



independent education

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MAKING HISTORY

In Focus: Professor Clare Wright

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Editorial

The teacher shortage is a national crisis requiring urgent action. One of the reasons underpinning the shortage, apart from the obvious issues of uncompetitive salaries and unmanageable workloads, is lack of professional respect for teachers.

The University of Sydney's Associate Professor Nicole Mockler conducted a large-scale analysis of media coverage of teachers and her findings prove disrespectful commentary is indeed rife (p14).

Turning the tide of this negative narrative is important if we are to attract more high-quality graduates to the profession.

In 2021, Acting Education Minister Stuart Robert proclaimed some teachers "can't read and write" – a typical example of the unhelpful commentary that demoralises teachers and discourages young people from considering the profession.

Union advocacy is one of the best ways to raise teacher professionalism and counter this negative culture. This edition of *IE* emphasises the professional nature of the work of teachers and support staff. In 'For the love of teaching' (p12) the passion teachers and support staff have for teaching and learning shines through.

The IEU aims constantly to raise the status of the profession through its publications, professional development and advocacy.

Hopefully the new Federal Government will respond to pressure from education unions and lend its voice to a campaign to restore the high regard in which teachers should be held.

To this end, IEUA Assistant Federal Secretary Brad Hayes outlines how the IEU plans to set the agenda for a better future for teachers and support staff (p10).

To kick off this issue we meet historian Professor Clare Wright, who personifies the passion many teachers have for their chosen field of study (p6).

Read about the dedicated work of support staff such as veteran teacher aide Joy Aquilina (p9) and counsellors Rita Maher and Jeanne Appleton (p24).

Elsewhere we look at a school promoting an Indigenous perspective on history (p16), hear why renowned economist and Nobel laureate Professor Joseph Stiglitz loves unions (p18), and find out about professional supervision for principals (p32).

We hope you enjoy this issue. Contact us with your feedback via email: ie@ieu.asn.au

Mark Northam
Secretary
IEUA NSW/ACT Branch



New South Wales

Mobile billboard truck takes to the streets

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch revved up its mobile billboard truck on 20 August, sending it on the road for two weeks with a packed itinerary visiting towns and schools throughout NSW.

While the truck's giant digital screens carried a series of messages, there were two key issues: Fix teacher shortages now! Pay support staff properly! At each stop, the truck was greeted by media and members in bright yellow 'Hear our voice!' campaign t-shirts.

In its first week, the truck covered the Illawarra region and Nowra, south of Sydney; then Queanbeyan, Goulburn and Bathurst; followed by Sydney's western, northern and eastern suburbs and the city itself.

In the second week, the truck headed north to the central coast, Newcastle and Port Macquarie; then inland to Armidale and Tamworth and back south to Singleton and Maitland.

"The IEU seeks the support of the public, politicians and parents in our campaign to have teacher shortages taken seriously," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam.

"Solutions are straightforward: fair salaries for teachers; pay parity for support staff with their counterparts in government schools; adequate planning time; a reduced administrative load; and practical strategies to end the acute staff shortages afflicting schools and the early childhood sector."

Australian Capital Territory

Step in the right direction

ACT Catholic systemic teachers who received a 1.5% increase on 1 July are counting on a further increase before the end of the year to counter the high cost of living in the ACT. In the previous years, increases were 3% in 2018 (in two increments); then 3% in 2019; 3% in 2020; and 3% in 2021) in line with teachers in ACT public schools.

In other news, the application of 20 hours' professional learning each year is anchored within the ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) Act. TQI is looking at other ways of assisting teachers to fulfil their professional learning obligations during this pandemic period.

Considerations include recognising 'system-sponsored' professional learning, automatically recognising the evidence of practice against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), as teachers move from Provisional to Proficient and to include those seeking certification at Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher level.

Finally, the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch has moved its ACT office to Deakin. The new office will provide space for the IEUA National office.

Northern Territory

Exemption for teachers from Automatic Mutual Recognition scheme

The Northern Territory Government has exempted teachers from participating in the Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) scheme, meaning teachers are unable to use the AMR scheme to work as a teacher in the NT. The exemption is in place until 30 June 2027.

This is distinct from Mutual Recognition (MR) where a teacher who is registered in one jurisdiction can become registered in another, based on their nominal registration.

IEU-QNT Branch Executive member and NT Teacher Registration Board (TRB) acting representative Justin Zammit said while the AMR does allow for a smooth recognition of teachers' registration from one jurisdiction to the other, the NT Government has placed an exemption on this for the time being.

"The TRB does allow for MR for teachers from other states and territories within Australia," Mr Zammit said.

"This allows for a smooth transition of employment from one jurisdiction to the other.

"As always, the TRB strongly believes in ensuring all teachers registered within the NT are appropriately registered, competent, fit and proper to teach," he said.

Queensland

New provisions aim to close the Industrial Gap

IEU members at Hymba Yumba Independent School in south-east Queensland have secured powerful new provisions in their collective agreement - the first of its kind in education, this will contribute to Closing the Industrial Gap.

Organiser Aaron Watson said Hymba Yumba Independent School, a prep-to-Year 12 school with predominately First Nations students, provided education grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

"The new provisions in the Hymba Yumba collective agreement relate to working with First Nations traditional cultural knowledge and intellectual property," Aaron said.

"The provisions are designed to protect the traditional owners of cultural knowledge as well as the teachers or instructors delivering that knowledge to students.

"It details how cultural knowledge must be shared and indicates permission must be granted by traditional owners for authorised individuals to share that knowledge," he said.

"Significantly, these provisions acknowledge that any First Nations cultural knowledge shared with students remains the property of the group of traditional custodians and does not belong to the school.

"It's another step towards proper, tangible reconciliation between two legal codes and marrying them together, so that's important," he said.

Victoria

Time for a deal

The union is co-ordinating more actions across regional Victoria and Melbourne to demand an urgent deal on a long-overdue agreement. There is one region, however, where the IEU doesn't need to protest.

Schools in the Diocese of Sale in eastern Victoria finalised a deal that matches improvements won in government schools, including significant measures aimed at tackling the massive problem of teacher workloads.

Alas, employers tied to the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) group, which includes many regional and rural schools, are still resisting consultation and transparency provisions long ago agreed to by diocesan (DOSCEL) and government schools.

This is further exacerbating the plight of teachers whose workloads, already unacceptable, continue to spike due to staff absences caused by illness.

Members rallied, moved sub branch motions, handed in damning 'report cards' on employer performance, and promoted a mobile billboard (known as the 'MACS Truck')

that has been stopping at schools and Catholic education headquarters.

Constrained by clauses governing multi-enterprise agreements - which will hopefully be changed by the new Federal Government - strike action is a difficult last resort. But nothing is ruled out if the MACS group doesn't offer its employees the same conditions as their colleagues.

Tasmania

Talks with meeting-shy employers descend into farce

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO) is seemingly out to revive the art of satire with its 'negotiations' on a new agreement.

First, they refused to meet for long enough to have any meaningful discussions (and never in person). Nine months after the union's claim was served, there have been only a handful of online meetings.

Then came a demand for every union visitor to their offices to present a current Registration to Work with Vulnerable People - despite the fact there are no children at these offices.

The TCEO also pursued a ridiculous discrimination claim against an IEU Organiser - on religious grounds - for working directly with principals to resolve local issues rather than going through the TCEO HR Manager. Union representatives must deal with principals under the prevailing agreement.

Then the TCEO deemed "the practice of bringing foodstuffs onto CET sites... an OHS/WHS risk" and directed that no food or beverages be brought onto their sites.

That obstruction, soon dubbed 'TimTamgate', generated mocking photos on social media and a hilarious horror video featuring the snacks.

After so little progress on a much-needed deal, every affected educator needed a laugh. But the union will not rest until the TCEO tomfoolery is replaced with good faith negotiations and an overdue result for members.

South Australia

Labor Government's attack on injured workers

It was with great shock and disappointment that not two months into a state Labor Government - the same government that promised to be pro-worker, transparent and consultative - the union movement found itself in conflict with them.

Due to issues regarding unfunded liability, the government put legislation to parliament without consultation, limiting an injured worker's ability to claim on two related injuries, known as the 'Summerfield decision'.

This action brought unions together and, through a well-planned and implemented campaign, we were deferred the legislation.

The resulting new legislation is greatly improved, enshrining the rights: to count two related injuries; for lump sum payments to be paid to seriously injured workers; and a commitment from the government to look at the return to work structure.

IEU(SA) staff were involved in many meetings with the Premier Peter Malinauskas and the Attorney-General.

Many IEU(SA) members were prepared to join the action, if needed, with statements, videos of their injuries and visits to their local MP.

In the end, the government resolved the legislation issues in consultation with unions, so this member action was not required.

In Focus

PROFESSOR CLARE WRIGHT



Historian Professor Clare Wright has raised the profile of her profession and many causes, but she remains an introverted activist and an unofficial mentor, she tells Will Brodie.

Professor Wright finds it hard to say no, and she says no “six times a week”.

When we meet for our interview at a café, she displays this quality immediately. Having ordered a pot of tea to keep herself awake after a night of writing until 3am, she starts chatting with the young woman at the cash register. They discuss what Professor Wright is writing about and the cashier’s career path, and it’s clear *IE* will have to wait a few minutes.

Professor Wright is one of a rare breed in modern Australia: the public intellectual. She’s achieved that by saying ‘yes’ – endlessly.

It makes her crazy busy. In the week we talked, she also slaved away on her latest book; sat alongside Senator Penny Wong at a federal election campaign launch; took calls about an upcoming TV production; visited Ballarat to attend the 10-year anniversary of the Stella Award for Women’s Writing (which she won in 2014 for *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*); and worked on her *Archive Fever* podcast series with Yves Rees.

She also promoted ‘A Monument of One’s Own’, a campaign to have more statues of famous women erected. Did you know only 4 per cent of Australian statues represent historical female figures? That’s a classic Clare Wright mission – to publicise a startling and previously unheeded truth.

In this packed week, Professor Wright also took part in a seminar on gendered violence, in which she experienced an exciting phenomena – an all-women panel. Professor Wright says even supportive, supposedly feminist men can tend to take over at such events.

“It just happens so frequently and it’s part of the ether – men don’t even notice it – but women know it happens all the time,” she says.

“We internalise from such an early age that men are the ones who are entitled to be taking up the space, that we give it over as well.”

When there are no men on a panel, Professor Wright says, “Women just have a riotous good time! There’s this energy which just lifts the roof off.”

The mother of two boys, she empathises with the difficulties males navigate. But her advice to them is simple: “If you’re not sure, communicate, talk. You’re at the top of the pyramid. You are white, you are male. You are well educated. English is your first language”.

Patriarchy not loosening grip

Professor Wright is as blunt about society: "Our patriarchy is not going to give up power. Patriarchy is a systemic form of oppression. Individual men do not give up their power without a fight".

It's hard to believe she ever, even subconsciously, defers to anyone, but Professor Wright insists she is timid by nature and needed theatre classes as a child to improve her social skills.

"I worked to overcome my introversion. I was an only child. I grew up mostly around adults."

American-born, she moved to Australia with her mother at five years of age. Her mum was a tech school teacher, her stepfather taught at La Trobe University. Professor Wright says she was "raised with a very anti-elitist temper and very much with a democratic ethos".

From Year 9 onwards she attended Mac.Robertson Girls' High School in Melbourne – one of few Victorian selective schools – which suited her "perfectly".

"I found my people," Professor Wright says. "There really was this ethos that girls could do anything; there was no reason anything about our gender should hold us back from anything we might want to do in life."

The school was a meritocracy where "you could aspire to be whatever you wanted to be".

"That wasn't taught to us as feminism per se, it was just the ethos of the school," she says. Surrounded by high achievers and excellent teachers she loved, Professor Wright thrived.

Professor Wright says she was not a "natural activist", but she now realises school provided her first taste of campaigning.

When a Student Representative on the School Council, she confronted her school leaders over the Christian content of songs chosen for massed singing at the end-of-year gala.

She'd noticed the "silent dissent" of non-Christian girls who weren't singing, and felt their voices were "literally being stifled".

