

# ACT EDUCATOR



## TEACHERS SAY 'WE NEED MORE TIME'

**30**  
**YEARS**

10

Thank you  
30 year members



18

Belonging  
at Lanyon



26

Margaret Clark  
on NAPLAN

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### More info

Cover photo: Lyneham Primary teacher and AEU ACT Vice-President, Nina Leuning. Photo by Melissa Adams

### Feedback and Contributions

Send feedback or share a story about your school. Please contact Tom Greenwell in the AEU ACT office (6272 7900, Tom.Greenwell@aeuact.org.au).

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# More time please!

As reported in the Canberra Times in September, the results of our member workload survey were overwhelming. It revealed that we almost unanimously believe our workload has increased in recent years (a response consistent with a recent OECD finding that Australian teachers are working considerably longer on average than our international counterparts).



By Lana Read,  
AEU ACT President

While we believe collaborative professional learning helps us improve student outcomes, only a minority of us have time to regularly engage in it. These results underscore the importance of our core claim for the new teacher Enterprise Agreement: reduced face-to-face hours so we have time for meaningful professional learning communities.

Glenn explores the survey results in greater depth in his report (p.8).

Sherril Lake writes powerfully on how

Richardson Primary has used National Partnerships funding to build a culture of collaboration (p.22). Sherril's account reveals what schools can do for their students when teachers are given the time to work together and learn from each other. It also highlights why we need the Gonski funding to be delivered to all schools in full.

The Richardson approach is also a great example of rigorously using assessment to improve student learning. Education commentator, Margaret Clark writes on the deficiencies of the NAPLAN regime and how Australia could have gone down another path – and maybe still can (p.26).

So many great things are happening in our schools like the TREK program at Lanyon High (p.18) or student-driven driving recycling at Hawker College (p. 32). However, excellence in our schools shouldn't come at the cost of work-life balance and teacher burnout. It's crucial we are given more time to perform our vital work. //

## 2014 Annual Conference, Sat October 25 – All Members Invited

Until the early 90s, AEU ACT held weekend long annual conferences at Hawker College. This year we're reviving the tradition but in more modest form! It will be held on the morning of October 25 along with a reformatted meeting of Branch Council. The Conference will feature small group discussions to give all members an opportunity to provide input on what we want to achieve together over the coming year. Keep an eye on [www.aeuact.org.au](http://www.aeuact.org.au) for more details.

# 2014 Term 4 Upcoming Events

RSVP and find out more at [www.aeuact.org.au/events](http://www.aeuact.org.au/events)

## Local Campaign Skills Course

**October 16 & 17**

Industrial leave applies  
Email [Andy.Jennings@aeuact.org.au](mailto:Andy.Jennings@aeuact.org.au)

## Applications close for ACT Teacher Scholarship Program

**COB Friday 17 October**

Visit [www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au) or email [Sharon.Hough@act.gov.au](mailto:Sharon.Hough@act.gov.au) for more information.

## Federal New Educators' Conference

**October 18 & 19**

Queensland Teachers Union  
Brisbane

## Federal Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Conference

**October 18 & 19**

NSW Teachers Federation  
Sydney

## Anna Stewart Program

**October 20 – 24**

AEU ACT Office

## Bill Book Program

**October 27 – 31**

AEU ACT Office

## Branch Executive

**Tuesday October 21**

5.30 – 8.30pm  
United Voice Boardroom  
40 Brisbane Avenue,  
Barton

## Branch Council & 2014 Annual Conference

**Saturday October 25**

9am – 12pm  
J Block Theatre, CIT Reid  
37 Constitution Avenue  
Reid

## Understanding Your Super

With Tom Babic from First State Super

**Thursday October 30**

4.30 – 5.30pm  
HBCTL  
51 Fremantle Drive Stirling

## Retirement Planning Session

With Paul Larkin from State Super Financial Services Australia

**November 12**

4 – 6pm  
HBCTL  
51 Fremantle Drive Stirling

## Branch Executive

**Tuesday November 18**

5.30 – 8.30pm  
United Voice Boardroom  
40 Brisbane Avenue,  
Barton

## Branch Council

**Saturday November 22**

9am – 3.30pm  
J Block Theatre, CIT Reid  
37 Constitution Avenue  
Reid

## Unions ACT Council

**Wednesday December 3**

5.30 – 7pm  
189 Flemington Rd,  
Mitchell

## Nominations for Arthur Hamilton Awards close

**Friday December 5**

Email [kate.reynolds@aeuact.org.au](mailto:kate.reynolds@aeuact.org.au) or visit [www.aeuact.org.au](http://www.aeuact.org.au) for more information

## Branch Executive

**Tuesday December 16**

5.30 – 8.30pm  
United Voice Boardroom  
40 Brisbane Avenue,  
Barton

# News In Brief



## New AEU-CIT Agreement Endorsed

The new AEU-CIT Enterprise Agreement has been overwhelmingly endorsed with 194 votes in favour to 13 against. **Congratulations to all involved on our successful campaign.** Special thank you to Graeme Lawson, Mark Hemmingsen and Karen Noble who directly participated in the negotiations. AEU TaFE Council has reordered its monthly agenda to monitor and advance the implementation of key gains won in the new agreement.

## Australian Teachers working longer than OECD average

The recently released OECD Teaching and Learning in Schools report revealed **Australian teachers are working considerably longer than their OECD counterparts.** Australian teachers are working an average of 42.7 hours per week, compared with the OECD average of 38.3. The average Australian class size (24.7) is slightly higher than the OECD average and considerably higher than many high performing countries, like Finland (17.8).

## ACT Teacher Scholarship Program – applications close October 17

**Planning to study in 2015–2016?** Applications for the Teacher Scholarship program are open until Friday 17 October. The Teacher Scholarship program is part of the provision for teacher professional learning under our Enterprise Agreement. Please contact Sharon Hough ([Sharon.Hough@act.gov.au](mailto:Sharon.Hough@act.gov.au)) for more information.

## Women facing discrimination on return from maternity leave

The Australian Human Rights Commission's 2014 review of pregnancy-related discrimination has found that one in two (49%) mothers 'reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace at some point during pregnancy, parental leave or on return to work'. A quarter (27%) of mothers reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace during pregnancy. Almost a third (32%) of mothers reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace when they requested or took parental leave. More than a third (35%) reported experiencing discrimination when returning to work after parental leave. **The Sex Discrimination Act and Fair Work Act prohibit this kind of discrimination.** Contact the AEU ACT office if you need information or support in this regard.

## 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Day

**On August 12, AEU ACT hosted a Close the Gap health day in conjunction with the Canberra Raiders and Habitat Personnel.** The day involved dance and art sessions and an attempt to break the record for the biggest ever three-legged race. The event was very well attended. Ainslie Primary School even had their whole school participate in the race. It was a fun day for a great cause.



## Public school students more successful at university

Barbara Preston reported recently in *The Conversation* on research which 'found that, on average, graduates of state schools received the same marks at the end of first-year university as graduates of private schools who had tertiary entrance scores around three to six points higher.' Graduates of co-educational schools also performed better at uni than graduates of single-sex schools. Also in recent findings, University of Canberra researcher, Jennifer Chester, reported that, controlling for other variables, **there is no difference in employment rates or income levels between public and private school graduates.**

## Abbott Government tries to resurrect chaplaincy program

In the wake of the High Court ruling that the Commonwealth Government's school chaplaincy program was unconstitutional, the Abbott Government has attempted to revive it by channelling funding through State and Territory Governments. **At publication, the Commonwealth is threatening to withhold funding from the ACT because Minister Burch believes ACT schools should have the option of choosing a secular welfare officer.** AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos commented that the Chaplaincy program is a misuse of funding that could be spent on more urgent needs, such as support for students with disability.



