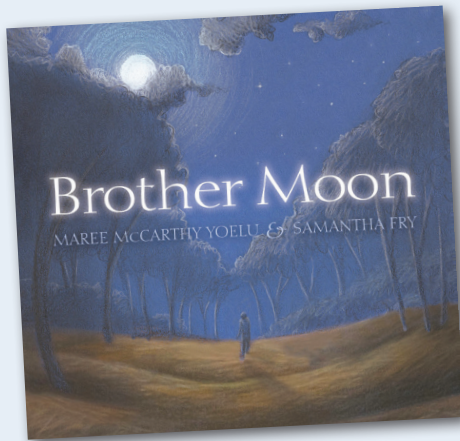
In 1989, I was fortunate to work with the 'New Arrival' program, visiting schools working with migrant and refugee students. In 1994 I began working in Curriculum, ESL and New Arrivals at the Catholic Education Office Parramatta.

Working with disadvantaged schools and assisting a large number of refugees from Southern Sudan were some of the highlights, as well as working with inspirational people who had a strong sense of social justice.

As I reflect on what the IEU has achieved it is almost impossible to imagine that the first meeting of Catholic teachers with a few hundred members would lead to the IEU of 2020 with 32,000 members and wages and conditions that could only be dreamt of in the 60's.

Liz Finlay, long-term IEU member and Accreditation Officer IEUA NSW/ACT Branch, has played a role in educational leadership dating back from the 1970s. Before her current IEU position, Liz made a major contribution in her Parramatta Diocese role and was Head of Primary Curriculum in the Catholic Education Office, which included supporting migrant and refugee students through the 'New Arrivals' program. Her sister Trisha is currently working with refugee students as a specialist teacher at Our Lady of the Rosary Primary at Fairfield.

GIVEAWAYS



Brother Moon

Publisher Magabala books
Author Maree McCarthy Yoelu
Illustrator Samantha Fry

Brother Moon is a powerful story lovingly told by a great grandfather to his great grandson.

Beneath the dark sky of the Northern Territory, Hippy-Boy is captivated when Great Grandpa Liman tells him the mysterious story of his brother and how it guides his connection to Country.

Great Grandpa is a masterful storyteller and, as the tale unfolds, he finally reveals his brother is the moon – a wonder of the universe. Hippy-Boy learns how his great grandfather uses the phases of the moon when he goes hunting and fishing, and why it is important for us all to have an understanding of the natural world.

Liman (Harry Morgan), the author's grandfather, was a respected Wadjigany man – a leader amongst his people and the community. Liman was born at Manjimamany in the Northern Territory in 1916. He was a canoe maker, hunter, community mediator, and a family man who lived off the land and travelled the seas. Liman spoke Batjamalh, his first language, and other languages from the Daly River area.

Family

Publisher Magabala
Author Fay Stewart-Muir and Sue Lawson
Illustrator Jasmine Seymour

Family is a thoughtful contemplation for all to learn the different ways that family makes us whole. This beautifully illustrated children's picture book shows everyone that 'family' can be about heart and home; an endless sky; stories and songs. The book teaches how to be with each other and with Country. Families come in all shapes and sizes, and this remarkably simple story teaches us all that family can be many things.

This is the second book from the *Our Place* series, that introduces young minds to First Nations' cultural philosophies that Aunty Fay Muir, a Boonwurrung Elder holds close to her heart.



The New Playground The Four Square Challenge Footy Fever

These three books in the series have been published by Pat Cronin Foundation
Author Maureen Hyland
Illustrator Bruce Rankin

The legacy of coward punch victim Pat Cronin is set to help educate young people in feeling empowered to 'be wise' and never use violence.

In August this year, the Pat Cronin Foundation launched three storybooks written for primary school-aged children that the Foundation hopes will be shared with young students throughout Australia. Each book includes teacher notes and classroom activities.

The three books are written by Maureen Hyland who taught at Pat's primary school and was inspired by Pat in creating the characters, colours and commentary.

The IEU makes these 'giveaway' books available to members. To go in the draw, submit an email entry with the name of the 'giveaway' book you would like in the subject line. In the body of the email write your IEU membership number and postal address. All entries should be sent to giveaways@ieu.asn.au by 1 December 2020.

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