Professor Wright, who is Jewish, was made to "feel foolish" for her rejection at the time, but at the next year's gala, a Russian folk song was sung.

It taught her that seeking change can bring both humiliation and exhilaration. It revealed an "outsider's perspective" derived from being a "first generation immigrant from a minority religion".

That meant she was "kind of outside looking in" at Australian life and culture.

"I didn't necessarily take for granted the things that other people take for granted," she says.

This trait became the "sense of critical inquiry" driving Professor Wright's

books. She investigated women's place in supposedly egalitarian Aussie pubs in *Beyond the Ladies Lounge: Australia's Female Publicans* (2003); the role of women on Victoria's goldfields in *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (2014); and the trailblazing fight by Australian women for the right to vote in *You Daughters of Freedom* (2018).

Rebels and *You Daughters* were the first two books of Professor Wright's democracy trilogy, which she is now completing with a book investigating the fight for voting rights by Indigenous people in Australia.

Despite all the awards and acclaim for her work, Professor Wright believes she is only just "finding her voice" as a writer. Surprisingly, writing and presenting TV shows, including the



"We don't give teachers anywhere near the respect and recognition they deserve."

ABC documentaries *Utopia Girls* and *The War that Changed Us*, helped her refine her craft the most.

"I learned to write in a much more conversational style, a much more direct style with a sense that each scene leads seamlessly onto the next scene. It's a fictional device as well. It makes readers ask, 'what happens next?'"

But she's strictly a non-fiction writer. "Writing history has meant that I believe in the significance of every story I

tell because it actually happened," Professor Wright says.

"And I generally tell stories that haven't been told before, and I have a sense of the injustice of their lack of exposure. So I'm evangelical about the work. I'm passionate about the narratives."

Mentorships

Professor Wright is aware her public visibility means she's become a role model for some young women.

For her, that means emphasising her vulnerabilities. Professor Wright set out to "burst the bubble" of her "shiny life" – successful career, long-standing marriage, three healthy kids – with a speech in the *Epic Fail* series at the Wheeler Centre.

Professor Wright's 2014 speech, titled 'The Year my Brain Broke', discussed her diagnosis of severe clinical postnatal depression in 2007, when "no strength of character or force of will" would get me through "feelings of utter incompetence".

"For at least two years, I had struggled with the daily challenge to scale the summit of my own wretchedness. Most days were like snorkelling through tar. Dark, heavy, suffocating days punctuated by panic and a generalised sense of impending doom.

"On the outside, I was a solid citizen. On the inside, I had fractured into a million little pieces."

The response to that speech was "extraordinary", vindicating Professor Wright's instinct to share.

"It's a responsibility to let people know that you have struggled, that the last thing women need is role models presenting some idea of perfection, because women already all the time think they do things inadequately.

"We're trained to think of ourselves as deficient."

Professor Wright avoids formal mentoring programs, keen to avoid administrative red tape, obligatory emails, and token interactions. Instead she has "a lot of very significant relationships" upon which she expends a lot of time and energy.

Professor Wright never had a mentor herself, but always wanted one. But then she once showed an admired female writer and historian her work and "she tore it to shreds".

"I just sort of came away shell-shocked and realised that I actually didn't want her to critique my work," she says.

Professor Wright was after nurturing – and that's what she tries to provide. She encourages women to "trust their instincts, listen to their inner voice, follow their knowing".



Professor Clare Wright appears on Channel 10's current affairs program, *The Project*

"I ask everyday questions. What are you going to do next? What are you going to do with your life? Are you happy with the people you have around you? What ethics are you going to follow? What's going to be your moral compass?"

History and teaching

Professor Wright is saddened that many schools don't teach Australian history because a "beautiful new relaunched curriculum" starts this year.

Not enough students are choosing the subject. "I would say that the broader culture wars have had their impact in education," she says.

Yet, Professor Wright sees students at open days with "a gleam in their eye because they've got a passion for history".

"They love it. It speaks to something inside them. It lights them up from the inside. And then their parents come over and ask, 'what jobs can you get if you do history?'"

"Then I reel it out. You can work in museums, heritage, archaeology, journalism. And studying history builds critical-thinking skills, narrative skills, and empathy."

Beyond saddened, Professor Wright is outraged by the plight of Australia's teachers.

"I come from a family of teachers, and I love teachers," she says. "I know how hard they work, and I think the workload on teachers these days is extraordinary and unfathomable."

"And it's a national disgrace that we don't afford our teachers the status and remuneration that rewards

their effort and the role they play, because they're social workers, they're educators, and they're negotiating all of these incredibly difficult new rules of engagement around gender and sexuality.

"They're at the coalface of the culture wars in many ways. And we don't give them anywhere near the respect and the recognition they deserve."

Never a dull moment

Seeking a picture many weeks after our interview, I'm updated on Professor Wright's activities. A statue of working-class feminist activist Zelda D'Aprano will be unveiled in October outside Trades Hall in Melbourne.

The *Archive Fever* series 4 podcast rolls out soon. She's now Professor of Public Engagement at La Trobe University as well as Professor of History. She's trying to sell a *Forgotten Rebels* TV series to the US.

And she's just said 'yes' to a role as an expert adviser to "provide overarching strategic advice" to the Federal Government to develop a National Cultural Policy - by helping trawl more than 1200 public submissions.

Concluding her *Epic Fail* speech, Professor Wright said: "Achievement is a state of grace, not the sum total of relentless activity ... and hard work often brings just rewards, but it's not what sets you free".

Those words could be a touchstone for Professor Wright as well as a salve for others, for her output remains astonishing.



From left: 'A Monument of One's Own' campaign co-convenor Kristine Ziwicki; sculptor Jennifer Mann; Professor Clare Wright and Luke Hilakari, Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, with the statue of feminist activist Zelda D'Aprano

Membership matters

Reflecting on five decades

IEU member and experienced teacher aide Joy Aquilina retires at the end of 2022 after a long and rewarding career. Emily Campbell spoke to her about the importance of union membership during her five decades in education.

Joy (pictured right) began her career in early childhood education immediately after leaving high school.

"After growing up and leaving school, I realised I loved being around children but did not want to pursue a university degree, so I secured employment at the Brisbane Town Hall Child Care Centre," Joy said.

"During this time, I was working with children during the day and studying for my kindercraft certificate by night, undergoing training to be a teacher aide."

Supporting diverse young learners

Joy continued working for years in various early childhood education centres around north Brisbane. She married, had four children and assisted with bookkeeping in her family business. "I ended up doing relief work at Sandgate Preschool to assist the teacher and was tasked with supporting a young student who had Down Syndrome," Joy said.

"It was during this year my spark for learning support and desire to work with children who have a disability was ignited. "I got a job as a tutor in Sandgate State Primary School, where I worked 20 hours per week and completed my Certificate III teacher aide qualification, specialising in English and Literacy.

"Teacher aides were trained to assist students in all sorts of subject areas, including reading, writing, oracy and maths, and to support the teachers.

"Eventually, I secured work at St Michael's College in Caboolture, after moving to the area and enrolling my two youngest children in the school," she said.

Joy said St Michael's has been a rewarding and inclusive workplace for 23 years. "St Michael's was the first school I had worked in that allowed teacher aides in the staff room, and I immediately felt right at home.

"My favourite aspect of the job was transitioning into the Learning Support Department, where I've since completed my Certificate IV in Learning Support, helped train up

"The growth in the number of students with learning difficulties has increased substantially. We started with maybe six when I first began, and now have over 60 students."



new teacher aides and spent many hours in Professional Development (PD) learning the different aspects of working with children who have disabilities or learning difficulties.

"I have completed a Certificate in Kindercraft, Cert III in English and Language, Cert III in Education and a Cert IV in Learning Support.

"It's incredibly rewarding getting to know the students and their little idiosyncrasies and helping them to finally grasp a concept they're learning."

Membership matters

Joy has been an IEU member for over 20 years and has experienced major changes to working in schools during that time.

"The uptake of technology in schools has been rapid, including the use of laptops in the classroom and the technologies available to our learning support students to help them with their everyday school life," Joy said.

"Additionally, the growth in the number of students with learning difficulties that are verified has increased substantially.

"We started with maybe six when I first began and now have over 60 verified students," she said.

Joy has been a dedicated member of her IEU Chapter for over 20 years, serving as a single bargaining unit (SBU) representative during collective bargaining and as a Chapter wellbeing representative.

"In the beginning of my tenure at St Michael's, the log of claims focused mainly on teaching staff," Joy said.

"As my confidence evolved in my workplace, my desire to see the teacher aides represented - and issues pertaining to them be heard and acknowledged - grew, so I ended up as Chapter Representative.

"IEU membership is important for professional protection and, as a member, it was reassuring to know I could rely on our union or ask for support or advice when necessary.

"Our union has made a substantial difference and improved working conditions for my colleagues.

"For example, we previously only got one day off for attending a school camp, which was up to a week in length.

"In 2017, this was removed and amended so now employees who attend camps are entitled to an overnight allowance of \$50 per night if they are required to remain at the camp.

"Some of the significant IEU-won working conditions include accessing long service leave after seven years, PD opportunities and carer's leave being included in personal leave.

"Superannuation increases and the opportunity to co-contribute means I'll be able to retire comfortably and enjoy myself travelling too."

A 'better future'
starts here

The agenda for education and the teaching profession



IEU Assistant Federal Secretary Brad Hayes discusses our union's federal agenda for the future of the teaching profession and education sector, and the priority reforms that must be delivered by the new Federal Government.

The new ALP Federal Government was elected under the campaign banner 'A Better Future'.

Our schools and early childhood education centres must now be at the head of the list to bring this slogan into reality - there is no better future for Australia without radical and wide-ranging reforms to our education system.

While the workforce and professional challenges in education are many and complex, the one common element that must underpin all government plans and policy debates is the need to consult with actual education practitioners.

For too long, teachers have been excluded from crucial education debates that have instead been dominated by actors external to the reality in classrooms, often to the detriment of our schools and students.

Early signs have been positive, with the new government adopting a more inclusive and collaborative approach.

It will be a long and difficult path to repair the significant issues in our sector, but for the first time in many years we are at least heading in the right direction.

Union members have been calling out these issues for decades.

Backed by the collective strength of our 75,000 IEU members nationwide, our campaign is underway to make these changes a reality.

Teacher voices must be at the centre of education policy

Australia's education policies and regulatory authorities have been plagued by a glaring disconnect between their decisions and the reality of classroom teaching and learning.

It is a sadly predictable outcome given the previous federal government's aversion to listening to real-world practitioners.

Any classroom teacher or support staff member can tell you about the negative impact of successive policy changes and new government requirements impeding their core work educating students.

Our members have first-hand experience, and common-sense solutions, as to how regulatory authorities can streamline compliance procedures and reporting requirements.

Now we need employers and government to listen.

The work of bodies such as the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is a clear example of the disconnect between policy makers and the teaching profession.

The Federal Government must act immediately to restore the voice of teachers on the AITSL board.

The IEU and Australian Education Union should be included on the AITSL board, as they were before being removed by the previous government in 2013.

We need the voice of teachers to inform all areas of review and educational reform - NAPLAN, Teach for Australia, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs and the Online Formative Assessment Initiative.

The impact on school staff must be at the core of any future discussions.

Government programs and school-level implementation of any new initiatives must also be supported by a foundational commitment to restore the professional autonomy and judgement of teachers.

More red tape, paperwork and bureaucratic intrusions into classrooms will continue to undermine the profession. What teachers need is the discretion and professional respect to get on with their teaching.



From left: IEUA Federal Secretary Christine Cooper and Federal Education Minister Jason Clare, with IEUA Assistant Federal Secretaries Brad Hayes and Anthony Odgers

Returning the voice of teachers to critical education debates is an important step to rebuilding the status of teaching.

The government can lead by example through recognising the full value and respect for the profession.

Improved workforce planning and retention

Members and our union have been warning of looming staffing shortages for decades.

The pandemic has just accelerated a slow-burn crisis to the point we now see playing out across the country.

According to a July 2022 report by Monash University, 59 per cent of teachers plan on leaving the profession – the warning signs have been ignored by successive governments and employers alike.

IEU members therefore welcome the Federal Government's plan to begin tackling the issue as one of its stated 'first priority' education issues.