## Nominations for Arthur Hamilton Award

Nominations are now open for the 2014 Arthur Hamilton Award for Outstanding Contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. The Award recognises **AEU members who are committed to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have the right to high quality public education throughout their lives.** Visit [www.aeufederal.org.au](http://www.aeufederal.org.au) or email [slowndes@aeufederal.org.au](mailto:slowndes@aeufederal.org.au) for more information.



## First School Assistant Sub-branch President

Congratulations Georg Cygan on being elected as Lyneham High's new Sub-branch President. Georg becomes the first school assistant to take on the role of AEU Sub-branch President. **We hope he is the first of many!**

## Congratulations Heather Page – Anna Stewart Officer

Congratulations to Heather Page from Forrest Primary who was **the successful applicant for the Anna Stewart Program.** Heather has been an active member since she started teaching in 2010 and it will be great to have her in the AEU office in Week 2. The Bill Book officer (yet to be announced when this went to print) will be joining us in Week 3.

# Teachers need more time for what matters

Our member survey makes it very clear we are overworked and we don't have time to engage in the professional collaboration that makes such a difference for our students.



There have been many new ideas in education over the last few years. Some are wrong-headed but just as many are entirely valid. The problem is that the burden for implementing these new ideas always falls disproportionately on teachers and school leaders. Now we are saying loud and clear to our employer that we have had enough.

In just a few days in late August, more than 1000 ACT teachers and school leaders in ACT public schools responded to a survey conducted by AEU ACT.

By Glenn Fowler, AEU ACT Branch Secretary

**98%** of ACT teachers say there has been an increase in overall workload over the last 5 years.

**98%** of ACT teachers say there has been an increase in the number of tasks they are required to complete over the last 5 years.

**98%**

of ACT teachers say there has been an increase in the number of bureaucratic, administrative and compliance tasks they are required to complete.

**86%** of ACT teachers say that administrative tasks are impacting on their ability to consistently deliver the best possible lessons.

**96%** of ACT teachers say that they value collaborative professional learning when appropriate time is allocated.

**79%**

of ACT teachers say they do not have enough time to regularly engage in collaborative professional learning.

**88%** of ACT teachers think that regular collaborative professional learning, built into the weekly timetable, will help them improve their teaching practice.

**89%** of ACT teachers say that ACT public schools would produce even better student outcomes if there was more time for collaborative professional learning.



"I regularly do not get any break at all, including to go to the toilet or eat or drink anything at all until after 3:00pm each day. **My working day usually finishes at 7 pm.**"

**Comments from teachers included:**

"I like that we try to do so much to reflect on and improve our practice, but it becomes useless if we aren't given adequate time to prepare and work together."

"It is not uncommon for me and many of my colleagues to be doing up to 3 hours of work at home on weekdays and double that over a weekend. As a parent myself I find it is very hard to find any kind of appropriate work/life balance."

"I find that whilst our professional learning is always meaningful, it is nearly always at the expense of the preparation and management of my day-to-day tasks."

"I regularly do not get any break at all, including to go to the toilet or eat or drink anything at all until after 3:00pm each day. My working day usually finishes at 7 pm. We need more staff and more time in schools."

"Providing time for educators to collaborate is a proven method of enhancing teaching effectiveness. We need to value the professionalism of teachers and provide opportunities for them to make more lessons, better lessons."

"The increase in administrative tasks has meant that I have less time to plan thorough and engaging lessons, or mark assessments tasks to provide feedback in a timely manner. I feel that this detracts significantly from the results I could be reaching with my students."

"I love teaching, but the workload at my school was so great, I had to go part time at my school to be able to have anything approaching work-life balance."

"There is much evidence that a collaborative, professional learning community approach can lead to improved learning outcomes for students. The approach does require time to collaborate

and to focus on learning, evidence and interventions. Lack of time is a blocker to the implementation of this approach."

"Over the last five or more years I have been given less time and lesser quality resources to do my job. I see more disillusioned colleagues around me now than at any time in my twenty five years of teaching in the ACT."

"Even with all the out of hours work I am completing I am still finding it difficult to remain on top of the administrative tasks and then simply plan a lesson."

**School leaders commented:**

"As a school leader, my working week is between 55 and 70 hours. Approximately 60% of this relates to non-teaching duties which have been transferred from central office as a result of budget cuts in that area. The tasks have been transferred to school with no additional resources. I do not have the time to effectively support staff or the resources needed to deliver up-to-date learning experiences for students."

"My desire is to be an instructional leader but I consistently struggle to give this the priority it deserves because of my workload."

The research makes it very clear and teachers know instinctively what works in schools – professional learning communities where teachers can meaningfully collaborate with each other to enhance practice and prepare more great lessons for students.

This cannot be done on the smell of an oily rag in an atmosphere of more and more bureaucratic tasks that take them away from teaching. No more lip service. The ACT Government now has the opportunity to take seriously the earnest and urgent appeal of educators to properly resource the professional communities they are so eager to establish. //

"I love teaching, but the workload at my school was so great, **I had to go part time at my school to be able to have anything approaching work-life balance.**"



# Thank you to our **30** year members!

Thank you to members who have been with the AEU for 30 years or more – over 230 of us. Your dedication is what makes our union as strong as it is. We hope you wear your commemorative badge with great pride. Thank you.

Barbara Adams . Helen Agostino . Ian Alder .  
Roger Allan . Jane Allan . Paul Andrews . Fiona  
Arthur . Mark Ashdown . Paul Baker . Sydney  
Baker . Andrew Barnett . Gerard Barrett . Debbie  
Bartlett . Michael Battenally . Glenda Beasley .  
Phil Beecher . Gai Beecher . Geoff Bell . Jan  
Bentley . Barbara Biddle . Mark Bishop . Maree  
Blume . Peter Blunt . Alan Boate . Sue Boettcher .  
Christine Bowen . Galina Bree . Donna Brennan .  
Vicky Bresnan . Wanda Bridgland . Gina  
Brown . Murray Bruce . Dianne Bruce . Johanna  
Bruinsma . Helen Burfitt . Jillian Burnett . Maureen  
Campbell . Merylyn Carney . Dora Chapman .  
Stephen Chignell . Stewart Clode . Jeanette  
Cody . Jennifer Coen . Chris Conti . Jacoba  
Cordes . Wendy Coutts . Donald Coutts . Beth  
Craddy . Trish Cregan . Deidre Cropley . David  
Cropley . Vivienne Da Deppo . Anne Dash .  
Carl Davies . Fran Dawning . Kathy Dawson .  
Caroline Dawson . Jan Day . Felicity De Plater .

