



Teachers: Leading in crisis, re-imagining the future.....

“Teachers have been absolutely outstanding during these incredibly hard times. Now is the time to stand together because together we have the power to effect real change in the world. We are the teaching and learning profession. If the world is to learn the lessons of the pandemic, teachers must take the lead.” (David Edwards, Education International General Secretary)

This year, World Teachers Day will be celebrated in Australia on Friday 29 October.

Internationally it is held on 5 October, however, as this is usually during school holidays, Australia traditionally celebrates the day on the last Friday in October.

On World Teachers' Day, we celebrate and recognise the achievements of the teaching profession. Teachers are taking the **lead in crisis** to ensure all students can continue their education, under extraordinary circumstances. Teachers in preschool, and schools have led the way in 2020 -2021, working tirelessly and creatively to make sure that every student can continue their high-quality education, regardless of the circumstances.

Established in 1994, World Teachers Day commemorates the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which is a standard-setting instrument that addresses the status and situations of teachers around the world. This recommendation outlines standards relating to education personnel policy, recruitment, and initial training as well as the continuing education of teachers, their employment, and working conditions.

To celebrate World Teachers' Day, the UNESCO and Education International (EI) mount a campaign each year to help give the world a better understanding of teachers and the role they play in the development of students and society.

This year's focus is teachers' leadership during COVID19.

It was March 2020 when the World Health Organisation declared a pandemic and the coronavirus rapidly spread across the world, with 2020-2021 becoming one of the most challenging periods in

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recent history. Over 90% of the global student population have been out of school at different stages of the pandemic, resulting in education being severely impacted by the spread of Covid-19.

During these trying times, IEU members have stepped up to ensure that their colleagues and the children they teach are protected and supported through the delivery of quality education. Working together to find solutions for remote teaching and learning, distributing meals and books , combating weak internet connections, teachers have gone above and beyond to ensure that education continues. They have played a vital role in guiding their students and communities through this unprecedented crisis. We have seen our members face the many snap lockdown decisions with resilience.

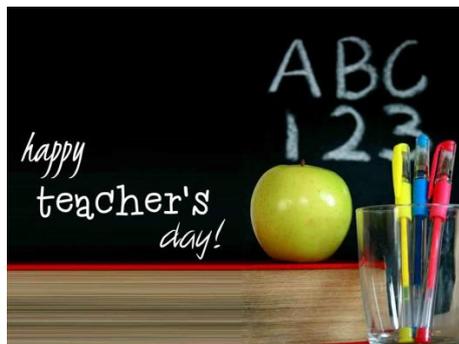
IEU members have shown that they are adaptable and the fact that they continue to meet the various challenges that have occurred in schools, to firstly operate under a pandemic, then to manage transitions to remote education, to conduct that remote education and then to resume operations under a COVID 19 safe environment is nothing short of remarkable!

Teachers struggled to maintain their work-life balance and simultaneously keep their students engaged. One of the biggest challenges faced by teachers during the pandemic was student engagement. A survey found that 75% of the teachers feel that students were less engaged in a remote learning environment. Whether it is Zoom classes or normal classrooms, let us understand the value of teachers and thank each educator for their immense dedication to creating a better future for their students.

Sadly, the *OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)* surveyed over 260,000 teachers. They found that only 26% feel that society values their work. While society expects teachers to be skilful not only in teaching but also in child management, classroom development, and even psychology ,the pandemic has added to the problem of teachers' burnout and stress.

With all of these obstacles facing teachers, the IEU acknowledges and thanks educators around the world for the incredible work they do.

As the country opens to a post COVID environment, the IEU calls upon the Federal Government and employers to do more than just thank their teachers but to acknowledge their amazing contribution by providing a safe working environment , appropriate resources , funding and remuneration. The need to address teachers' working conditions and entitlements is not only an industrial but an ethical and moral imperative to ensure teachers are supported.



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