The IEU participated in the government's recent Teacher Workforce Roundtable where we highlighted the solutions our members have been raising for years – solutions that require wide-ranging and significant reform.

The current crisis is clearly linked to retention and recruitment. Improved pay rates, workload relief and enhanced career paths must head the list for immediate employer investment.

Early career teachers need more support to stay in the profession, with improved release time, professional development (PD) and mentoring programs.

Offering graduate teachers permanent jobs instead of insecure short-term contracts must become the new standard in all schools.

Winning the major improvements needed to wages and conditions won't happen in a vacuum – it must be supported by a complementary review of a broken collective bargaining system that is holding back our members.

Our pay rates, leave entitlements, job security and workload protections all depend on a fair set of laws; however, the bargaining system has been stacked against employees for decades.

We need the government to restore some fairness and balance to a bargaining system that has such a major impact on the working lives of IEU members.

The government must also avoid quick-fix responses to teacher shortages like sending unqualified teachers into classrooms without adequate preparation.

Teaching is a highly complex and evolving profession, and rushing student teachers into classrooms before they are ready will only exacerbate early career burnout.

Teacher burnout and unsustainable workloads

Experienced teachers and school leaders are leaving the profession in staggering numbers and around a third of new teachers walk away from teaching in their first five years.

We know the reason – unsustainable workloads are leaving school staff exhausted and demoralised.

Teacher burnout caused by unsustainable workloads can be directly attributed to employer demands.

Additional administrative duties, new reporting formats, record-keeping and excessive testing are undermining the core role of teachers in the classroom.

However, the federal government also has an important part to play.

An obsession with data and a relentless cycle of compliance requirements are being driven by state and federal governments, culminating in competing priorities that are impossible for teachers to satisfy within reasonable working hours.

The simplification and streamlining of processes such as Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) reporting is long overdue.

Any new government proposal should first satisfy the tests:

- Does this initiative support quality learning in the classroom?
- Do teachers have the time and resources to make it work?

We now have a real opportunity to make lasting improvements to the Australian education system, and our union will be front and centre to make sure the new government avoids repeating the failures of the past.



For the love of **TEACHING**

There's a teacher shortage and more than half of current teachers are contemplating quitting. How have they hung on so long, asks Will Brodie.

Workers in other industries would have moved on long ago in the face of the extreme workload intensification faced by teachers.

Teachers have persisted despite exploding workloads and the endless demands of the pandemic for one reason only – they love their jobs.

For most teachers, helping children learn is not just an earner, it's a vocation.

Michael Victory, Executive Officer of the Teacher Learning Network, recently wrote that people choose teaching "to make a difference in the lives of students".

"That is what gets the best teachers out of bed in the morning. They look forward to engaging in the complex

relationships of a classroom of children or adolescents and finishing each day knowing that 'today I made a difference,'" Victory wrote.

In negotiations to alleviate workload intensification all around Australia, the message repeats: get rid of these extraneous duties which keep me from my primary function – to teach children, to grapple with the glorious challenge of helping them to grow. Give me time to prepare classes and give students my full attention. Save me from exhaustion by 'administrivia', lengthy and unnecessary meetings, and the other non-teaching tasks that have piled up for the past decade.

Survey after survey confirms that teachers are working well over 50 hours per week to keep their heads above water. They work after putting their own kids to bed at night and on weekends. They get to school early and

leave late just to keep up. They never feel they have time to get ahead with the latest research.

So, what specifically do teachers love about their jobs?

Making a difference

The two most prominent reasons are that desire to make a difference, and the chance to share one's love of learning.

Here are some quotes explaining the attractions of teaching from IEU members from all over Australia:

"I love working with kids and the feeling of helping a child learn something and be proud of themselves for it is incomparable to anything else."

"I am so grateful to have been a teacher, striving in my career to understand how to honour children, to listen more and speak less, to understand and learn with them."

"I was passionate about my subject area, and I wanted to influence the next generation to make the world a better place."

"Teaching is truly a rewarding career. The bonds you build with staff and students are both special and rewarding."

New IEU Reps in Victoria echoed these sentiments.

Mark Almond from St Brendan's Shepparton said he got into teaching "to try to make a difference in the engagement of learning for all students".

"I've always enjoyed seeing kids learn and grow. It's awesome to spark a child's interest and see them get excited and curious about learning," said Georgina Bennett from St Joseph's Boronia.

Dean Haydock from Eltham College loves working collaboratively with young adults "to assist them achieve their life goals".

Helping is hardwired

"Through fMRI [functional magnetic resonance imaging] technology, we now know that giving activates the same parts of the brain that are stimulated by food and sex. Experiments show evidence that altruism is hardwired in the brain – and it's pleasurable," writes Jenny Santi for *Time*.

Whether teaching is altruistic or not can be debated, but many teachers get a huge kick out of seeing their students develop.

Psychologists posit that giving and helping release endorphins, so teachers experience a 'helper's high', similar to the exultation of runner's high felt by many exercisers.

Supporting others activates a neural pathway in the brain that boosts our wellbeing, state researchers at the University of Pittsburgh in the US.

"Helping others directly activates a brain region that has previously been linked to parental care behaviours. At the same time, activity in the amygdala – a brain structure associated with fear and stress responses – is lowered."

No matter what brain chemistry is going on, there's no doubting the excitement a teacher feels when a student who has been struggling with a concept "gets it".

Meindert Smid from Trinity Grammar, Kew, calls that a student's "light bulb moment".

Teacher Georgina Bennett loves "the joy that comes from seeing a child learn and grow. From a student who can't read to loving reading or the mute student who grows in confidence to be telling jokes in front of the whole class".

Mel Whittle also finds joy in, "seeing a student find self-confidence and

success and the joy it gave them because of the classroom I set up."

The satisfaction of the moment it all "clicks" for a student is unique to teaching.

But there is also reward for those, like Ballarat Grammar's Danni Armstrong, who got into teaching because of "a love of learning".

Teaching is learning

"While we teach, we learn," is a saying attributed to Roman philosopher Seneca. Modern author Annie Murphy Paul says "For thousands of years, people have known that the best way to understand a concept is to explain it to someone else.

"In what scientists have dubbed 'the protégé effect', student teachers score higher on tests than pupils who are learning only for their own sake."

"I am so grateful to have been a teacher, striving in my career to understand how to honour children, to listen more and speak less, to understand and learn with them."

Students enlisted to tutor others work harder to understand the material, recall it more accurately and apply it more effectively. These "student teachers" score higher on tests than pupils who are learning only for themselves.

Paul says it is the emotions elicited by teaching that make it such a powerful vehicle for learning. Student tutors feel chagrin when their pupils fail; when their proteges succeed, they

feel *nachas*, a Yiddish term that means 'pride and satisfaction that is derived from someone else's accomplishment'.

Numbers, good and bad

The 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey also concluded that teachers are in love with *nachas*. It concluded that "contributing to society or young people's development" motivated 93 per cent of Australians who want to become teachers.

Karen Bailey, teacher and wellbeing officer, says there are many great things about being a teacher – the fact that no two days are the same; the colleagues who become like family; and making activities memorable to foster learning.

But the greatest satisfaction comes from helping students.

"Ultimately, we're responsible for shaping the future generation, helping young people become inquisitive and seek out truths to form their own opinion," Karen said.

"We see them develop into their own personalities, see them enquire and question and sometimes challenge.

"Seeing kids achieve, when they know they've done their best – that's when you see them flourish. It's always something that makes you stand back and think 'all of the work was worth it.'"

Teaching remains an attractive prospect, but half of new teachers leave education within five years of graduation. And there is a national downturn of 20 per cent in new enrolments as fewer school-leavers enter teaching degrees.

Until society and school systems value teaching as much as teachers, the numbers will get worse. We all must realise what a motivated, passionate cohort we have at our disposal, and get them back to doing what they do best, and love most – teaching.

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TRIAL

BY MEDIA

HOW THE PORTRAYAL OF TEACHERS HURTS THE PROFESSION

Do teachers really get a bad rap in the media? Yes they do, writes Associate Professor Nicole Mockler of the University of Sydney. And she's done the in-depth research that proves it. She shares it with us here.

Most teachers I know are regularly outraged by depictions of their profession in the media.

Whether it's disparaging remarks made by politicians; blame for crises both educational and social; or allegations of political bias and indoctrination of students, teachers seem to cop it regularly in the media.

While there are also stories of heroism, often infused with nostalgic recollections of school teachers past, these often serve to underline the point of difference between the 'heroes' and the rest of the profession - in an 'exception proves the rule' kind of way.

Over the past couple of decades, I've focused on representations of teachers in the print media. I have closely analysed small, carefully chosen selections of articles around a specific topic or timeframe to detect patterns and themes.

Small studies such as these can tell us a lot. But what they don't do is track the large-scale issues and how they rise and fall over time.

Big picture issues

A few years ago, I set my sights on a larger study that would allow me to do that. I collected every article published in Australia's 12 capital city and national daily newspapers from 1996 to 2020 that used the word 'teacher' and/or 'teachers' three times or more.

There are more than 65,000 articles and 45 million words in what I call the Australian Teacher Corpus (ATC) - that's about 50 articles a week, every week, for 25 years.

I examined patterns and change over time using a combination of techniques, including quantitative methods from linguistics; close analysis of concordance lines (where words are displayed in their context); and 'prototypical texts' identified using statistical analysis.

Media coverage of teachers hit a peak in 2008, with 4007 articles (more than 77 a week). In 2008, readers of Victoria's *The Age* alone encountered 11 articles a week about teachers. Readers of *The Australian* in the same year encountered an average of nine articles about teachers per week - one or two each day.

Excessive focus on teachers

Media stories about teachers are a constant in Australian newspapers. Using the same search parameters for

accountants, public servants, nurses, lawyers and doctors in the equivalent number of articles over the same 25 years, I found that teachers came out on top.

There was more than twice the volume of articles about teachers than nurses, the profession to which teachers are most often compared.

Three important words

I want to focus here on three words, prominent in different ways in the ATC, that provide good examples of how teachers are talked about in the public space. The three words are: *performing*; *should*; and *quality*.

Performing: Media discussions of teachers and their work have increasingly been linked to regimes of accountability. 'Performing' was a keyword in every year of the ATC from 2007 to 2019 inclusive.

In this kind of analysis, a keyword is one used more frequently (in a statistically significant sense) in one group of texts than in another. To come up with this analysis I compared the ATC to a massive collection of general Australian news media texts (Davies, 2016).

In 1996, the top 10 collocates, or words used most frequently (again in a statistically significant sense) around 'performing' were mostly related to the performing arts. In 2007, the first year when 'performing' was a keyword, it was mostly related to 'high performing' and 'poorly performing' schools - and school systems had started to creep in.

By 2019, the arts sector was no longer in the top 10. By 2019 performing was exclusively related to international standardised tests, complete with a nod to the 'reference societies' (Sellar & Lingard, 2013) with which Australia likes to compare itself, such as Estonia, Finland and Singapore.

Top 10 collocates of 'performing', in order of strength

1996	2007	2019
Newtown	arts	stronger
arts	poorly	Estonia
visual	rewards	systems
high	highest	Finland
how	aren't	world's
schools	low	Singapore
school	reward	top
state	systems	highest
are	high	countries
and	under	disadvantaged

Randomly selected instances of 'teachers should' from the Australian Teacher Corpus

Teachers should	be paid according to how their students succeed.
Teachers should	be given clear, concise road-maps of what to teach.
Teachers should	be using social media in the classroom.
Teachers should	have one core function: to provide a system of standards and assessments.
Teachers should	have the flexibility to decide how they teach their students.
Teachers should	not be spending time organising sausage sizzles and other fundraising events.
Teachers should	not adopt a cookie-cutter approach to learning.
Teachers should	always affirm, respect and support children.
Teachers should	approach the problem by starting a general discussion in the classroom.
Teachers should	arrive in classes prepared and have thought about how they are going to present material.
Teachers should	clearly explain that it's necessary to allow other students to learn, grow up to at least the age level of those who they are supposed to be teaching.
Teachers should	keep the interests of students and the quality of education in mind and administer the tests.
Teachers should	make sure children had enough to drink during a dust storm and be a little more careful.
Teachers should	take the time to get to know their students and find out how they learn best.