Rodney Deverson . Denis Dickinson . Fiona  
Dickson . Ed Dittmer . Heather Donohoe .  
Peter Duggan . Audrey Duke . Robert Dunlop .  
Dennis Dyer . Robin Egerton . June Ellery . Mary  
Elliott . Graeme Falls . Karen Farrell . Karen  
Fitzgerald-Osman . Narelle Ford . Suzanne  
Forrest . Louise Frawley . Danelle Gannon .  
Catherine Gardiner . John Geary . Robyn  
Geary . Catherine Geraghty-Slavica . John  
Gilbert . Geoff Gilmour . Josephine Goff . Ann  
Goleby . Shane Gorman . Margaret Gosper .  
Janine Gould . Kerrie Grundy . Clive Haggan .  
Jennifer Hall . Michael Hall . Phillip Hall . Karen  
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Harvey . Ann Heenan . Rosie Hendry . Ricardo  
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Andrew Hiscocks . Wally Hoefel . Rhondda  
Hoffmann . Alison Hogan . Moir Holmes .  
Janice Hourigan . Jacqueline Howarth . Peng



Howell . Marilyn Howell . Anne Huard . Jane Hubbard . Ross Humphreys . Christine Hynes . Jerry Ianno . Karen Irvine . Gillian Jackson . Annette Jamieson . Richard Jenkins . Ian Johnson . Christine Johnston . Hazel Johnstone-Hall . Kathy Joyce . Evelyn Karapanos . Helen Kaye . Frank Keighley . Trish Keller . Anne Kiley . Kathy Kiting . Muriel Lane . Jennifer Lang . Linda Latter . Keith Lawler . Graeme Lawson . Elizabeth Lea . Deborah Lee . Beth Lee . Warren Lee . Karma MacArthur . James MacArthur . Jennifer Macdonald . Ian MacDonald . Ian MacDougall . Fiona Macgregor . Judy Marriott . Robert Matthews . Anna McKenzie . Neil McLeod . Margaret McMahan . Ian McPhee . Anne Meszes . Clive Monty . Lynette Moorhouse . Kim Morgan . Juanita Morton . Thiona Moss . Nikey Mylordi . Linda Neeson . Winston Newman . Pam Nicolson . Margaret Noakes . Margaret O'Dea . Jane Offley . Jo Padgham . George Palavestra . Len Parish . Sarah Parker . Frank Parker . Anthony Patis . Leanne Pattison . Glenys Patulny . Anne Paul . Elaine Perry . Rietta Pogson . Rae Pottenger . Richard Powell . Penny Rae . Robert Reardon . Gareth Rees . Alex Reid . Judith Richards . Barbara Richardson . Margaret Riley . Bronwyn Riley . Margaret Robson . Ann Rocca . Gareth Rowe . Margaret Rowlands . Julia Ryan . Sarah Schipilow . Janice Schroder . John See . Glen Shipton . Barbara Slotemaker De Bruine . Jen Smith . Jack Spahr . Janine Spring . Ed Staples . Vanessa Stephens . James Stoddart . Helen Strauch . Margaret Strong . Lynette Sumner . Mike Szabo . Narelle Tait . Kim Tankard . Barbara Thompson . Bea Thompson . Michael Thomson . Livia Tigwell . Mandy Trethowan . Pip Trundle . Penny Upward . Paul Van Diemen . Stephen Walding . Beth Wallace . Robert Walls . Kathleen Ward . Heather Wardrop . Andy Wardrop . Wendy Waring . Maureen Webb . Michael Webster . Davinia Wells . David Wentworth-Perry . Alan White . Jacqueline Williams . Susan Young . Geoffrey Young

## Message from a proud 30 year member

I just wanted to thank you for acknowledging and celebrating the commitment of long term members with a very special badge which I will wear with great pride in the coming years.

Over those years, I have never taken for granted the relevance and critical importance of the Australian Education Union, and the small annual fee that I pay each year is perhaps the best investment I have ever made.

Through the commitment and dedication of the Executive, I have, over the many years I've taught in the ACT, secured and maintained so many important working conditions relating to my career. I remind people whenever I can that without a strong and vibrant union, governments like the present Federal Government would show absolutely no regard to pay and working conditions, and would destroy, on a whim, those things that were hard won by generations of others in times past.

The dirty deals done on superannuation, and on higher education opportunities for all young Australians, including the deregulation of the universities, speak volumes about the current federal government, and young teachers who are still not in the union need to think long and hard about what sort of profession they hope to hold on to in the near and distant future.

I am now casually employed with the ACT Education and Training Directorate, but I still get to hold my union card. I want to thank the Executive and staff for all of their efforts and continued commitment.

*Ed Staples  
Classroom Teacher*

# A conversation with Heather and Andy Wardrop

Heather and Andy Wardrop have each taught in the ACT and been AEU members for well over 30 years. They talk with *Educator* about what they value about AEU membership and how the job of teaching has evolved.

**Q. What do you teach? What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

We have been working in the A.C.T. system for nearly 40 years. We have been mathematics teachers for the whole time. We enjoy the interaction with colleagues and students. We have always strived to keep Mathematics interesting and relevant and we have been involved with the Canberra Mathematical Association for most of this time.

**Q. Congratulations on being an AEU member for over 30 years. What do you value most about union membership?**

Membership of the union has kept us well informed about local, national and international issues in education. We have met colourful and passionate educators on the Council. We have enjoyed robust and vigorous debate which has exposed us to a great variety of opinions. We both appreciate the fact that the union provides us with some level of protection when speaking our minds.



Heather and Andy Wardrop have both been proud AEU members for well over thirty years.

**Q. What do you think are the most important achievements of the union over your time as a member?**

The union has protected the rights of individual members and has fought to improve the wages and conditions of teachers in a hostile environment of economic rationalism.

**Q. You've both made significant contributions as sub-branch representatives and councillors. Do you have any comment on the rewards and challenges of the positions you've held in our union?**

Being actively involved in the union has been a rewarding experience for both of us. The work of the union complements what we have been trying to achieve as teachers as it benefits the learning of students.

**Q. What do you think are the most significant ways teaching has changed over the course of your career?**

The biggest changes have been in accountability, the pressure to "do more with less" and the imposition of excessive paperwork which impinges on the time needed to prepare quality lessons. Modern teaching practice requires more time to consult with colleagues and draw from innovative practices, especially those involving information technology, yet there is now less time to do this.

We hope that our next 40 years are as good as the first! //

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# Nominations open soon for Branch Secretary and President Positions

## AEU ACT Branch Secretary

The current two year term for Branch Secretary expires on 31st December 2014. Financial AEU members will soon be invited to nominate for the position for 2015 and 2016. Interested members should keep an eye on the website and email communications.

In the case that there is more than one nomination, a ballot of AEU ACT members will be conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission.

The Branch Secretary is the most senior position in our branch. The Secretary is a voting member of Branch Executive and the senior manager of AEU ACT staff. The role of the Secretary is outlined in AEU ACT Branch Rules as follows.

The Branch Secretary will, subject to any direction of the Branch Council and Branch Executive:

- be the Chief Officer of the Branch;
- exercise control over and conduct the affairs of the Branch;
- ensure that the Rules of the Union and the Branch are adhered to at all times;
- provide political, industrial and professional leadership to the ACT Branch of the AEU;
- manage the finances of the Branch;
- manage the professional and administrative staff of the Branch;
- attend all meetings of the Branch Council and Branch Executive and such other meetings as directed and be responsible for keeping minutes of those meetings;
- keep all documents/vouchers/papers belonging to the Branch;
- summon within a reasonable time the first meeting of any committee appointed by Branch Council or Branch Executive;
- be the registered officer of the Branch and the officer to sue and be sued on behalf of the Branch;
- organise all returns required by the Act for the approval of Branch Council or Branch Executive and ensure the submission of the returns to the Industrial Registrar in accordance with the Act;
- supervise the register of the Branch;
- notify Sub-Branch Secretaries of the names of members allocated to Sub-Branches;
- Inform Sub-Branches of the business set down for Branch Council including proposed amendments to the Federal Branch Rules;
- perform any other duties as prescribed by the Federal Rules or Federal Branch Rules.

## AEU ACT Branch President

The term of the President will also expire at the end of this year and nominations for the 2015-2016 term will soon be called for.

In the case that there is more than one nomination, a ballot of AEU ACT members will be conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission.

