

IEUA 2009 REPORT

It has been a big year for the IEUA Federal Office which officially established its residence in Unit 10, 40 Brisbane Avenue, Canberra in January 2009. In April, Jennie Goodwin commenced in the Canberra office as Finance Administration Officer and then on 25 June the position of the second Assistant Federal Secretary was formally filled by Anthony Odgers. Anthony will remain in the VIEU offices and will work from that branch in line with the philosophy which the Federal Executive has implemented since considering the operation of a national union.

The following provides a detail summary of the issues and challenges which the IEUA and its committees have been addressing during the year:

1. EDUCATION ISSUES

1.1 National Partnerships

An additional form of Federal Government educational funding payments - National Partnerships (NP) - have been agreed and will now fund specific projects in 2010 in States/Territories on nationally-significant reforms. In particular, NPs have been agreed upon for *Quality Teaching, Numeracy and Literacy, Low SES, Indigenous Education and Early Childhood Education*. From the broad agreed objectives, all stakeholders within the state/territories are to develop an Implementation Agreement outlining the processes on how the various objectives will be achieved.

Funding will be provided on two levels – initially as facilitation and then upon completion as ‘reward’.

Difficulties have been experienced by the Non-Government employers and the IEUA branches (to varying extents) with regard to input and consultation around the Implementation Agreements. The Federal Office has been informed that it is an expectation that all stakeholders including the education unions be involved in the discussions around the implementation agreements. Correspondence has been forwarded to the State Ministers outlining the levels of exclusion and branches are currently following this up with their relevant state education minister.

1.2 Teach for Australia

On 14 May 2009, the Federal Government launched the trialling of the *Teach for Australia* initiative. The program falls within the National Partnership for Quality Teaching where funding is provided and will be conducted by the independent non profit organisation “*Teach for Australia*” which works with Government and business partners.

The Federal Office met with representatives from DP Julia Gillard’s office to discuss the initiative and raise our concerns.

We were informed that the first intake of 75 graduates will be placed in Victorian Government schools in 2010. It is a two year process containing eight weeks of induction. Associates will undertake further course work during the two years. Associates will be provided with *VIT Permission to Teach* and will not be fully registered until they have full qualifications. Associates will work as 0.8 FTE within

the selected school, with their own classes. A university tutor as well as a teacher mentor(s) will be assigned.

(i) Interaction with non-government sector

Currently the scheme is not involving the non-government sector, but may do so in the future. As with all projects under the National Partnership Agreements, there will be a requirement on the employers to co-invest in any project and thus this may deter many of the independent employers from the program.

(ii) Recognition after two year program

Associates completing all requirements of the two-year program will graduate with a Graduate Diploma of Education.

(iii) Interaction with other States' Registration/Accreditation Bodies.

Many of the State/Territory Registration/Accreditation Bodies have indicated that while they appeared open for continued discussion on the initiative, applicants employed under this project must have an approved teaching qualification or be enrolled in an approved teacher education course.

1.3 Quality Teaching



The IEUA Quality Teaching Framework document was launched in May 2009 as a proactive response to the debate regarding quality teaching. The framework is based on the principle that quality teaching is the shared responsibility of a number of stakeholders - teachers, the teaching profession, schools and systems and government both at State and Federal level.

The three essential and basic components of quality teaching have been identified and documented as:

- Building quality teacher capacity
- Delivering quality career pathways
- Establishing quality learning outcomes.

Material on these elements are available at www.ieu.org.au/214html

1.4 School Reporting

The Federal Government development of the “My School” web page is still underway. The website will provide information on a ranking basis of “like schools” using 17 factors including student population criteria.

It has been reported that the website will be “read only” to reduce the capacity for media to cut and paste and create tables. Though it is recognised that there are still capacities under FOI to gain a full set of data directly from ACARA.

DEEWR has acknowledged that many sections will not be completed initially and that an education program will be needed.

(i) Campaign - School Reporting – What is Best for Students and Parents?

The Federal office had identified a real need to educate our members and parents on the inadequacies of school league tables and to debunk the myth which surrounds any protest regarding league tables. Federal executive will now consider within their Branch's current capacity the following elements for a 2010 campaign:

(a) Member Education

The flyer “**School Reporting – What is best for students and parents?**” has been developed and distributed to branches and provides clear statements on the value of reporting and assessment, cites international experiences regarding the ranking of schools and provides information about freedom of press issues.

(b) Political Action

The federal office is currently developing a one page draft letter for modification and use by Chapter representatives in correspondence to local state and federal MPs.

The draft letter will allow chapters to outline the specific nature of their schools, their concerns and include reference to international experience, as well as seeking commitment from the MP to ensure that schools within their electorate are not publically “shamed” because of improper ranking processes.