Should: There are plenty of words and phrases in the ATC that homogenise teachers: 'all teachers', 'every teacher' and 'teachers should' are the main examples. The effect is to make teachers' work appear simple. Take 'teachers should' as a case in point (see table above).

Leaving aside the many contradictions in this small cross-section of the 2300 or so instances (for example, "clear, concise road-maps" versus "not adopt a cookie-cutter approach"), these lines reveal a number of other interesting factors.

Advice for teachers is loaded with connotations that the ideas presented by 'experts' in the media will seem novel or unusual to teachers; for example: 'teachers should affirm, respect and support children'; 'teachers should get to know their students'; 'teachers should arrive in classes prepared, with lessons planned'. Who knew?!

The authority with which 'teachers should' is proclaimed, especially when it precedes outrageous claims ('teachers should be paid according to how their students succeed') or insults ('teachers should grow up to at least the age level of those who they are supposed to be teaching'), can exaggerate simplicity and flatten the very real complexity of teachers' work.

Quality: Third, discussions about teachers in the print media have been largely focused on teacher quality since the mid-2000s.

My analysis shows that instances of 'teacher quality' far outweigh other popular discussions of quality in any other part of the ATC.

There are two problems with this focus on teacher quality. The first is that it's rarely anything other than negative and generally deployed in association with an assessment of deficit. Teacher quality is positioned as poor, it's falling, it's in need of improvement and so on.

Discussions of teacher quality also attribute problems with education systems and structures to the teachers themselves,

implying they are responsible for those problems rather than drawing attention to the larger structural issues that get in the way.

Discussions of quality in schooling are not in and of themselves problematic, but emphasising teacher quality lays blame for systemic failures on individual teachers. It excludes more nuanced discussions of teaching practice that involve professional development and support for teachers throughout their entire careers.

"The general lack of respect expressed toward teachers in the public space doesn't help attract the 'best and brightest' into the profession."

Perfect storm

Media representations of teachers are not to blame for the current teacher shortage – not on their own, anyway.

What we're seeing now is an almost perfect storm of teacher shortages, unsustainable workloads, and pandemic-related burnout.

But the general lack of respect expressed toward teachers in the public space doesn't help. It doesn't help attract the 'best and

brightest' into the profession, an aspiration of successive governments of all persuasions and at all levels in Australia.

And it doesn't help to keep talented and experienced teachers in the classroom. Our teachers – and their students – deserve better. It's time to change the conversation.

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New view of First Nations heroes

Aboriginal Change Makers, a unique collaboration between the Victorian Parliament and Worawa Aboriginal College, prompts students to consider history through the eyes and experiences of Indigenous people who fought against long odds to keep their culture and language alive, Will Brodie writes.

The teaching resource, launched in early June by Worawa Principal and Executive Director Dr Lois Peeler and Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly Colin Brooks, presents “amazing stories of political and social activity, self-determination, and empowerment, as well as the struggle for recognition in the face of another more dominant and colonising society”.

The course for students in Years 7 to 10 details life on Aboriginal missions, the removal of children from their families at age 15 to work as household or farm labour, and crusades for recognition and self-determination. Teachers and university teaching students will also be able to complete one-day training sessions at Worawa’s Healesville campus, and the Victorian Government will provide professional resources for teachers to make best use of the material in their classrooms.

Personal experiences

Aboriginal Change Makers gives accounts of the personal experiences of people who participated in historically significant events. It gives voice to the stories, remembrances, and experience of people who worked tirelessly to bring about change in the lives of Aboriginal people.

For so many of them, campaigning for Aboriginal liberation and recognition was “costly and dangerous”.

One such figure featured by Change Makers is William Cooper, an “early and relentless campaigner for Aboriginal rights” who founded National Aborigines Day in 1940, a precursor to NAIDOC Week.

“He began with a group for Aboriginal people: an organisation called Australian Aborigines’ League, and they were advocating for improved conditions for our people,” Dr Peeler said.

Cooper believed that Aboriginal people should be represented in parliament and petitioned King George V demanding the right to propose a member of parliament who directly represented Aboriginal people. Sound familiar? He obtained 1814 signatures. The Commonwealth refused to pass the petition to the King.

In 1938, Cooper led a delegation on behalf of the Aboriginal community to the German consulate in Canberra to deliver a letter which condemned the persecution of Jewish people on Kristallnacht by Germany’s Nazis.

“That was one of the amazing things, because our own people were going through this process of being discriminated against,” Dr Peeler said.

Education is the key to ending discrimination, says Dr Peeler. When we learn about ourselves, we begin to understand the need for social change.

“You don’t know what you don’t know”, she says.

True history

The mission statement for the program states: “It is our hope that non-Aboriginal students will begin to access the actual history of the past and a new understanding of what has created their own perspective so they can look at the past with clarity and the future with honesty.”

Dr Peeler hopes those who engage with Aboriginal Change Makers “will gain an understanding of their own perspective and a deeper appreciation of the incredible riches of Aboriginal cultures and recognition of the impact of colonialism on First Nations people of this land that would truly support our nation’s journey to reconciliation and healing”.

“I think these stories need to be told. These are people who have worked against the odds to make changes, often at great personal sacrifice.

“People often ask, ‘Why weren’t we taught (this)?’ These stories have been hidden; we’ve never been noticed as part of Australian history.

“Everybody is looking for this, now that we are advancing the ideas of the Statement from the Heart, of treaty,

of self-determination, and we have to bring along the broader community.”

Dr Peeler believes projects like Change Makers “truly support our nation’s journey to healing and reconciliation” by helping Australians learn about the real history of our country.

“We are going through such a significant social change at the moment,” she said.

“We’re talking about acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Nations people of Australia.

“That’s why it’s important to be able to provide resources so that this can be taught in schools.”

Worawa College, Victoria’s only Aboriginal-run school, was founded in 1983 by “visionary, poet, writer and philosopher” Hyllus Maris.

Indigenous education website deadlstory.com describes Worawa as “an Aboriginal community initiative ... established on Aboriginal-owned land. It is governed by Aboriginal people. Students are from Aboriginal communities across Australia”.

Worawa welcomes First Nations girls from around the country, many of them from regional and remote communities. Some become the first people in their families to finish high school.

Holistic approach

The school offers a holistic program, integrating academic learning, health and wellbeing, and a celebration of culture – needs not previously met by other educational options.

Worawa filled that gap, but also countered mainstream curricula, which lacked any reference to Indigenous people who’d lived for 60,000 years in what became called Australia. It also lacked any positive stories about Aboriginal people.

“You can’t focus on your education unless you’re feeling right in your heart and in your head,” Dr Peeler said.

By fulfilling that fundamental need, Worawa’s holistic program has had a big impact on the lives of its students.

“Being able to identify as Aboriginal and focus on the resilience and achievements of our people over



Dr Lois Peeler, Principal of Worawa, Australia's only Aboriginal girls' boarding school, leads students in ceremony. Dr Peeler is a former member of The Sapphires, a 1960s all-girl Aboriginal pop group.



“Being able to identify as Aboriginal and focus on the resilience and achievements of our people over 60,000 years – that’s very powerful.”

60,000 years ... that’s very powerful. And that’s what we see in our young people.

“They feel confident in who they are. They have aspirations to either go back to work in their communities, to be the leaders, or go on to higher education.”

Dr Peeler, recently named NAIDOC 2022 Female Elder of the Year, has long been a significant changemaker herself.

She was the country’s first Aboriginal model when 17 and in the 1960s performed as a singer in the now famous all-female Indigenous group The Sapphires, a breakthrough group recently immortalised in a hit film of the same name.

Since then, she’s been Assistant Director of the Aborigines Advancement League, worked in the public sector for 16 years managing Aboriginal Affairs and now chairs the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee.

Dr Peeler understands how important it is to chronicle and record living history.

Her family lived in the renowned Cummeragunja Aboriginal reserve.

“And there was a lot of music, there were a lot of concerts, and a lot of sports on that reserve,” Dr Peeler said.

Performing at church functions and parties in her community led to the creation of The Sapphires.

“That was our life. And it was something that drew us together”, she said.

However, when the reserve was discontinued, the music stopped.

And because there are few recordings of The Sapphires’ performances and none of the members owned a camera, they lacked an archive. So, Dr Peeler is grateful the movie celebrates their career.

Little wonder she has an enthusiasm for promoting recognition of important Indigenous figures and campaigns.

Dr Peeler’s respect for learning derives from her childhood education on Cummeragunja, home to First Nations heroes including Uncle William Cooper, Uncle Jack Patten, Uncle Doug

Nicholls, Uncle Bill Onus, and Aunty Marge Tucker.

“My Elders were always there when I chose to do things as a teenager,” she told NITV.

“That’s what we need to show our young people, that they can do anything.”

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Professor Joseph Stiglitz

Lights, camera, collective action!

Nobel laureate and renowned economist Professor Joseph Stiglitz explained the social good of strong unions while visiting Australia in July. Monica Crouch shares some of his ideas.

Professor Stiglitz gave the inaugural Laurie Carmichael Lecture in Melbourne on 20 July, entitled 'The Economic benefits of Trade Unions'.

Former ACTU Assistant Secretary Laurie Carmichael (1925-2018) was "a visionary, an intellectual, an organiser, a change-maker and a unionist through and through", said Australian Council of Trade Unions Secretary Sally McManus.

In this proud tradition, Professor Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank, laid out a vision for transformative change.

In the beginning

"Before unions, in the early days of the industrial revolution, GDP was going up, but wages went down and working conditions got worse," Professor Stiglitz said. "If you've read Dickens, you know how bad conditions were in 19th century UK.

"And even as recently as the early part of the 20th century, working conditions were terrible in the United States. Workers were locked up in factories, and there was a fire – the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire [25 March 1911] in which hundreds of people died. That provided impetus not only for unionisation, but also for social legislation.

"It has only been through the action of unions that workers' conditions got better. The unions made a big difference as the US opened up – it led to a reversal of these terrible conditions that had prevailed since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Constant struggle and collective action

"But it was a struggle, employers have always resisted," Professor Stiglitz said. "They want to get labour for as low a price as possible. In the early days of the founding of America, the way we got cheap labour was slavery from Africa. And when [the ruling class] couldn't get slaves, they created frameworks to keep wages as low as possible. It was only through collective action that workers were able to improve their wellbeing.

"The need for collective action is even greater in a modern economy. We have to have collective action to provide education, health, and infrastructure – and not only hard infrastructure, but the soft infrastructure related to the provision of childcare and aged care.

"The increased concentration of market power by corporations means it's even more important to have a countervailing power. Unions have always pushed for legislation that protects workers, and without strong unions, new forms of abuse arise (for example, split shifts, abolition of penalty rates).

"If you don't have unions advocating for the wellbeing of all people, you wind up with healthcare systems where things are so bad that life expectancy in the United States was in decline even before the pandemic. It's not like we don't have good doctors, or we don't understand medical science, we just don't have a system that delivers health to ordinary people.

How inequality hurts democracy

"The inequality in our society – where the top 1 per cent gets 20 per cent or 25 per cent of the income – has been getting worse," Professor Stiglitz said. "And inequality hurts our economy. It hurts our democracy. It divides our society.

"When people ask, 'How could you have somebody like Trump?', it becomes more understandable when you see the growth of inequality in the US, that those on the bottom have not gotten a pay raise in 65 years – over two generations.

"This growth of inequality leads to lower productivity. It leads to a less well-performing economy. We are paying a high price for this inequality. Short-term profit maximisation leads to higher labour turnover because workers get demoralised.

How unions help productivity

"This growth in inequality can be stymied through a better balance of power, and that means stronger unions," Professor Stiglitz said.

"And unions play a role in increased productivity in another way. Unions give voice to workers who have the best information about what is going on in the workplace. By giving them a greater voice, companies can increase productivity.

"Massachusetts, in the US, where teachers' unions are particularly influential, has the best-performing education system. I don't think it's an accident – it's because the teachers' unions are a strong advocate for investment in education and designing an education system that delivers."

Countering complacency

"The success of unions has actually weakened unions," Professor Stiglitz said. "In places where unions have been successful, people will say, 'well, we have good working conditions, what do we need unions for?'