The role of President is outlined in AEU ACT rules. The Branch President will

- be an honorary position and will represent the Union as required
- preside at all meetings of Branch Executive, Branch Council, Stop Work meetings and Mass meetings;
- when presiding over a meeting exercise a casting vote. In respect of any election held by such meeting she or he shall nevertheless have the right as a member of the Union to cast a vote. //

# Nominations open for Arthur Hamilton Award



Nominations are now open for the Arthur Hamilton Award for Outstanding Contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

The Arthur Hamilton Award for Outstanding Contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education is named in honour of Arthur Hamilton, a proud Palawa man, educator and union activist. Arthur passed away in 2004 leaving a legacy of equity and social justice, cross-cultural awareness, recognition of Indigenous peoples and the elimination of racism within Australian schools. This Award is in recognition of AEU members who are committed to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have the right to high quality public education throughout their lives. The AEU is dedicated to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have local access to a free, publicly funded education system, which affirms cultural identity, and enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to contribute to, and participate in, their own, and broader society.

## Nominations

Nomination forms can be downloaded from [www.aefederal.org.au/Atsi/2014AHnomform.pdf](http://www.aefederal.org.au/Atsi/2014AHnomform.pdf). They can also be obtained from Sue Lowndes at the AEU federal office in Melbourne by phoning (03) 9693 1800, faxing (03) 9693 1805, or emailing [slowndes@aefederal.org.au](mailto:slowndes@aefederal.org.au).

The closing date for nominations is Friday, 5 December 2014. The winner will receive a \$1000 prize and will be flown to Melbourne to accept the Award at the Annual Federal Conference of the AEU in February 2015. All nominees will receive a certificate from the AEU. //

## More info

If you would like to know more, please contact Nicole Major, Federal Aboriginal Education Officer - [nmajor@aefederal.org.au](mailto:nmajor@aefederal.org.au), or visit [www.aefederal.org.au](http://www.aefederal.org.au).

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# The Very Fine Vintage Reds

They are not a Canberra house brick, nor are they a decent old bottle of red wine; they are the Progressive Retired Trade Union Activists of the Canberra Region! *By Jane Timbrell*

**The group humorously call themselves “Vintage Reds”, but they do have a number of very serious union-based activities that they wish to pursue.**

These include:

- Publicly promoting and supporting trade unionism with street rallies and attending specific union rallies. This is even more important under the recently elected Abbott Government;
- Promoting the interests of trade unionism and of retired unionists, particularly in regards to Government policies and practices;
- Providing forums for political discussion and camaraderie through social

activities such as lunches, guest speaker discussions, cinema screenings, and attending labour history events.

- Already the group has affiliated to UnionsACT, but the Vintage Reds need your support!!

The group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Dickson Tradies’ Club at 11.00am. For further information contact Jane Timbrell at [vintagereds.canberra@gmail.com](mailto:vintagereds.canberra@gmail.com) or at home on (02) 6249 8657.

All retired trade union members who still hold the role of unionism in Australia as an important part of the democratic process are encouraged to join the Vintage Reds! //



The Vintage Reds at March in August, Garema Place.



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TREK students relaxing in front of their work.

# Belonging the key to success

Sam Delaney reports on TREK (Trust Respect Empathy Knowledge), an innovative program at Lanyon High designed to support students' diverse needs.



By Sam Delaney

One of the many great programs running in south side schools, Lanyon High's TREK program is enabling students to shine. Launched by Bill Thompson and Cherie Connors in 2009, T.R.E.K has a strong focus on social and emotional wellbeing, and more recently has grown to include a literacy and numeracy element. As Cherie puts it: "Being a TREK teacher is a heart-and-soul job and the values that underpinned the program are the centre of its success."

The current model involves students participating during three lines - Maths, English and Wellbeing. The Wellbeing

component focuses on qualities that are crucial for school and future success: relationship building; emotional self-management; and skills for learning. A central philosophy of the program has been to encourage students to engage in reflection on their strengths and weaknesses. With the help of many staff at Lanyon, including youth workers, counsellors, teachers and executive, lessons have been tailored to help students develop in these areas.

The initial goal was to create a sense of ownership and community within the group. In Term 1, the class focused on

“Lanyon High has always prided itself on its ability to meet the needs of all students. **TREK was designed to provide another layer of support.**”

their organisational skills, not giving up and ignoring noise and distraction.

TREK teacher, Joh Davies, comments: “We had a bit of a turning point when we started doing weekly class lunches at the end of Term 2. Everyone has a turn at providing a cheap and easy meal for the rest of the class. At one of these lunches, one student commented “We’re starting to feel like a big family”. These lunches are now called “Family Lunches” and have evolved to include class negotiated guidelines for contributing money, shopping, preparation, set-up and clean-up.”

Students in the program then took on the responsibility of building their own learning environment. By participating in one of three core working groups - furniture building, interior decorating and a lunch-time radio station - students have had a chance to take pride in what is now TREK’s own space on schools grounds.

The introduction of this personalised learning approach and the expansion of the program over time has helped students achieve at school. Grades have improved across the board, attendance has increased and suspension rates for students in the TREK program have decreased significantly. The TREK class has most recently immersed itself in the Lanyon High Giving Project and volunteered time to help out at the RPSCA. TREK has grown into a model of best practise that other schools are now looking to emulate.

Pastoral Care SLC, Kim Rice says: “Lanyon High has always prided itself on its ability to meet the needs of all students. TREK was designed to provide another layer of support to students with a wide range of needs.”

Principal, Bill Thompson, comments: “The most rewarding aspect for me is seeing the change in self-confidence in

the students taking part. It’s important to have a program which caters for students who don’t quite fit the mould of your average student and who would otherwise fail without the case management support they are given.”

Bill acknowledges that the program has faced challenges at times. “There have been many obstacles to overcome, the main one being cost. The school has to find the money to staff and run this program outside of



its normal budget. It costs approximately \$50,000 per year to keep the program running.

However, he comments that the commitment of Lanyon High staff has been critical. “The staff have been fantastic in referring students and supporting the fact that these students need this type of program to remain engaged with school.”

Lanyon staff are justifiably proud of the TREK program. By creating an environment in which everyone belongs, we are ensuring all students have a chance to flourish at school. //

**TREK is designed to give every student at Lanyon High a chance to flourish.**



# What students say about **TREK**

Perhaps the best evidence of TREK's success can be found in the reflections of the students themselves.

**"TREK is a reward and it has its privileges. I find it a class to get away from the mainstream school system, but it's not a bludge class. It's a great class to help get career choices and experiences. I struggled in main stream school. This opens my options in life and all that."**

"TREK helps me learn how to deal with people better. I'm not a people person. It does help me with work-related things, but I mainly get more relationship skills out of it than anything else."

**"It's helped me with my people skills, my confidence, and my work. Before I came to TREK I pretty much never did anything but now I try. TREK gets you out there and doing stuff that you might not have before. You do things you never thought you could."**

"TREK is great. It helps me because we're like closer than a class. We're all like friends. Like a big family. I guess I feel more comfortable sharing my work with people I'm friends with rather than people I don't know... and we have hellaawesome teachers."

**You get to take leadership of a lot of things. Everyone gets a go of taking a turn to be the leader. We all get a chance at the activities. It's important because it encourages people. It's helped me focus and get better grades. It's not really about the grades though. It's about personally achieving and actually doing work.**

"TREK has helped me to not get in trouble as much. It's always fun to go to. The work is normally pretty good. I can't concentrate in a normal class. I need some assistance some of the time. The people here are cool and the environment is cool."

**"I think TREK is helpful because you learn how to take care of yourself and others. It can help you a lot with your own wellbeing."**

"To me it was a good use for my classes and also for my attendance. I don't feel like it's just a class. I feel like it's a friendship group. TREK has helped me become a better leader."