(c) Website

Continued development of the IEUA website to ensure links on articles and research regarding the problem, highlight the IEUA policy position. Individual branches can develop a direct link to the information page on the federal website and advertise it.

1.5 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

On 28 September 2009, The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) agreed to establish the AITSL to “*provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.*”

The Board will take responsibility for national standards and for driving professional development for teachers and school leaders. The roles of the new Institute will be to:

- develop and oversee a set of national standards for teaching and school leadership and implement an agreed system of national accreditation of teachers based on these standards; and
- promote excellence and national leadership in the professional development of teachers and school leaders.

It is with great regret that MCEECDYA decided only to provide one position on the board for the education unions – IEUA or AEU.

The IEUA has nominated the Federal Secretary for the position on the board and we are in discussions with AEU who has also nominated their Federal President.

In addition to the AITSL board, there will be four committees established – to feed into the work of the Board on pre-service, national standards, professional development and school leadership. Composition of committees is yet to be outlined.

1.6 Early Childhood Education



The Early Childhood Education sector has experienced a considerable number of reforms and the IEUA with the support of the QNT and NSW/ACT early childhood branches has contributed to many of the inquiries, in particular:

- Early Years Learning Framework
- National Quality Framework
- Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Education and Care Quality Reforms
- Senate Inquiry into the provision of Childcare.

These submissions are located on the IEUA website. www.ieu.org.au

The most significant impact to the early childhood education and care sector will be the introduction of the **Universal Access to Early Childhood Education** initiative. All states and territories have now signed Bilateral Agreements with the Australian Government to deliver universal access to early childhood education by 2013 which commits the Australian Government to \$970 million of funding to achieve universal access. Under the initiative, all Australian children will have access to a quality early childhood education program by 2013. These programs will be delivered in a diversity of settings by a university qualified early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year in the year before formal schooling.

In particular for Queensland, the Education and Training Minister Geoff Wilson has announced that a key area for universal access will be that long day care centres around Queensland will, for the first time, be eligible to access new state funding to deliver kindergarten programs by university qualified early childhood teachers.

Starting in early 2010, a pilot program will be run with up to 100 long day care centres to deliver kindergarten programs. In addition to funding for long day care centres, the Minister also confirmed other initiatives to help achieve universal access to kindergarten for Queensland children, including:

- Co-location of new kindergarten services on state school sites as a priority;
- C&K will operate the majority of services on state school sites;
- Capital funding of up to 75% of the agreed construction costs to build or extend kindergarten services on non-state school sites.

With regard to existing DECKAS funding model, this will be maintained for 2010, with a new model being introduced in 2011. However, the Education Minister has indicated that existing services who currently receive DECKAS funding will not receive less funding at the point of transition to the new scheme from 1 January 2011.

1.7 Reflecting Diversity – Our Schools, Our Future

The Federal Government has foreshadowed that the Commonwealth review of school funding will commence in 2010. The IEUA continues to be a strong advocate for well-funded schools, both within government and non-government sectors.

Many IEUA Branches, including QNT have been involved in the development of a brochure *Reflecting Diversity: Our Schools, Our Future* to outline our union's views on education policy and funding for non-government schools. This brochure emphasises particularly the diverse role of our members' work within non-government education. The brochures have been positively received from various groups of members, employers, principals and politicians.

(a) National Symposium

A full day national symposium on diversity in education will be held on 17th March 2010 in Canberra in order to provide opportunities for debate and discussion on the need for the recognition of diversity within the Australian education system and appropriate non-discriminatory policies in relation to school funding which recognises, celebrates and supports greater diversity and creates a greater sense of cohesion in our community.

It was proposed that the full one day symposium would be conducted for identified representatives of national/state organisations including employer authorities, church/community groups and Branch organisers and officers. Total attendance is estimated at 200.

It is envisaged that the symposium could be opened by the Deputy PM Julia Gillard. As well, a specially undertaken research project conducted by the Edmund Rice Foundation on non-government schools and school cohesion could be launched and discussed at the symposium. This would be followed by a Guest Speaker Panel.

The National Officers' seminar would follow the next day to provide Branch organisers and officers an opportunity to debate and strategise the outcomes of the symposium.

1.8 Indigenous Education

An IEUA policy statement on *Indigenous Education* has been developed by the Education Committee and can be found at <http://www.ieu.org.au/210.html>. Further, an *IEUA Indigenous Issues Committee* was endorsed and branches have been asked to nominate committee membership. A draft charter for this committee has also been developed for the committee's consideration at its first meeting.

1.9 Senate Inquiry into International Student Welfare

Through the coordinated work of NSW/ACT, QLD/NT and VIEU Branches, the IEUA has made a submission to the *Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Committee Inquiry into International Student Welfare*. The submission outlines the serious concerns held around the employment practices and the inconsistent and inefficient regulation of this sector.