"It's a little bit like what happened in banking in the US. In the early 1980s, under Ronald Reagan, the Republicans said, 'we haven't had a banking crisis for 50 years, so what do we need banking regulations for?' The reason we haven't had a financial crisis for 50 years is because we had financial regulations. Then came the global financial crisis.

"When we have institutions that are working, we take them for granted – and then we say, 'well, what do we need them

for?' But it's precisely because we have those institutions that we have those higher living standards.

Big vision for the future

"Things have been going bad for a long time, and you're not going to remedy them in one or two years," Professor Stiglitz said. "So, you need a vision of what you should demand of your new government."

Better bargaining laws: "The bargaining process needs to be changed. We need sector-wide bargaining - it's an important way of increasing negotiating power. If it didn't have any effect on bargaining power, employers would say, 'Okay, go ahead'. But the fact they've put up such resistance, and not only in Australia and New Zealand, but in Europe, is evidence. It's interesting that some of these neoliberals, people who supposedly don't believe in regulation, have wound up believing in regulations against workers. If they believe free markets work, why don't they let workers and firms bargain freely?"

Corporate governance laws: "It's important for workers to have seats on the board of directors. Having the voice of workers - that is, unions - on the board of directors, ought to be part of good corporate governance.

"It also seems strange to me that workers' pension [superannuation] funds don't have a voice in how the

companies they've invested in behave. Over the long term, companies that behave better have higher returns.

Governance of the Reserve Bank: "The Treasury in Australia has announced a review of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA). The question is, who is sitting there making these judgements? Some countries have recognised that a lot of people from the financial sector on their central bank is not representative. Sweden, for instance, always has a representative of workers on their central bank."

No to neoliberalism: "Under neoliberalism [also known as 'trickle-down economics'] there was supposedly perfect competition: no firm had any power, no worker had any power, the word 'power' was never even used in economics.

"Now we've had 40 years of neoliberalism in many countries. I think we can say with a fair degree of confidence that the experiment has failed. Growth was lower in the 40 years of neoliberalism than it was before. And what growth occurred was not shared, it all went to the people at the top, and that's how we wind up with growing inequality, and the first generation that will be worse off than its parents.

"We need a new economic framework, one in which there is a better balance, a greater role for collective action and an important part of that collective action has to be through unions."

"In Massachusetts, where teachers' unions are particularly powerful, that state has the best-performing education system - teacher unions have become a strong advocate for investment in education."



How teacher shortages are stunting STEM

The proliferation of out-of-field (OOF) teaching has grave ramifications for educators and students, but there are bright ideas about how to fix the problem, Will Brodie writes.

OOF teaching is when teachers take on subjects or stages of schooling they are not qualified to teach.

Staff shortages mean classes in the crucial economy-building fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects are among the worst affected by OOF teaching.

The statistics are stark:

- Around 40 per cent of Australia's Year 7 to 10 mathematics classes are taught without a qualified maths teacher.
- One in four Australian Year 8 students (23 per cent) is taught by non-specialist maths teachers and one in 10 (9 per cent) by non-specialist science teachers.
- The number of school students studying STEM in Year 11 and 12 has stalled at 10 per cent.

Professor Mark Hutchinson, President of Science and Technology Australia, says research by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute shows that at current rates of training, "it would take 20 years to ensure every Australian student is taught by a maths teacher with specialist training".

Hutchinson says when STEM subjects are taught by OOF teachers, "regardless of how hard a teacher works, students' enthusiasm and desire to continue in maths and science often drops away".

Lauren McKnight, Vice President of the Science Teachers Association of NSW, says, "we are jeopardising the

future of the STEM workforce and it's a vicious cycle. We can adjust policy to train mid-career professionals, but this is not an immediate solution.

"We are going backwards," she said, citing a survey of 300 NSW science teachers conducted in June which found eight in 10 science classes were taught by teachers without expertise in that subject.

The survey also found 48 per cent of respondents said there was at least one permanent vacancy for a science teacher in their school, and 84 per cent of respondents reported that science classes had been taught by a non-science teacher in the week they were surveyed.

High attrition rates

"The pipeline of new teachers entering the profession is inadequate, and attrition rates are high," said the Science Teachers Association's submission to a NSW parliamentary inquiry committee in June.

In 2020, the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) warned Australia did not have enough high-quality STEM teachers emerging to meet future demand.

At that time, research from Monash University and the University of Sydney revealed Victoria's rate of out-of-field STEM teaching was 14.9 per cent, and in NSW it was 10.5 per cent.

The report, *Teaching 'out-of-field' in STEM subjects in Australia* found OOF teaching happened less when schools had more autonomy, flexible budgets, and better funding.

Solutions

Linda Hobbs, Deakin School of Education Associate Professor – and lead author of the report *Australian*

National Summit on Teaching Out-of-field: Synthesis and Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Research – says teaching out-of-field has become "an increasingly critical issue".

"We believe it is something that needs to be addressed urgently to mitigate any impact on students' education and teacher wellbeing."

Associate Professor Hobbs says there are three main causes for the out-of-field teaching crisis.

"The first is a lack of teachers available at the school who are qualified to teach certain subjects. The second is that there is an unequal distribution of teachers in a geographic area, meaning suburbs, towns or cities just don't have enough teachers to meet demand. The third reason is recruitment practices by the school that preference qualities other than teacher specialisations when making their hiring decisions."

Paul Weldon, Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), says OOF teaching will never be completely eradicated because there are small schools "that can only employ a certain number of staff but must provide a minimum curriculum".

However, he suggests incentives should be provided for teachers to upskill in another field. He also says it's important to ensure even distribution of qualified teachers "so that regional and rural areas aren't missing out while there is over-supply in metro areas".

A major recommendation of the report is the development of a national definition of OOF teaching to help measure how bad the problem is in each jurisdiction.

“It needs to be addressed urgently to mitigate any impact on students’ education and teachers’ wellbeing.”

The report also calls for better data on the long-term impact of OOF teaching on teachers and students, better support systems for OOF teachers, bolstered teacher career pathways, and retraining for professionals wishing to switch to teaching.

Just change minds

Another education expert is less glum – at least about teaching maths – saying helping Australian kids improve their skills may be as simple as “shifting negative attitudes”.

“Many students see maths as a subject only certain types of people are good at”, which can stop them from engaging with it, says Dr Laura Tuohilampi from the University of NSW School of Education.

“In reality, the largest group of people actively using maths are the people who think they’re no good at it,” Dr Tuohilampi told *The Australian*.

Dr Tuohilampi wants “maths for humans”, and a “rethinking of maths curriculums to appeal more to students’ natural sense of wonder and curiosity”.

“When we solve real-life problems – like, for example, estimating the volume of furniture when booking storage space – ‘maths-aversion’ does not exist.”

Rather than completely overhaul Australia’s curriculum, Dr Tuohilampi says one lesson per month which uses a “richer” approach can change students’ attitudes towards maths for the better.

“Teachers struggle with their students being unmotivated and disengaged. But when you give them these kinds of challenges every once in a while, you allow them permission to start appreciating maths and they

appreciate the conventional tasks more,” Dr Tuohilampi said.

No escaping the future

Professor Hutchinson says to solve the OOF/STEM problem, teaching needs to be properly “rewarded, recognised and respected”.

“Higher teacher salaries would telegraph the immense esteem and value society places on teaching and teachers and boost the academic achievement rankings of the candidates applying for teaching courses.”

He says some high academic achievers are put off teaching by fears they “might get bored teaching the same thing year after year”.

To fix this, current specialist STEM teachers could work across multiple schools, which would expose them to different teaching methods across multiple schools and help to accelerate their career paths.

“In the medium-term, there is an opportunity to retrain and deploy some of the thousands of talented science and technology staff who lost jobs in the university sector during the pandemic – and others keen to move out of short-term research employment contracts.

“Doing so will help to tackle the shortages of specialist STEM teachers in schools, including in regional Australia where this shortage is most pronounced.”

He says the drop in students taking on STEM subjects “will damage our long-term workforce capabilities, national income and living standards.

“All of the big new emerging technologies poised to revolutionise our lives and economy – artificial

intelligence, machine learning and quantum computing – will need a highly trained workforce with strong maths skills to build and maintain strong sovereign capabilities.

“Australia’s future economy – and our future workforce – will depend on our students having that essential bedrock knowledge of science and maths.

“Without it, we’ll be lost.”

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The importance of teacher wellbeing

Attention to teacher wellbeing has grown in recent years in the wake of emerging findings that associate positive wellbeing with a range of favourable life outcomes, IEU member and Year 5 teacher Damien Lynch writes.

As teachers continue to play an increasingly significant role in the educational and psychological development of their students, it is the wellbeing of teachers that determines the degree to which they can support their students.

With improved insights into the significance of teacher wellbeing, educational authorities, teachers and their unions can put in place strategies to minimise conditions that cause wellbeing to suffer and promote conditions that cause teacher wellbeing to thrive.

The teacher wellbeing experiment

To remedy the poor wellbeing of many staff in my school, I was given the opportunity to highlight the importance of teacher wellbeing to my colleagues.

I shared with them a renowned wellbeing framework and accompanying online survey to support teacher wellbeing and offered an invitation for staff to prioritise their wellbeing over a two-week period.

The invitation was well received, and participants were supported in developing a wellness goal for the period of the project, by either considering the results of the online survey to identify aspects of their wellbeing in need of attention, or by personally reflecting on aspects of their wellbeing requiring resolve.

Surprisingly, all participants found little value in the results of the survey, but when given the opportunity to autonomously reflect on aspects of their wellbeing, each could identify features that needed attention and consequent ways to address it.

While participants could identify problems and potential solutions, they were not taking steps to apply these strategies to foster their wellbeing in their everyday lives.

These same participants welcomed the opportunity to put into action their independently developed goal over a two-week period.

Erosion of identity impacts wellbeing

Participants commonly shared that their wellbeing was weakened through a devaluing of the teaching profession by administrators, their educational authority and broader society, along with the stressful impact of constant and unrealistic intensification of workloads.

Respondents were generally not opposed to new initiatives or evolving expectations but struggled to find the time and energy to always be doing more.

Teachers felt as though this pressure influenced their professional identity, or what Kelchtermans (2005) identifies as the "professional self", the ideas one has about their capacity as a teacher.

A teacher's self-esteem is impacted by feeling obliged to be doing more for their students and doing more to meet professional standards, but this comes at the cost of longer

work hours, negative impacts on personal relationships, and work-related stress (Bubb & Earley, 2004).

The July 2022 report from Monash University is the latest report that corresponds with the findings of my own study and highlights the struggles of Australian teachers.

This report revealed that 59 per cent of Australian teachers surveyed planned on leaving the profession in the next five years due to excessive and unsustainable workloads, wellbeing concerns and the status of the profession, and established that most teachers are not coping with the demands expected of them.

It is through strong union chapters, advocacy and collective bargaining that IEU members must continue to remind educational authorities that people matter and that enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in our schools is dependent on professional, supported and valued human resources.

The results

My own small-scale study to support teachers found participants were invested in applying their personally developed interventions.

After two weeks, they reported feeling calmer, happier, less stressed and having more control over their moods and actions.

Participants claimed this enhanced positive state was felt across various contexts, encompassing both home and school life.

They identified being calmer at school allowed them to be more organised and engaged in their work and foster improved relationships with their students, allowing them to be more responsive to the needs of their students.

Participants were inspired and motivated to persist with attending to their wellbeing beyond the term of the project.

Another finding from this study was that most participants claimed their newly energised mindset motivated them to adjust other aspects of their lives, beyond their initial action, in support of their wellbeing.

Not only did participants exercise their elevated sense of control over their thinking, relationships, and actions both at work and at home, but also with their involvement in the wellbeing project.

One participant said, "My goal was to get fitter by going for a 30-minute walk each morning. It felt good doing this and I stopped having a glass of wine the night before so I could wake better for my walk and less alcohol was also helping me being fitter anyway" (Participant 7).

Flow-on benefits

The goals participants were setting and acting on resulted in heightened self-regulation and a flow-on effect of employing secondary practices conducive to their wellbeing.