**"TREK has helped me to not get in trouble as much. It's always fun to go to. The work is normally pretty good. I can't concentrate in a normal class. I need some assistance some of the time. The people here are cool and the environment is cool."**

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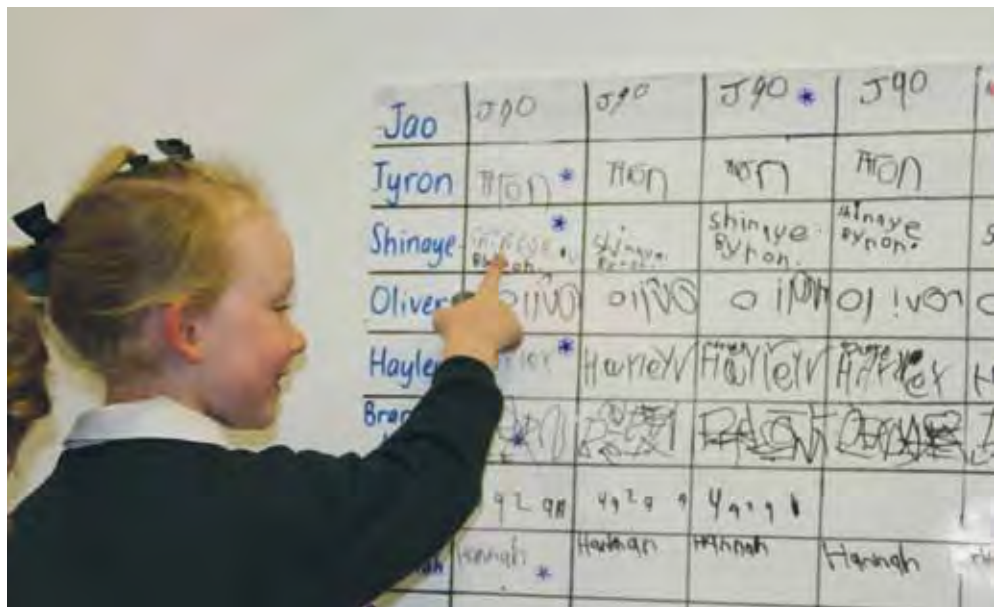
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# Making a difference at Richardson Primary

In August, Glenn Fowler wrote in the *Canberra Times* about how Richardson Primary has used National Partnership funding to make a big difference in the lives of its students. Now, Executive teacher, Sherri Lake, provides a first-hand account of the exciting range of strategies Richardson is deploying.



When Principal Jason Borton refers to 'our main thing', everyone at Richardson Primary School knows he is talking about our primary strategy to improve student learning, "Keeping it REEL: Richardson Engaging Effective Learners". For the past few years, the leadership team and staff at Richardson Primary have maintained a razor sharp focus on engaging all learners through the effective use of Dylan Wiliam's formative assessment principles.

To understand Wiliam's approach, every teacher at Richardson attended one of his two-day seminars on using formative assessment strategies to enrich each student's learning journey.

In its simplest terms, formative assessment is an iterative process in which teachers 'use evidence about learning to adapt instruction to meet student needs' (Wiliam, 2009). Richardson Primary School staff are seeing tremendous results through implementing Dylan Wiliam's five principles of formative assessment (Wiliam, 2012):

- Clarifying, understanding, and sharing learning intentions
- Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward

**“Additional resources have allowed us to develop a collaborative culture where staff are constantly supported to develop their practice.”**

- Activating students as learning resources for one another
- Activating students as owners of their own learning

To help students own their learning, every staff member attended a five-day intensive course in Dr Spencer Kagan’s high impact collaborative learning strategy. Kagan’s approach aims to engage every student, especially those who are struggling, by structuring activities so that students feel individual and collective responsibility for their learning.

To activate students as learning resources for one another, the school uses whole class response systems such as Think-Pair-Share, Traffic Lights and Exit Cards, as well as a range of cooperative learning strategies and structures.

“Effective cooperative learning,” asserts William (2011), “requires the presence of two key elements. First, there must be group goals, so that students are working as a group, not merely working in a group. Second, there must be individual accountability, so that individual students cannot be carried along by the work of others.”

Richardson Primary staff have participated in training with Kagan Australia and Barrie Bennett, and engaged with coaching to implement cooperative learning across the school. It has been a significant but worthwhile investment in time and money for the school. In reflecting on how the use of Cooperative Learning has worked for him, one of our year 6 students shared this insight: “Sometimes I get the questions wrong and they (peers) give me a tip, and a chance to do it again and get it right.”

Students are involved in developing criteria for self-assessment.

There are high levels of student engagement in class discussions.

Feedback is timely, clear, specific and supportive in tone

Students can explain what they are supposed to be learning and why.

Richardson teachers use this simple ‘scoreboard’ to evaluate progress during whole school walkthroughs.

At Richardson Primary, the leadership team aims to ‘Keep it REEL’ for students by ‘Keeping it REEL’ for teachers. With this in mind, our professional learning strategy consists of action learning teams, whole school walkthroughs and instructional coaching designed to engage teachers as effective learners.

#### Action Learning Teams

All teachers are part of an action learning team each comprised of between three to five staff, representative of the P-6 environment of the school. These teams collaborate to:

deepen their professional knowledge of high impact instructional strategies e.g. providing effective feedback, self and peer assessment, questioning, cooperative learning; contextualise the formative assessment practices; make recommendations to the whole school about classroom practices that must be introduced, strengthened or indeed abandoned based on the evidence they have collected.

#### Whole School Walkthroughs

Whole school walkthroughs are a time when two members of staff walk through the whole school to take a quick measure of how well we are achieving our aim of embedding formative assessment principles across the school. The school leadership team teaches a class each during this time, in part to free up teachers to conduct walkthroughs and in part to provide us with a class where as school leaders we too can practice the target instructional strategies.

**“Whole school walkthroughs are a time when two members of staff walk through the whole school to take a quick measure of how well we are achieving our aims.”**

## Partnership Principles

High-Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching © Knight, Jim. 2013.

Equality	Professional learning with teachers rather than training done to teachers, because each of us is unique and equally valuable
Choice	Professional educators should be free to make meaningful decisions regarding what and how they learn
Voice	Professional learning should empower and respect the opinions of teachers
Reflection	Professional learning should involve 'looking back,' 'looking at,' or 'looking ahead' at one's practices
Dialogue	Educational leaders and teachers should interact in ways that foster a two-way sharing of ideas
Praxis	Professional learning should involve real-life application of learning
Reciprocity	Everyone should be learning during professional learning, not just those 'receiving' the learning

We use the 'scoreboard' (pictured) during whole school walkthroughs to evaluate our progress. Based on the premise that only a few evidence-based practices can have a tremendous positive impact (Knight, Patterson et al, Fullan, Senge), the scoreboard is simple by design. The leadership team facilitated a collaborative process involving all staff to identify these 'high impact instructional strategies', based on the learning from the action learning teams and further study of Dylan Wiliam's work.

Whole school walkthrough data is collated and periodically reviewed, in conjunction with the ongoing action learning team work. The aim is for this data to guide us in making decisions about 'where to next' with the work.

### Instructional coaching

Instructional coaching is a highly personalised process in which staff can enrol a coach to support them with achieving individual goals related to their own classroom practices

### Principles of collaboration

Each of the above elements – action learning teams, whole school walkthroughs and instructional coaching - play distinct but connected roles in ensuring the whole school remains focused on implementation of formative assessment as described by Dylan Wiliam as 'our

main thing'. The overall professional learning strategy is at its core highly collaborative and designed to increase professional accountability in a high trust culture. The success of this strategy relies heavily on Jim Knight's Partnership Principles of equality, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, and praxis.