The submission questions the overall emphasis on the attainment of profit in conflict with the attainment of quality education and support for the students. Full copy of the submission is located at <http://www.ieu.org.au/228.html>

1.10 National Curriculum

National Curriculum issues are still ongoing and IEUA has remained active in the all national forums and state forums regarding the matter.

1.11 Building the Education Revolution

The IEUA is currently developing a submission into the outcomes of the building education revolution.

2 Industrial Issues

2.1 Federal Industrial Relations System

While the notion of a new industrial relations system which would restore collective bargaining rights was welcomed with anticipation at the beginning of this year, the national union and its branches remained concerned regarding the elements of a national system of laws which would strip away some of the rights of employees employed under state awards.

Our Union had actively participated in peak level discussions with the ACTU who were involved in discussions with the Federal Government about the new laws to try to ensure the elements of protections were legislated.

The Fair Work Act was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate and was put into place on 1 July 2009.

Discussions have continued between State and Federal Governments regarding the referral of IR powers to the federal government.

Tasmania and South Australia have decided to refer their powers for all employees other than public servants. Victoria, ACT and Northern Territory are of course already in the federal system.

The Queensland Government has recently introduced a bill into parliament referring the State's IR powers to Federal Government

State and local government employees and law enforcement officers are excluded from the referral, but Queensland IR Minister Cameron Dick said in his second reading speech *“the bill does extend coverage to some commercial elements of the public sector including government-owned corporations”*.

The bill's Explanatory Statement reveals that the States have secured an additional safeguard through the inter-governmental agreement they will all sign and which underpins the bill. According to the statement, the agreement provides that *“if a Commonwealth proposal or amendment to the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cwth) is considered by one or more of the referring States or the Territories to undermine the fundamental workplace relations principles, that proposal or amendment will not*

proceed unless it is endorsed by a two-thirds majority of referring States, the Territories and the Commonwealth".

2.2 Modern Awards

Whilst the position that no worker would be disadvantaged by a move to the federal system, it started to become apparent that not all would be delivered as the modernisation of awards commenced this year.

The Industrial Committee – particularly John Spriggs QLDNT, Anthony Odgers VIEU and Carole Mathews NSW/ACT have been extensively involved in negotiations, the writing of submissions and appearing at proceedings before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission concerning the making of modern awards to cover employees in educational services, including early childhood centres, ELICOS and other post –secondary colleges.

The Commission has now issued exposure drafts of the separate awards for post secondary institutions, teachers in schools, school support staff and in late September, handed down a decision in respect of early childhood teachers employed in preschools and kindergartens and long day care centres, in varying the earlier award entitled Teachers in Educational Services to include early childhood teachers as well as teachers in schools.

This established a good principle for the sector as it recognises the professional status of teachers in early childhood education.

The final decision and complexion of the Awards will need to be determined by 4 December 2009.

It is important to note that Modern Awards reflect the federal award standards which are well below that in our current state awards or that in our collective bargaining agreements.

It is imperative that our members remain vigilant to ensure that there is no diminution of conditions and standards. Federal Collective bargaining agreements must enhance and protect standards and conditions already existing in our schools and centres.

2.3 Fair Work Education and Information Project

The IEUA has been successful in the application for a grant under the Fair Work Education and Information Project. The grant funding has been provided by DEEWR for the education of employees and employers in understanding the new workplace relations laws and their practical application, with particular focus on collective bargaining. A schedule of information sessions for members and employees is now currently being implemented across the Branches to February 2010.

3. Organising and Campaigning Issues

(a) 2009 National Officers' Seminar "*Shaping our Future in Times of Change*"



This year's National Officers' Seminar was opened by Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, on the 2 April. The focus of the seminar and the workshops was to analyse the federal education agenda, consider the professional, industrial and equity implications arising from it and plan strategies which deliver the best outcomes for our members.

(b) 2009 Organiser Workshop – "*Developing Stronger Collectives In Low Organised Schools*"

In September, about 30 organisers from the various Branches met to consider the question: "**What can be done within and across branches to develop stronger collectives in low or hard to organise schools?**"

In doing so, participants were provided with an opportunity to identify common issues and best practice strategies associated with developing low organised schools. Participants were also provided with opportunities to develop strategies using the Fair Work Act as an organising tool and time to consider a developmental/campaign plan.



In addition to the various training and professional development opportunities developed, the Organising Campaigning Committee has developed a charter of operation.

4 Women and Equity Issues



The Women and Equity Committee has continued to have a strong focus on workplace equity and inclusiveness as well as enhancing workplace access to paid maternity leave and family friendly work practices across Australia. On 25 February 2009, the Committee met with MP Sharron Jackson Member for Hasluck and Chair of Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations to discuss elements of the Pay Equity Inquiry and outlined the IEUA submission.