Armed with enriched self-regulation, Singh and Sharma (2018) recognised individuals are likely to seek out new experiences to support them in their desire to reach their goals.

This study acknowledges the significance of a teacher's individual capacity to isolate and target a specific personal intervention strategy to address their own wellbeing.

Through introspection of their wellbeing state, participants adopted an increasingly metacognitive stance to think about their thinking, applying mindful approaches of paying closer attention to their thoughts and emotions.

These findings align with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008) suggesting each teacher's wellbeing is influenced by their ability to choose and have control over their wellbeing action, by experiencing competence through achieving personal goals and by the relatedness of feeling valued and respected by others.

Taking initiative to improve wellbeing

Why then, if these participants were confidently aware of an aspect of their wellbeing that required attention, did they not act to address it prior to being involved in this study?

Participants responded to this question by referring to the gentle 'push' of being involved in the project, motivating them to adjust their mindset and see it as an opportunity to improve their wellbeing.

These responses highlight the key role of rousing self-regulation and promoting a growth mindset to reframe poorer states of wellbeing as an opportunity for flourishing.

I urge all IEU members to reflect on aspects of their life or work where they feel their wellbeing is being tested and to consider the actions required to address the difficulty.

Members can take steps towards applying this action to enhance their own wellbeing. You may be surprised at how a comparatively small action could grow into bigger than expected rewards, with the potential to improve personal wellbeing and influence the wellbeing of those around you.

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Damien Lynch is a long-time IEU member and has worked in education for over 25 years. He has worked in primary and secondary schools in the non-government and public sectors in Australia and overseas. Damien followed his initial teaching degree with a MEd in ESL/ Inclusive Education, and he recently graduated with a MEd in Guidance Counselling. In his 16th year as a teacher with Brisbane Catholic Education, Damien, continues to explore ways of developing and sharing his skills in attending to the wellbeing and engagement of all those in our school communities.

For a more detailed report on this project please contact dmlynch@bne.catholic.edu.au

A DAY IN THE LIFE SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

A new series in which we talk to IEU members about the diverse roles in education.



Rita Maher
School Counsellor, Senior Practitioner, Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, NSW

Rita has been a counsellor for five years. Before she took her counselling degree, she worked as a school support officer.

"Children needed someone to advocate for them. I noticed kids were being labelled 'naughty' or 'kids who don't follow instructions'. I felt like we needed to be curious about these kids and understand them," Rita said.

She always gets to work one hour before school starts so teachers can talk to her about any students they have concerns about, or in case she needs to debrief a teacher about a child.

There are set appointments throughout the day with children who have been referred by a parent and/or teacher. As Rita works in a primary school, parents must give permission for a child to see a counsellor.

"The day can vary dramatically", she says. "You have to be ready to go with the flow. If a child is emotionally distressed, you have to deal with that immediately."

Rita runs in-class sessions for the children as well as one-on-one sessions.

"Things have changed a lot over the years. It used to be a more structured day, but now we have to switch it up more, and that's a direct result of COVID."

Rita said the two years of lockdowns and COVID disruption have had a profound effect on some children.

"Children have struggled with being



Jeanne Appleton
Wellbeing Counsellor, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, NSW

Jeanne has been a counsellor in Catholic primary schools for 18 years. Previously, she was a social worker finding foster families for children. Working with children and families has been a lifelong passion. Even when she wasn't working, she was organising mothers' groups.

Her typical day starts half an hour before the official school day begins, connecting with teachers and other staff to check on students and ask about significant events. She always makes

sure it's a good time to take children out of class for a session, so as not to impact on their assessments, art and music classes or other special times.

Jeanne sees roughly six students a day, speaks with parents and checks in with teachers to see how things are going. Sometimes she has before or after-school meetings with parents, groups of teachers or external psychologists to collaborate on behaviour plans for children.

She sometimes runs a group for children to develop their social skills or talk about friendship groups and has done class presentations on mental health topics. Other work includes observations of children in the playground to see how they interact with other students, or in class to see how on or off task they might be.

"As a mandatory reporter, it's also my job to liaise with statutory bodies like the Department of Community Justice. As counsellors we need to keep updated with training on safeguarding children and the risk of significant harm," Jeanne said.

"The role has evolved since I began. There weren't as many counsellors in the diocese. I had to look after five schools rather than two. Now the role of counsellor is more embedded. Every primary school has a counsellor at least two days a week.

back in the classroom after long periods away.

"For some children it's the first time in two years they're back in class. They are tired. They can't emotionally regulate.

"They are used to more movement, more brain breaks. They don't have the ability to focus 9-3. They've missed that solid grounding."

Anxiety presentations are on the rise, again a symptom of COVID, she said.

"We've been doing group programs to build up resilience and connection. We can't see every child individually so we're providing whole-day programs that build emotional literacy.

"We're teaching them 'it's okay to ask for help'. This is a crucial message for the children to take with them throughout their lives."

Rita is undertaking a Master's degree in Child and Adolescent Mental Health and would love to get involved with initial teacher training.

"I want to educate teachers about how to work with children who present with challenges. Teachers and counsellors can work collaboratively to help children

with different learning needs.

"Teaching degrees teach teachers how to teach, but you can't teach a dysregulated child. We need to support teachers and give them the tools to enable all children to thrive.

"We need more counsellors in the primary system. It's a proactive investment that is really going to strengthen children as they go into high school.

"It's more productive to support them emotionally before they hit the teenage years than after.

"Normalising counselling in people's lives and building emotional literacy, that's what I really cherish."

As Rita is an advocate for children, the IEU advocates for her.

"If I want to be a voice for change, the union is a voice for change for me. It's important our work is sustainable. There is burnout among counsellors. Being in the IEU gives us a united voice to advocate for ourselves."

Sue Osborne Journalist

"We have more time in a school, we can spend more time with a child who has serious issues.

"Now there's a range of support services. There's a behavioural team that can come in if a class is really struggling. There are family clinics and there's support for counsellors too.

"Lead counsellors come and supervise us so we can better manage our work. An attendance team helps with attendance issues."

Staff shortages and long wait times to see a psychologist have increased the burden on school counsellors. Since COVID, Jeanne said she is seeing more students with anxiety.

"School was always a safe place, but for the last two years it hasn't been. Friends are what gets kids and when they couldn't see their friends, they would start to wonder, 'will they still like me?'"

"The war in Ukraine is in our loungerooms every night. Our caseloads are getting heavier. I'm seeing a lot of stress in teachers too."

Jeanne said being a school counsellor is a privilege. "It's the best job as I get to know children and work with them and their families, and with the very committed school staff.

"I help kids learn to regulate their emotions. If kids feel right, they can flourish, so our role is crucial."

Jeanne said her IEU membership was important as the union successfully negotiated the first ever enterprise agreement for counsellors in 2017 and a second one in 2021 that secured better pay and conditions.

Sue Osborne Journalist

"Things have changed a lot over the years. It used to be a more structured day, but now we have to switch it up more, and that's a direct result of COVID."

"It's the best job as I get to know children and work with them and their families, and with the very committed school staff."

Responding to students' climate change concerns

We've heard a lot about the physical impacts of climate change this year, but what about the psychological impacts on children? And how should school staff deal with them? Three experts in the field, Chloe Wattfern, Blanche Savage and Cybele Dey, explore the issue.

Climate change affects the lives of students across Australia and the world, mainly through extreme weather events. For example, 331 schools were closed at the peak of the floods in northern NSW earlier this year.

Students' exposure to climate-driven natural disasters increases their risk of post-traumatic stress disorder and they are at increased risk of mental distress on very hot days.

Simply knowing about climate change can cause young people fear and anxiety. A recent global survey of 10,000 young people (aged 16-25) found that over 80 per cent were worried about climate change, and more than 45 per cent reported that their feelings affected their day-to-day functioning.

The toll of climate change on school-aged children and young people's mental health is huge, but often overlooked. It is no wonder that many feel deep distress - they are on the front line, facing a future of escalating crises and ecological loss over which they have no control.

Climate distress is a valid response to a real threat, motivating students to take meaningful action and connect with others who share their concerns. However, it can also be debilitating.

The way adults respond to young people when they express concern or distress about climate change can shape how they cope. Teachers and school counsellors are often the first people school students come to with their fears, frustrations, and sadness about climate change.

There are many free resources online that can help school staff understand climate distress in their students and respond to them in appropriate ways.

Below are some practical points to help school staff support their students with climate distress.

Acknowledge climate feelings in ourselves

We each bring our own emotional responses to climate change, and we may have had our own experiences of ecological loss or natural disaster, from bushfire to drought or flood.

To respond well to a student's climate distress, adults need to have processed their own feelings.

There are many ways to do this: try writing them down (for example, start with, 'climate change makes me feel...'), or connecting with others through support networks like the climate cafes offered by Psychology for a Safe Climate.

Validate feelings in students

It is appropriate, but not universal, for school-aged children to be distressed about climate change. The climate crisis is real, and the best available scientific evidence predicts increased warming over coming decades.

False reassurance or avoiding students' distress about climate change is likely to worsen, not improve, their mental health. It is helpful when trusted adults, including teachers and school counsellors, listen and validate concerns while remaining interested and realistically hopeful.

Consider impact of family, culture and community

Climate change disproportionately affects those least responsible for it: families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, people with mental illness, people living in poverty or unstable housing, and First Nations people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have cared for their ancestral lands for millennia without causing climate change, and have a cultural duty to protect Country. They may experience a deep sense of shame and loss of culture in addition to the climate distress impacting other students.

At the same time, there are many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who have been sharing wisdom and speaking about climate injustice. Building an understanding of the stories of these leaders can be particularly valuable for maintaining and developing realistic hope.

Offer investigation, counter misinformation

Companies profiting from the ongoing extraction of fossil fuels have waged a substantial campaign of advertising and misinformation to prevent or delay effective action on climate change.





Collage made by Year 7 student during a climate change workshop: 'We are running out of time to take climate action'

As a result, families and community groups can differ in their attitudes towards climate change and its effects, putting teachers and students in a difficult position.

School staff can help students consider and access information, with awareness that the child or teenagers' family or local community may not yet accept scientific information about climate change. This is something that teachers already excel at by teaching critical thinking across the curriculum.

Offer developmentally appropriate support

Providing a safe space for students to share how they feel is an important first step towards supporting them to cope with climate distress.

Visual art and storytelling provide powerful ways of engaging with emotions that can be hard to articulate. They can also help students focus on hope and gratitude or encourage them to share why they care about climate change with their broader community.

One of the authors of this article, Chloe Watfern, recently led a project with high school students in Sydney where they created hand-made letters of thanks, which they sent to leaders acting on climate change. Each student told their recipient why climate action matters to them, and visually expressed themselves using collage (see picture).

Students benefit from taking action that is personally meaningful. The Australian Youth Coalition on Climate and School Strikes 4 Climate are examples of youth-led, not-for-profit groups providing opportunities for such action.

SeedMob is Australia's first Indigenous youth-led climate network. More suggestions are available from the Australian Psychological Society and Regenerating Australia.

For older students, teachers and adults can play the important role of allies and support them to take peaceful action without dictating the form it takes. This role is particularly important because many young people are disappointed and angry about the failure of older generations to prevent or address climate change.

When more is needed

Most distress about climate change is within the range of healthy responses and does not constitute a mental health disorder.

At times, however, students will also have a significant mental health disorder or experience such severe climate distress or inability to function that formal mental health assessment and treatment is needed.

If this is the case, teachers should refer the student to the wellbeing team at their school. These students will still need and benefit from school staff support while accessing additional mental health services.

The principles for distinguishing students who need further support are like those for other sources of distress, for example, if the student is having trouble functioning academically or socially; if the student is at risk of harming themselves or others; or if the student's worries are out of touch with current climate science.

Show genuine leadership and action

Leaders taking meaningful and visible action in response to the serious and increasing impacts of climate change is an important way of relieving distress for students. Examples of leadership in schools include sustainability activities, like installing solar panels or accessing renewable energy, recycling, tree-planting and supporting opportunities for students to engage in meaningful action.

Chloe Watfern is research associate at the Black Dog Institute and Maridulu Budyari Gumal SPHERE (Sydney Partnership for Health Education Research and Enterprise).