Richardson is strongly focused on creating what Jim Knight calls an 'impact school' where 'everything is structured so that teachers can do the important work of striving for personal bests so that students can strive for their own personal bests' (Jim Knight, 2013). There is no denying our strategies are time intensive in what we all know is a time poor field. The extra resources Richardson received through National Partnership funding have been crucial in this regard. As National Partnership funding ends, it's imperative for Richardson that the Gonski funding is delivered in full.

### Community partnerships

Richardson has also worked hard at building community partnerships. We engaged CIT to offer workplace skills training for parents and provided seed funding to establish an Intel Computer Clubhouse. We also worked with an academic partner from the University of Canberra to explore and monitor changes to staff motivations and assumptions around students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. Finally, we partnered with a local author to help us deepen student love of reading.

Additional resources have allowed us to develop a collaborative culture where staff are constantly supported to develop their practice. Ask any one of our teachers and they will tell you in one sentence exactly what formative assessment is and does. This is helping us lift student outcomes. Growth data on a range of standardised assessments shows our student achievement is improving and responses to school culture surveys reveal an increasingly positive attitude to learning. //



# Honest history in the next four years

All history is interpretation. The teaching of history needs to allow for competing evidence-based interpretations. Honest history is interpretation robustly supported by evidence.

By David Stephens, Secretary, Honest History



Australian poet at war: Egypt c. 1915-16. Captain Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson (right) of 2nd Remounts, Australian Imperial Force, inspects a sulking horse (Flickr Commons/Australian War Memorial P00269.001)

The centenary of the First World War (2014 – 2018) sharpens the focus on our history but the centenary should be more than a sentimental celebration of blokes in khaki doing heroic things. The next four years offer great opportunities to grow a balanced Australian history.

When we set up Honest History, the coalition, we were determined not to be seen as Anzac knockers. Accordingly, we have constantly reiterated the slogan, 'not only Anzac, but also ...', the 'also' being the many other strands of our history that deserve to be remembered, studied and presented. Of course, Anzac is an important part of our history – we need to understand what war has done to Australia and to Australians – but so is our environmental, social, political, cultural, economic and other history.

Our website ([honesthistory.net.au](http://honesthistory.net.au)) reflects our objectives. While we tend to lead with

items that address Anzac-related issues, the great bulk of the site (over half the content) is bibliographical items on non-war related themes. You can explore this material under the menu items 'Themes' and 'Resources' (searchable three ways).

We want the site to be a useful resource for teachers, students and the general public and we are always open to suggestions for new material that should be included. We also welcome new writers (pitch to [admin@honesthistory.net.au](mailto:admin@honesthistory.net.au)). And we try to choose appropriate illustrations to go with the written material.

Honest History's President is Professor Peter Stanley and we have the support of many distinguished historians (see 'About us' – 'Supporters'). We have been pleased at the reception our website has received since it began last November and at the invitations we have received to speak to various groups. We presented at the History Teachers' Association of Australia national conference in Brisbane in late September and will gladly accept other engagements. //

## More info

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# NAPLAN and the path not taken

– a sad tale of poor policy development in education



Margaret Clark writes on education and blogs at [educatorvoices.wordpress.com](http://educatorvoices.wordpress.com). She was previously the CEO of the Australian College of Educators (ACE) and worked in senior roles in the Australian Public Service.

By Margaret Clark

**There is now a strong and growing consensus among educational researchers and practitioners across the globe that well designed classroom-based assessment is an essential element of sound pedagogy and improved student learning.**

The evidence from a number of different disciplines all meet around this understanding.

The New Zealand Best Evidence Synthesis work and the work of John Hattie both confirm that student feedback on learning is one of the top 10 influencers of student learning, but not just any feedback. It must be timely and in a form that assists learners to understand where they are in their learning. This requires sound assessment processes.

Our understandings about large differences in student skills and knowledge within every school year level has confirmed the importance of personalising learning rather than teaching to the middle. This requires understanding where individuals are in their learning as the starting point for planning. Assessment processes are required to support this.

Research about how we learn from neurobiology highlights the importance of mental models of learning and the importance of developing deep understandings. But learners can also construct their own mental models and understandings that are inconsistent with teachers' intentions. These can impede further learning. Well designed assessments can assist teachers to understand how individual learners are thinking.

There is also an extensive body of work under the broad heading of '21 Century education' that makes it clear that the knowledge's and skills of the future require capabilities that can only be assessed 'in production'. Portfolio-based assessments, simulations and group projects are all forms of classroom-based assessments that support powerful student learning.

This list is not comprehensive nor are any of these arguments contested or controversial. My intention here is not to persuade but rather to note that even though this understanding is confirmed, the development and dissemination of knowledge-grounded high quality assessments, and other supports, to promote the best practice in classroom-based assessments have never been a high policy priority in school education on Australia.

This stands in stark contrast to the priority and importance given to another form of assessment: The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

## “I argue that the under-prioritisation of **sound classroom assessment and the overemphasis on NAPLAN are connected.**”

Concerns about NAPLAN in Australia and other standardised, population-based high stakes tests in other countries are continuing to grow. Here is my summary about the main issues that have been identified in relation the NAPLAN tests:

- the results are not valid and reliable at school or classroom level
- it is not a diagnostic test
- the results take 5 months to be reported
- it is unsuitable for both ends of the achievement spectrum – because it is not multilevel
- it is not culturally neutral
- growing evidence that its high visibility drives perverse impacts on teaching and learning
- some of our most important teaching and learning goals are not reducible to multiple choice tests
- there is a very real danger that it will be used to assess teacher performance – a task it is not at all suited to
- some students are being harmed by this exercise
- a few schools are using it to weed out ‘unsuitable enrolments’
- school comparisons exacerbate middle class parent drift away from schools that need them most
- there will always be a risk of league tables
- in spite of claimed intentions it has not resulted in systemic changes to funding priorities based on results.

I argue that the under-prioritisation of sound classroom assessment and the overemphasis on NAPLAN are connected. A radically different approach could have made a profound difference to schooling in Australia today.

Kim Beazley was the first Education Minister to publicly enthuse about national standardized tests in the early 1990s as the solution to alleged falling standards in student learning and unacceptable levels of illiteracy.

But many of us working in education were appalled for a number of reasons. One: we anticipated many of the problems that we see today. Two: we knew that the ability to identify struggling learners was not dependent on national standardized tests – that good teachers already knew which of their students were struggling. What teachers were less clear about related to why these students were struggling and what to do about it.

But the third reason we were alarmed stemmed from new developments taking place around student assessment in the UK and the USA.

In the UK, exciting work was in development around using assessment for, and as, learning. This is relatively commonplace now but it was very new in the 90s. There was also some important work being developed in the USA through the Coalition of Essential Schools on new models of assessment that included portfolio and formative assessments. The common factor in these developments was an emerging understanding of the centrality of holistic, intelligent judgment-based assessment as a powerful tool: for understanding where students are in their learning; to support timely and learning-focused feedback to students; and to support personalized learning and classroom planning.

We had been looking at ways of supporting similar initiatives in Australia and we were concerned that the introduction of national standardized testing would compete with, and even undermine, interest in supporting such work.

At fora and meetings around this time, the idea grew that maybe we should build on the UK and USA work and develop a series of classroom based assessment-rich activities that could serve the same purpose as national testing. That is, we believed that instead of thinking in boxes about assessment – this assessment for student learning and a different one for administrators and standards monitoring, we could develop a unified and integrated system from the classroom up.

We hypothesized that if we started by developing a bank of classroom-based, assessment-rich, benchmarked activities that were specifically designed to meet the needs of teachers to better understand where each of their students were along the literacy learning continuum, it might be possible to convince politicians and senior bureaucrats that these activities could also be used to take a snapshot about the state of student literacy learning. This would be a smarter approach than national multiple-choice standardized tests.