In particular, the committee has also been active with submissions into the following inquiries:

- Paid Parental Leave – Support for New Born Children
- Pay Equity and Associated Issues
- The Effectiveness of the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 in eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equity
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace.

In addition, the committee has been active in the Paid Paternal leave with the development of “Letters to the Editor Kit” and a “Letters to Parliamentarian Kit” for use with members in Branches as well as developing supporting material for “Equal Pay Day”.

5 International Issues

5.1 17th Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers’ Teachers Forum: Educators for the Future

The 17th Teachers Forum was held at Kuala Lumpur on 15-19 June 2009 and was attended by representatives of NSW/ACT Branch and the Federal Office. The forum was seen as an open platform for teachers and their union representatives from a variety of countries in the Commonwealth to address issues and share best practices, in the context of the overarching conference theme *Educators for the Future: Commonwealth Perspectives*. The forum was attended by about 200 delegates representing various teaching organisations. The forum drew upon expertise and insights across the countries to provide evidence-led understanding of educational practices and to address other pressing needs. It also provided an opportunity for teachers to deliberate issues relating to teacher professionalism, training and quality, as well as to suggest strategies to address them.

5.2 Fijian Teachers Union.

In further negative developments this year for our Fijian Teacher colleagues, Fiji Public Service Commission [PSC] terminated the employment of Tevita Koroi, President of the Fijian Teachers’ Association (FTA) and President of the Council of Pacific Education, from his position as a civil servant and principal of his school for performing his duties as a trade union leader.

The abolition of the country’s Constitution, the abolition of the Fiji’s High Court, Appeals Court, Supreme Court and the Public Service Appeals Board denies Tevita Koroi the rights to challenge this decision.

The Federal Office met with Federal Minister Duncan Kerr, Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Affairs on 13 May 2009 to discuss Tevita’s dismissal and the status of affairs in Fiji. As a result of this meeting a letter of support was sent to the FTA by IEUA. In addition, the IEUA wrote to the Archbishop of Suva, Petero Mataka, who was currently co-chairing the National Council for Building a Better Fiji informing him of our concerns and calling for the reinstatement of the judiciary and for the restoration of the Constitution thus safeguarding the protections of the human rights of all Fijians.

In addition, branches endorsed a set of circulated resolutions which:

- Called upon the Archbishop of Suva to urgently work for the restoration of democracy and the reinstatement of the judiciary; and
- Called upon the Public Service Commission to reinstate Tevita Koroi to his position as civil servant and principal of his school.

Unfortunately, the situation remains unchanged.

5.3 Asian Pacific Education International Conference

The 6th EI – Asia Pacific Regional Conference was held in Bangkok from 27-30 September 2009. This year's theme focused on the "*Asian Pacific Teacher Organisations Response to Global Crisis*". Prior to the Conference, 62 women delegates from 30 organisations in 16 countries, many of whom belonged to the Council of Pacific Education, met as part of the Education International Caucus of the Women in the Asia Pacific Region to discuss the Impact of the Global Crisis on Gender Equality in the region.



The key objectives of the caucus were to:

- Discuss the impact of the GFC in the Asia Pacific Regions and devise strategies to minimise the impact;
- Discuss current major issues pertaining to the gender equality in the Asia Pacific region and formulate strategies to address them;
- Exchange information on women's networks in the Asia Pacific Region and their role in promoting the status of women in trade unions, education and society;
- Discuss strategies to link sub-regional networks and to improve coordinated action; and
- Formulate strategies to ensure effective participation of women in the 6th Education International Regional Conference.

The IEUA Women's and Equity Committee has made significant network contacts with women activists in our pacific region and has made a determination to maintain regular contacts to ensure exchange of information and support.

5.3 Council of Pacific Education - Alisi Fusi Wightman Scholarship



Established in 1991, COPE runs a scholarship program for two female union activists in honour of Alisi Fusi Wightman who was an activist in the Fijian Teachers' Association in the 1970s and 1980s. The scholarship focuses on developing and strengthening union and professional skills in order to increase their knowledge and confidence.

Recipients spend one week in Australia meeting with representatives of the Independent Education Union of Australia and the Australian Education Union and then a further week in New Zealand with PPTA and NZEI.

This year, Jenny R Kome, the national women's representative from Papua New Guinea Teachers' Association and Firiam Marguerite, President of the Women's Network of Vanuatu Teachers' Union took up their educational visits to Australia and New Zealand from 2nd October to the 17th October 2009 and had an opportunity to work via teleconference with the national Women and Equity committee, where they had an opportunity to speak with other IEUA women unionists across Australia and talk about their methods of establishing women networks.

The IEUA Women and Equity committee discussed how their sub branches engage members in remote and regional areas and how to develop and strengthen women networks across these regions.