Blanche Savage is a Clinical Psychologist with 15 years' experience working in child and adolescent mental health.

Cybele Dey is a child and adolescent psychiatrist, co-chair, Doctors for the Environment Australia Mental Health working group and RANZCP NSW Climate Psychiatry Group, staff specialist, Sydney Children's Hospital Network and conjoint lecturer at UNSW.

Resources

Looking after our Mental Health in Response to Climate Change: climateresiliencenetwork.org

PsychologyForASafeClimate.org

Eco distress - for young people, Royal College of Psychiatrists: rcpsych.ac.uk

The Regenerators: theregenerators.co

An Existential Toolkit for Climate Justice Educators: existentialtoolkit.com

DEVELOPING TEACHER EFFICACY

What do teachers believe enhances their efficacy? Dr Graham Hendry from the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment at the University of Sydney, and Mary Ryan, Head of Professional Learning and Accreditation at Catholic Schools NSW, explore this question.

Why is teacher efficacy important? Teachers with higher efficacy are more motivated, have a greater sense of wellbeing and persevere in helping children to learn (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004; Zee & Koomen, 2016). There are two types of teacher efficacy: self-efficacy is a teacher's confidence or belief in their own capability in a particular area of practice (for example, in teaching reading); collective efficacy is a teacher's confidence or belief about their colleagues' and/or whole school's potential to be successful in a particular area of practice.

We already know that there is a positive relationship between both teachers' self and collective efficacy and students' achievement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). However, as vital as it is in education to understand how to support and develop teachers' efficacy, we know little about what teachers themselves think enhances their efficacy.

What we did

We conducted a small-scale interview study with 12 primary school teachers in western NSW about naturalistic influences that they thought had led to them developing their efficacy or made them feel more confident to teach reading. We focused on reading because the ability to read enables people to engage in education, acquire knowledge, and participate fully in society.

We held individual private interviews with teachers at their schools. Standard questions included: "Can you please tell me about a time when you have been successful in teaching reading?", "How did this experience influence your confidence (if at all) in your ability to teach reading?", and "What other

experiences or influences do you think have made you feel confident in your ability to teach reading?"

Both of us then read and re-read the interview transcripts to analyse them for 'themes', or things that were common to all teachers' views about what enhanced their efficacy in teaching reading. Five themes emerged from what teachers said.

"Teachers thought colleagues sharing their practice in a supportive way was an important influence that enhanced their confidence in their ability to teach reading."

Theme 1 - Observing children's success

Without exception, teachers thought that observing children's success in reading as a result of their teaching was an important influence that enhanced their confidence in their ability to teach reading. This was particularly the case when teachers helped children who were struggling to read to be successful; some teachers described such experiences as 'powerful'.

Teachers used a variety of systematic strategies and reading programs to help children learn to read and could see children were successful when they could read or meet certain benchmarks

or standards. Teachers could also see children were successful when they: were engaged or engrossed and expressed happiness or enjoyment in reading; wanted to read more; or were proud of their reading achievements.

Theme 2 - Sharing practice: Knowledge and modelling

Teachers thought that colleagues sharing their practice in a supportive way was an important influence that enhanced their confidence in their ability to teach reading. Supportive sharing of practice involved peers generously sharing their knowledge about and suggesting strategies for teaching reading, and/or sharing resources (for example, a book) about such strategies. It also involved peers who were successful in their teaching modelling or demonstrating strategies in real time in the classroom. As one teacher commented about their experience of observing a colleague teaching reading well, "if [they] can do that, I can do it too".

Theme 3 - Leadership support

Teachers also thought that support provided by their school leaders (which included principals and assistant principals) enhanced their confidence in their ability to teach reading. Similar to sharing practice, leadership support involved leaders being open to listening to teachers' requests for help to overcome challenges they were experiencing, then suggesting specific strategies or programs. Leadership support also involved principals showing trust in their staff that they could be successful in teaching reading. Indeed, in some schools, it involved principals modelling practice for their colleagues. We interpreted this kind of leadership support as mentoring characterised by autonomy support (Reeve, 2009).

Theme 4 - Professional learning - new knowledge and skill

Some teachers were also of the view that professional learning experiences (for example, promoted by their principal) that led them to

Enhanced self-efficacy



develop new knowledge and skill for teaching reading also enhanced their confidence in their ability to teach reading. However, teachers thought it was important that the reasons for using new programs should be clear so they could see how such programs related to their current practices.

Theme 5 - Whole-school culture

Finally, for teachers at some schools, a whole-school culture of a collaborative approach to teaching reading, in which all their colleagues felt responsible to teach in the same successful ways (for example, by using the same reading program), was an important influence that enhanced their confidence in their ability to teach reading. This whole-school culture evolved from leaders encouraging and showing trust in their teachers to make judgements and decisions, so that teachers felt 'safe' in attempting new strategies.

Summary: Our model

In summary, teachers experience natural growth in their efficacy for teaching reading through observing children's success in reading, receiving support from peers and school leaders through advice and modelling, and being trusted in their capability to implement new practices

by school leaders. Teachers also experience growth in their efficacy through professional learning in which they develop new knowledge and skills for teaching reading. Teachers' collective efficacy is strengthened when all these sources combine in a collaborative, whole-school culture. In hearing first-hand from teachers about the factors that enhanced their efficacy, we felt there was considerable overlap between our themes. We developed the model (see diagram) in which teachers' knowledge and skill continues to deepen and broaden throughout their careers.

Next steps

The next steps are to conduct a larger research study involving a survey of primary school teachers across NSW to further validate our themes. Based on our own and other research evidence, we intend to design practical, easy-to-use resources for schools to not only develop teachers' self and collective efficacy in teaching reading, but also teacher efficacy more broadly.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all the teachers interviewed for generously giving up their valuable time to participate in our

study. We also thank Dr Andrew Mellas for editing an earlier version of this article.

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Education in Full Colour



Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected at school, regardless of who they love or how they identify. But LGBTIQ+ people in Australia continue to be confronted with stigma, prejudice, and discrimination, Will Brodie writes.

The consequences of this are dire.

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia statistics from 2021 show that more than a quarter of LGBTIQ+ teens under the age of 17 and almost half of all trans people between 14 and 25 have attempted suicide.

Activist and former teacher (and IEU member) Suzi Taylor can't accept these terrible numbers. She's challenging them head on with her Full Colour Project, which aims to "eliminate LGBTIQ+ discrimination and end the disproportionate rates of LGBTIQ+ youth suicide".

"Our goal is to make schools and workplaces consistently safe, respectful, inclusive spaces, and to empower LGBTIQ+ youth," Taylor said.

"We see schools, in particular, as the starting point for attitudinal change."

Taylor made the documentary *Love In Full Colour* in 2012, after she read about the suicides of American queer students. A school district was accused of having "a culture of teachers and school leaders turning a blind eye to homophobic and transphobic bullying", and of the schools "lacking any kind of inclusive messaging or curriculum".

It resonated for Taylor. During her education "prejudice was normalised" and LGBTIQ+ people were "invisible". As a queer teacher herself, she hadn't known how to find resources to change these unacceptable 'norms'.

"I taught in schools where I didn't feel safe to be honest about myself."

That's crucial because "so much of teaching is about giving of yourself".

She says the US story got her thinking about education in Australia "and whether educators and principals are held accountable for the culture they're creating - that's where all these issues start".

Queer Formal

Taylor didn't want to "just chronicle tales of bullying". When she discovered the Same Sex Formal (subsequently renamed Queer Formal), she was excited.

"It was created for all the queer teens who couldn't attend their own school formals or debutante balls, either because they were overtly forbidden from bringing a same-sex partner or because they just knew they wouldn't feel welcome.

"I knew immediately that the Queer Formal could be a positive, life-affirming event - and it could be an empowering way to explore some tough subject matter."

Taylor invited Queer Formal attendees to participate in a documentary and within a week, she had 10 young people, spanning the spectrum of gender identity from widely varying schools, localities, and economic and religious backgrounds.

"I knew that if I could find a way to weave their stories together, we'd have a unique window into the lives and perspectives of queer teenagers in Melbourne, 2012."

Love in Full Colour, now celebrating its 10th birthday, was that window. Now Taylor is completing a sequel, *10 Years in Full Colour*, revisiting her original subjects.

Show of support

Taylor says there is often an audible gasp amongst audiences when participant Harry shares the following anecdote.

"My school was quite religious. At one point one of the teachers put up posters all around the school with two guys holding hands and a big cross through it."

However, in the upcoming sequel, Harry provides a heart-warming postscript:

"The headmistress was showing parents around the school and those posters were all around the place and the parents said, 'Oh, don't you support gay kids here?' and the headmistress didn't know that the teacher had put all these posters around.

"And the teacher got into big trouble for it and was forced to make up 10 apology letters to the 10 people who had complained. And a session was held at lunchtime between the teacher and these people (who complained) but instead of those 10 people turning up, half the school turned up to make a stance against what this teacher had done!

"It was completely overwhelming for me, just to know how many people were so supportive and just didn't accept this perspective the teacher was forcing on people."

Taylor says positive LGBTI content must be embedded "on a daily basis and be part of what a school represents".

Many participants in *Love in Full Colour* discussed depression and suicidality, after suffering rejection, stigma

and discrimination at home or school. Tragically, one participant took his own life.

Taylor says prejudice is not always overt. It's often insidious.

"It's easy to call out homophobia and transphobia when it's explicitly expressed - a locker room slur here, a punch there.

"But it's much harder to point to the stuff that's not there every time a teacher doesn't respond to homophobic bullying. Every time a queer history is not included in the curriculum. Every time a queer story does not make it onto TV or onto the shelves of the school library."

Turning a blind eye

Participant Nae says, "teachers would just kind of pretend that there weren't any gay kids at the school".

Nae was harassed via threatening notes left in their school locker and abusive text messages sent at night - and the year level coordinator's response was: "I don't think we can do anything about it".

"It's probably more that the school felt that the most politically correct way to deal with things was to turn a blind eye to it. But it ended up having the effect where it was actually really negative. Towards straight kids, it sends a message that being gay or trans is something bad and it's OK to pick on those people because no one's going to try and stop you," Nae says.

Taylor says "education for the educators" is vital. So is leadership. She cites an independent religious school and an outer-suburban high school as unexpected exemplars. One was the first Victorian school to institute a Gay Straight

Alliance - and hung a self-portrait of a trans student in the front office. The other championed a Wear It Purple sports day supporting queer and trans students at a multicultural and religiously diverse campus.

Small things also made a big difference: "I asked them all about the teachers who had an impact and their faces just lit up talking about them. Sometimes it was just someone who noticed they were a bit down and had a kind word."

Participant Maddy says a teacher helped them survive the "six-year bad dream" of high school by saying, "It will get better for you. You are much better than you think, and you can come and talk to me at any time."

Maddy is now working in education, and they are noticing change.

"I was teaching a Grade 5/6 class and the topic of sexuality came up in a lesson and every single one of the kids said, 'I wouldn't care if someone was gay.'"

"One girl said, 'If my brother was gay, I wouldn't hate him, I'd give him a coming out party!' I want to see more of that."

Maddy added, "I want to be one of those teachers that kids can talk to and trust. I want to help them."

More information

You can watch *Love In Full Colour* and support the planned sequel *10 Years In Full Colour* at: suzitaylor.net/the-full-colour-project

On social media follow at: [instagram.com/fullcolourproject](https://www.instagram.com/fullcolourproject)

"I asked them all about the teachers that had an impact and their faces just lit up talking about them."

If it's not Super, it's not Supervision

Supporting principals and educational leaders

Teachers live and work in unprecedented times, Dr John Lee writes. Schools are under considerable pressure, intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher shortages and multiple demands from stakeholders.

Professional supervision offers a regular opportunity for principals and educational leaders to pause, reflect and consider action. The number of principals engaging in supervision is on the rise; however, it remains unknown to many, and subtle barriers can work against leaders accessing this resource.

What is supervision?

"If it's not a super meeting of visionaries, then it is not supervision," writes educator and professional supervisor Michael Paterson.

Supervision should be an uplifting experience in which the educational leader can reflect on the joys, sorrows, struggles and highlights of their work. What gets discussed in a supervision session is in the hands of the educational leader.