I was a senior policy officer in the Department of Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) at the time and in this role I provided briefing about different ways of thinking about national testing. I also established a trial project in partnership with ACER (Geoff Masters) and the AEU (Sharon Burrow) to develop a sample bank of diagnostic-rich, classroom friendly learning activities that also served as assessments of student literacy levels.

Unfortunately, we failed to head off a decision to opt for standardised tests and the NAP (now NAPLAN) was born.

I often wonder what would have happened had we not failed.

Could we have developed an integrated model of assessment that takes as its starting point the most fundamental purpose of assessment – to inform teachers and students of learning progress?

**“Many of us working in education were appalled for a number of reasons. We knew that the ability to identify struggling learners was not dependent on national standardized tests.”**

Could we have developed out of this a national bank of classroom-based assessment items that could also have been used for assessing the state of literacy in Australian schools, without the distorting effects of NAPLAN and MySchool?

Our failure has cost us dearly. It has meant that the work to develop assessment-rich curriculum related learning activities has been inadequately supported and less understood than it might have been. It has meant that education gurus like John Hattie have continued to lament that the pedagogical elements that have the largest “effect size” on student learning, have never been adequately prioritised and supported. It has meant that we have allowed high stakes testing to undermine the kinds of teaching and learning environments that could have made the most difference to our struggling students.

But there is no reason why we cannot begin a campaign to advocate for this approach starting now. Geoff Masters, who worked on this model back in the 1990s, has more recently developed a comprehensive paper, ‘Reforming Educational Assessment’ arguing for just such a transformation. I highly recommend reading it.

He argues that a paradigm shift is required that places “assessment as an integral part of good pedagogy” at the

centre of the enterprise and builds ways of meeting other assessment purposes in ways that align with this, including national reporting.

He also points out that advances in technology have opened up exciting new possibilities for simulations, interactions, the intelligent analysis of student responses, personalized, tailored assessment tasks and rapid, information-rich and reliable feedback.

Writing this article, I came across the following quote: “When an educational problem persists despite the well intentioned efforts of many people to solve it, it’s a safe bet that the problem hasn’t been properly

framed. Assessment in education has clearly become such a problem. ... More ominously we seem unable to see any moral harm in bypassing context sensitive human judgments of human abilities in the name of statistical accuracy and economy.”

This statement by Grant Wiggins was made, not in 2014, but in 1989.

The sad truth is that we didn’t need 25 years of going down the wrong path to come to this realisation. This was clearly understood in Australian education circles even before the first murmurings about introducing national standardised testing.

We have dug ourselves into an educationally indefensible policy hole because we have allowed politicians and the media to drive key decisions. To my knowledge we have never established an expert group of educational practitioners with access to specialist expertise to develop better policy solutions in education. Why don’t we give it a try? //



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The Gaia Environment Group at Hawker has driven the installation of recycling bins across the college.

# Students Leading the Way at Hawker College

Hawker College students are taking a lead in tackling environmental and gender issues in their community. Tom Greenwell spoke with Vanessa Farrelly, Davis Jensen, Angela Christian-Wilkes, Clare Campbell, Saphyre McGregor, Emily-Jane Skillin, Phoebe O'Brien and Jeremy Platt.

## Gaia Environment Group

At Hawker College, an energetic and inspiring group of young people - the Gaia Environment Group - are taking responsibility for making sure the school environment is clean and tidy – and a place where everyone belongs.

Gaia was formed when acclaimed environmentalist, Anna Rose, visited Hawker and encouraged students to take action on issues in their local community.

The students believed there was potential for more recycling at their school and a need for greater awareness of its importance amongst their peers. They decided to organise a colourful three-bin recycling system to be prominently installed throughout the College.

To help them with the logistics of this task, the students enlisted the support of Clare Harrison from ANU Greensteps. With this help, they worked out how the recycling system would work, which bins to use and what company would take them away.

The Gaia group organised a range of activities to spread the message amongst their peers. Vanessa explains: "For Youth Week we got a scholarship of \$300 to host a series of environmentally themed events over a week. We had a sustainable BBQ where we gave out free kangaroo sausages and vegetarian sausages.



People were surprised – the vegetarian bacon was good!”

When the recycling bins arrived in Term 3, the group promoted them across the school including with a Youtube video they made and showed in assembly.

The bins are getting a great response from Hawker students. “Because the bins are really brightly coloured, that does help make them noticeable. People do see them, notice them and are encouraged to put their rubbish in them. Maybe our campaign has helped people think about where their rubbish goes.”

“We did a survey recently to see how people are responding to the bins. The responses are really positive. People are giving us a lot of really good feedback.”

The Gaia group organises an audit of the recycling system every Friday to ensure materials are going to the right places and everything is working smoothly.

As well making a difference to the environment, it’s clear that the initiative is strengthening Hawker students’ sense of ownership over their school. Year 12 student, Davis, comments: “Because if it’s by the staff it’s not as much part of the school. I think the students have helped really change the culture.”

According to Hawker teacher, Chris Kenna, there’s just less rubbish around the place. “It’s great to see an initiative like this encouraging students to think about rubbish as something you don’t just throw away or drop.”

### **SIA – Students for Inclusion and Autonomy’**

When the Anthropology of Gender class at Hawker got thinking about how stereotypes and stigmas affect how we’re brought up, see the world and behave, they decided to form a group to promote gender equality.

As one student explains: “One of the things that really inspired me to want to start this group was that I couldn’t really reconcile the fact that when I’d come to school I’d be treated with respect and I’d feel safe and comfortable but then as soon I was out of this environment, I was suddenly faced

with all these horrible other things that were outside of what I was used to. What we really wanted to do was understand that and try and see how we could change it.”

SIA organised a 6 week girls’ self-defence class where students learnt about protective behaviours, awareness and assertiveness as well as practising physical defence skills. “One of the most interesting things when we got in there was our instructor said “Right, we’re all going to do some shouting exercises.”

“I think a good thing about the shouting was being confident in yourself and your voice and being able to speak out. Rather than just minimize yourself, it’s about making your presence known and gaining more confidence.”

**“One of the most interesting things when we got in there was our instructor said “Right, we’re all going to do some shouting exercises.”**

The students have also held events to raise funds for the Assist-a-Sister foundation that provides resources and support to families who have just escaped domestic violence and abuse. “The particular aspect we were raising money for was school – so children from those families can go on excursions or have stationary and all the stuff they need to participate properly in the school environment.”

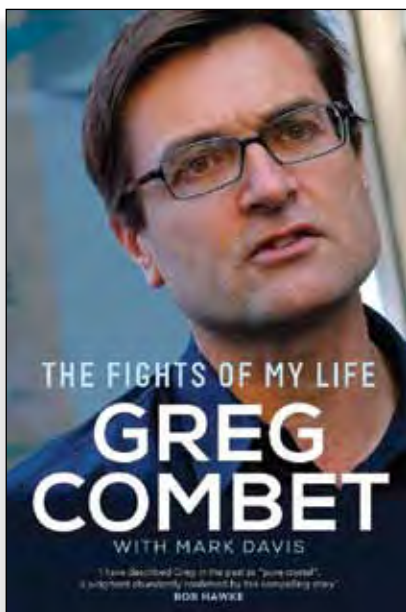
SIA students have also embarked on a campaign to promote a culture of respect in their own school environment. They have given talks in school assemblies challenged the use of sexist and homophobic language. While they know they are challenging their peers, they have been affirmed by an increasingly positive acceptance of their message.

The group is anxious to include young men too. “It’s a safe space for women to talk about whatever we feel we need to talk about. But we also welcome men. I think a lot of teenage boys don’t understand how they are affected by the same issues we are.”//

# Greg Combet's 'The Fights of My Life'

The Fights of My Life, Greg Combet with Mark Davis, Melbourne University Press, 312pp.