Professional supervision is not line management by the next leader up the ladder or from the employer's representative. The supervision described in this article has nothing to do with performance or management of poor performers by head office.

Similarly, it is not counselling, coaching, therapy, spiritual direction or having a cleansing ale or a glass of vino with a colleague or mentor. Each of these activities are valuable, but they are not supervision.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of myths and ignorance about supervision in our profession. Here is an example of a conversation between a principal and an employer representative:

Principal: "I'd like to engage a professional supervisor to support my reflective practice. This is their name and this is the cost. Are you prepared to pay?"

Employer: "Yes, of course we will pay. [Short pause] I am sorry to hear that you are not coping."

There are some employers who are switched on about supervision. They know principals need support from

someone who is skilled, trained and independent.

Anyone can say 'Come to me for supervision' but beware. Supervision should be by a trained, accredited and ethical professional who is in good standing as a Supervisor within a professional association.

Professional supervision comes in many varieties including clinical and pastoral.

Principals and other education leaders often have some awareness of supervision because the school counsellor or psychologist goes off site for it and the school pays the invoice. This is known as clinical supervision and may involve reflection on difficult 'cases' and how to respond to them.

The professional supervision accessed by principals is not clinical but pastoral. The focus is not on difficult 'cases' but on the principal or educational leader, their wellbeing and reflective practice.

Paterson describes pastoral supervision as the intentional dialogue between soul, role and context.

Supervision supports the soulful living of a role in a particular context.

I know principals who engage in supervision themselves then bring their supervisor to school once a term to offer supervision to members of the leadership team.

Other principals include the leaders of the wellbeing/pastoral team for a day visit each term. This may involve a group supervision session as well as individual sessions. What can happen over time is a deepening in reflective practice, shared vision and maintaining a contemplative stance while better caring for students and staff.

Principals and education leaders frequently find professional supervision a valuable place for confidential dialogue that deepens reflective practice and increases job satisfaction.

My session

This morning was an early start for me for a supervision session on Zoom with a principal in rural Australia. This highly regarded, experienced principal was referred to me by the head of his employing authority about a year ago. As we wrapped up the session the principal reflected on his insights from our hour and said: "I wish I had engaged a supervisor decades ago."

Principals and educational leaders have a regular time in their calendar that they protect fiercely. Once a month or twice a term they leave school early or close the door and sit down with their professional supervisor, in person or online. It is not for problem counselling, but it is taking an hour to hear their own voice.

In this vital space in their lives, they pause to breathe and consider how soul, role and context are relating in

their life changing work of educating the rising generations.

The positive impacts on individuals and communities are not to be underestimated. The process of supervision nurtures wisdom and forms courageous, prophetic leaders.

How it works

What does 'super supervision' look like for principals and educational leaders? It should include:

- principal/leader experiences hospitality and unconditional positive regard
- principal/leader and their agenda are at the centre
- supervision is built on relationship, ethics, trust and appropriate confidentiality
- vulnerability is welcomed as a gift
- supervision is a regular event, a meeting of visionary professionals in aid of a wider view
- reflection on the past, in the present to create a better future for the school
- supervision interrupts practice and questions assumptions
- supervision chases insight.

Supervision is not about giving advice, fixing, performance, surveillance or snooping around.

Finding a supervisor

Principals and educational leaders can find good supervisors via referral and word of mouth. There are registers of trained and accredited professional supervisors including Transforming Practices Inc (www.transformingpractices.org - training involves theory plus 120 hours of supervised practice) and Australasian Association of Supervision (AAOS:

www.supervision.org - theory plus 80 hours of supervised practice).

Members of Transforming Practices are all AAOS Supervisors and have additional experience as part of their Community of Practice.

Skilled professional supervisors come from diverse backgrounds: education, psychology, counselling, chaplaincy, ministry and coaching. While in-person supervision is great, online supervision using Zoom means that distance is no longer a barrier to accessing high quality supervision.

One of the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2012-2017) was the recommendation that supervision be mandatory for priests and others in pastoral ministry. So there are plenty of tertiary institutions producing pastoral supervisors with sparkling qualifications but as little as 10 hours of supervised professional practice. When seeking a supervisor, look around, do your research, investigate their experience and have a session or two to see if this person is the right one for you.

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Dr John Lee has been a member of the IEU for 40 years. He now lives his vocation through a creative portfolio of educational commitments including consulting and supervision as well as teaching part time at Christian Brothers' High School, Lewisham.

Read more at:

www.inspiringeducators.com.au

Alternatives to Violence Project



IEU members Heather Millhouse and Frances Missen from Jabiru Community College share their experience delivering an Alternatives to Violence Project workshop, and how such programs benefit their school.

In July this year we ran an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshop focusing on workplace trust, to education workers from around Australia, at the Doing Schools Differently conference in Adelaide on the Kaurna nation.

The Doing Schools Differently conference organised by the Australian Association of Flexible and Inclusive Education (AAFIE) brings together a range of participants from across education, academia, social work and more to discuss flexible and alternative learning.

We wanted the workshop to be experiential, as this is one of the most useful aspects of the AVP.

Civil rights movement origins

AVP originated in American prisons during the 1970s.

The Civil Rights movement in the United States, under Martin Luther King's leadership in the 1950s and 60s, used non-violent strategies that were also used by India's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi.

Many activists in the movement had training in civil disobedience, direct action and non-violence, guided by the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), other peace church groups and Gandhian networks.

Quakers around the world have always been involved in social justice issues, including prison reform, the abolition of capital punishment and visiting prisoners.

For example, in 1973 there were big increases in drug arrests and prosecutions in New York, disproportionately targeting the poor and people of colour, which led to a rapid increase in the prison population at New York's Greenhaven prison.

In response, some 'lifers' (people who were incarcerated

for life) approached the New York Quaker Project on Community Conflict and asked them to facilitate workshops within the prison, centred on non-violent responses to conflict.

Early AVP facilitator and trainer from New York Steve Angell said, "The first workshop (in 1975) was very much centred on individuals telling stories of how they approached potentially violent situations with non-violence."

AVP was incorporated as a separate organisation to Quakers and continues to be an independent, international association of volunteers.

Angell came to Brisbane in 1991 at the invitation of Lou Hunter and Ron Smith, after which AVP spread around Australia.

There are currently more than 60 countries offering AVP workshops across the globe.

AVP Program at Jabiru

We began running AVP camps at Jabiru Community College in 2015.

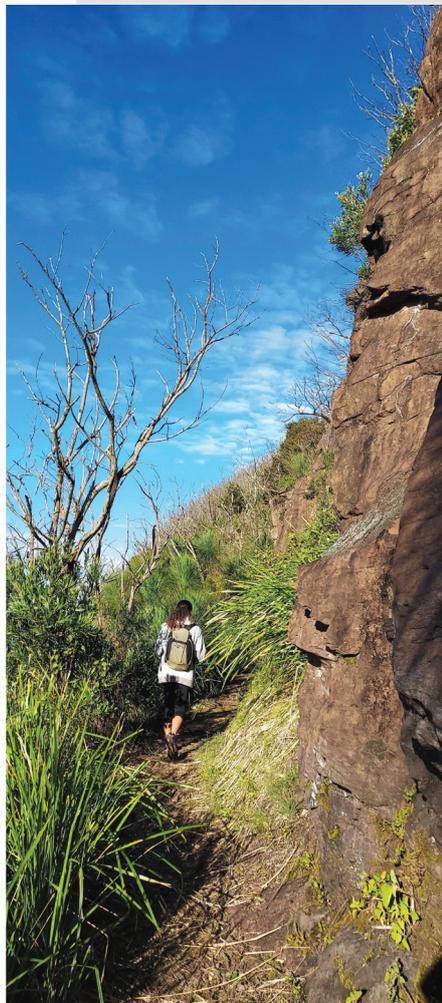
Jabiru Community College is a small, independent special assistance school of 80 young people and 25 staff, located in Zillmere in north Brisbane, on Jaggara and Turrabul country.

Previously, we had tried to run AVP sessions and programs onsite, but soon realised we needed an off-site setting to give everyone a better chance to connect and work together through the various sessions as a group.

As a result, our Jabiru Community College AVP Camp Program was developed.

We run between two to four camps per year at The Outlook Boonah, which is a Queensland Government run outdoor adventure and training facility, funded through Youth Justice.

Because of The Outlook's long history of training community workers, we were able to incorporate adventure and nature-based experiences such as bushwalking,



canoeing, and ropes courses with the AVP sessions.

This has enabled us to develop a learning program, that is centred on non-violence, grounded in nature and highly experiential.

Kindness and care were intentionally built in as part of our program, because many of the young people we work with have lived experience of trauma.

The workshops explore significant issues such as violence and we work to ensure that it is done in a safe and meaningful way.

We also want young people to learn how to support kindness and care in their daily activities.

Delicious and nutritious food is provided and we eat together as a group.

Finding small ways to celebrate the beauty of nature through activities like stargazing and watching the sun set is also very important to the program.

During the program, we explore important topics and unpack how the AVP mandala can be used to effectively deal with real-life conflicts and difficulties.

The camps run for three days, and we generally have no more than eight young people attending.

We typically run the program with three AVP trained facilitators and invite school staff to attend if we require more support.

On occasion volunteer pre-service teachers from the University of Queensland participate in this work, also helping us with food preparation and clean-up.

As we have been running these programs for almost eight years, they have become an important element of the school's curriculum. We have facilitated two AVP training programs for Jabiru staff over the eight years, ensuring they are familiar with the content and style of the camps.

The camps have a basic structure we have honed and refined through trial and error. For each camp we pick

specific themes to explore, based on the young people who are participating.

Love, leadership, care, trust and belonging are some examples of themes we have on different programs.

The importance of building relationships

A central part of both the AVP and our school's ethos is the importance of relationships.

The AVP mandala gives people a framework for responding to conflict and difficulty in all types of relationships and human interactions.

Because of our commitment to the importance of AVP, its ways of working have become part of our school's culture and the processes of AVP can be found across different aspects of the work undertaken in the school.

A few young people who have attended multiple camps have gone on to attend AVP Community Workshops, which are held at Lotus Place, Stones Corner, on weekends.

Some participants have also helped facilitate some further programs in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, because they are keen to be part of AVP in their post-school lives. So we celebrate these connections.

Exploring trust and what it means

When designing the Trust in the Workplace workshop for the Doing Schools Differently forum, we wanted to give participants a chance to really understand what trust meant for them and what helps to build or undermine it in a work context.

A critical part of AVP is the principle that everyone is a teacher as well as a learner and that information and ideas come from the participants.

We facilitated a mix of large group, small group and pair exercises to help participants consider trust from a range of different perspectives.

Participants said they felt more connected to one another after the workshop and a few people reported they were able to use the activities to explore a real-life situation they were wrestling with in their workplace.

More information

Find out about future AAFIE events at www.aafie.org.au

Learn more about AVP programs at www.avpaustralia.org

Heather Millhouse

Heather has taught non-violence as a path to peace to school students since the early 1990s. She has taught Peace Education, a focus of the UN International Decade for the Culture of Peace, at the University of Queensland, School of Education for six years.

Since then, Heather has been teaching courses on Educational Psychology, Educational Sociology, Adolescents at Risk, and Inclusion and Diversity at UQ and Indigenous Perspectives in Education at QUT. During those years, she has also worked for the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) Queensland, co-facilitating workshops in the community, in Correctional Centres in south-eastern Queensland and in the Youth Detention Centre in Brisbane. Since 2015, Heather has been employed at Jabiru Community College to support the AVP camp program and other non-violent school-based initiatives.

Frances Missen

Frances has worked in Flexible Learning Centres for 14 years, at both Albert Park Flexible Learning Centre and Jabiru Community College. She has a background in social work, narrative practice, adventure based learning and constructivist education. Frances is currently a Co-Principal at Jabiru Community College.

Targets are good. Action is better.



We've divested from some of the big fossil fuel companies.

NGS Super is committed to taking action to address climate change and create a better future for our members. That's why we recently divested from some of the big fossil fuel companies. We're on our way towards our goal of a carbon-neutral portfolio by 2030.

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