Reviewed by Tom Greenwell



**Greg Combet's recent memoir does more than tell the story of his time as a Minister in the Rudd and Gillard Governments. He also describes his long career in the Australian union movement. As such, his book serves as a useful addition to the history of our movement over recent decades.**

## The Waterfront Dispute

By 1997, Combet was Assistant Secretary of the ACTU and thus on the front lines of the dispute that shook Australia's waterfront. The MUA had been negotiating conditions and productivity measures with stevedoring company, Patricks, before the company - backed by the Howard government - determined to eschew compromise.

Patrick's locked their workers out and replaced them with non-union labor, secretly trained in Dubai.

The company's strategy escalated the dispute. It was no longer just about specific terms and conditions but the practical right of workers to be part of a union. Combet describes how the MUA and the union movement fought this attack on two levels. In the courts, they relied on legal protections prohibiting employers from discriminating against employees because of their membership of a union. Through picket lines and community protests, Patricks was prevented from getting goods on and off the docks and thus securing its cash flow.

In time, the combined effect was to force Patricks back to the negotiating table. The MUA agreed to accept significant compromises but Patricks was forced to accept the right of workers to negotiate through their union and today the ports remain highly unionised workplaces.

## Ansett – Saving Workers' Entitlements

When Ansett was put into administration in late 2001, over 15000 employees faced losing their jobs. They also faced the prospect of losing years of accrued entitlements - \$758 million in total. As the largest single bloc of creditors, workers would be able to exert major influence on the company's administrators – provided they stuck together. Combet co-ordinated the numerous unions involved into a single cohesive force, achieved recognition as the legitimate representative of the affected workers from the Federal Court and had new administrators appointed.

Combet writes: "I felt a tremendous burden of responsibility to these people. Individually they were powerless to recover their entitlements... It's one of the hardest situations for people, to work somewhere for many years, enjoy their jobs and feel commitment to the company, only for it to vanish overnight as if it had all been a mirage. It's very distressing to see the grief in people's eyes."

Combet was instrumental in the Your Rights at Work campaign in response to attacks on pay, conditions and job security.



Ansett was not saved but the unions influenced the insolvency administration through their voting power and ensured almost all employee entitlements were paid out. The final payment in September 2011 brought the total payouts to workers to \$727.5 million. Whereas in the past unions had adopted a passive attitude to business failures, the Ansett experience showed the potential to influence the insolvency process. Thus, the hard-won entitlements of ordinary people were protected.

### Making James Hardie Pay

Breathing in long thin asbestos fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma although it often takes decades for symptoms to show. Companies like CSR and James Hardie long knew this but did not provide safety warnings or cease production until relatively recently. As a result, there have been 10,000 deaths from mesothelioma alone since the 1980s. As Combet writes: 'Countless lives have been destroyed by illness, pain and death. The companies knew what they were doing.'

Likewise, James Hardie knew what it was doing when it parked all its asbestos-related liabilities in a Medical Research & Compensation foundation and moved its parent company to the Netherlands. These actions were designed to protect the company from decades of compensation claims as workers exposed to its asbestos were struck down by disease.

With limited legal or industrial recourse, the union movement worked with asbestos-sufferer groups to publicly shame James Hardie to the negotiating table. In the face of huge public anger, James Hardie CEO, Meredith Hellicar, was forced to sit down with Combet, Bernie Banton and others and hammer out a deal. They ultimately reached a settlement worth more than \$1.5 billion

that will ensure asbestos-sufferers can access compensation for decades to come.

### Our Rights at Work

When the Howard Government's WorkChoices legislation was introduced it hit working people hard. Annette Harris who worked at a Spotlight store was put on an individual contract that removed penalty rates, overtime, allowances and holiday pay. This meant she earned \$90 less a week. In turn, her base salary was increased 2 cents an hour. Andrew Cruickshank, a manager at a Priceline was sacked for 'operational reasons'. Two weeks later, his job was advertised for \$25,000 a year less.

In the face of the Howard Government's attack on basic rights and collective bargaining, the union movement mobilised a massive campaign. Combet describes speaking to a mass rally in November 2005. "It was the Australian union movement's largest ever demonstration, with between five and six hundred thousand people protesting nationwide." Along with rallies, the union movement spent over \$20 million on television commercials and organised intensive on-the-ground campaigns in 24 marginal seats, playing a pivotal role in the defeat of the Howard Government.

Reflecting on the victory for asbestos-sufferers against James Hardie, Combet writes: "It highlighted for me just how important the labour movement is to our country, how it delivers tangible outcomes for real people, in the cause of fairness and justice." The same could well be said of *The Fights of My Life*. The book is highly recommended to anyone interested in the Australian union movement and how we work together to achieve positive change. //

# Fair Go For Canberra



With attacks on Medicare, young people, university students, pensioners, and public servants (to name a few), we all stand to be hit by this Government's reckless policies! Fair Go For Canberra welcomes individuals and organisations of all backgrounds to join us in our fight to defend our community and livelihoods against the attacks of the Abbott government.

Visit [www.fairgoforcanberra.org.au](http://www.fairgoforcanberra.org.au) to sign the petition against the \$7 GP co-payment and find out more.

**Please sign our petition to protect universal healthcare.**

please sign our petition

[www.fairgoforcanberra.org.au](http://www.fairgoforcanberra.org.au)

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# Membership Application Form

## AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION - ACT BRANCH

Please complete this form send it to the AEU - ACT Branch Office

Post: PO Box 3042, Manuka 2603

Fax: 62731828

Email: [aeuact@aeuact.org.au](mailto:aeuact@aeuact.org.au).

### 1) Personal Details

Title: ..... First Name: ..... Surname: .....

Postal Address: ..... Postcode: .....

Home Phone: ..... Mobile: ..... Work Phone: .....

Please indicate preferred Phone:  Home  Mobile  Work

Work Email: ..... Personal email: .....

Please indicate preferred email:  Work  Personal

Gender:  Male  Female  Unspecified  Intersex

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?  Yes  No

Are you from a language background other than English?  Yes  No

If yes what is your primary language: .....

Have you previously been a member of the AEU-ACT Branch?  Yes  No

Were you asked by a colleague to join the AEU?  Yes  No

If yes, please provide colleague's name .....

### 2) Employment

School Teacher > go to section 3

School Assistant > go to section 4

CIT Teacher > go to section 5

### 3) School Teacher

Work Location: .....

Gross Annual Salary: .....

Employment Status:  Full time permanent  Full time contract

Part time permanent % load: .....

Part time contract % load: .....

Relief Average days per week:  
 0-1  2-3  3-5

Sector:  Primary: Preschool  Primary: K-2

Primary: 3-6  Secondary: High School

Secondary: College  ACT School Office

Other .....

Position:  Classroom Teacher

Subject Speciality: .....

School Psychologist  Teacher Librarian

Executive Teacher  Deputy Principal

Principal

Progress to section 6 >

### 4) School Assistant

Work Location: .....

Gross Annual Salary: .....

Employment Status:  Full time permanent  Full time contract

Part time permanent % load: .....

Part time contract % load: .....

Relief Average days per week:  
 0-1  2-3  3-5

Sector:  Primary: Preschool  Primary: K-2

Primary: 3-6  Secondary: High School

Secondary: College  ACT School Office

Other .....

Position:  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer

Bilingual Assistant  Learning Support Assistant

Defence Transition Mentor  Library Assistant

General Assistant  Preschool Assistant

Hearing Support Assistant  School Administration Assistant

Home Science Assistant  Vision Support Assistant

ICT Assistant  Youth Support Worker

Laboratory Assistant

Progress to section 6 >

## 5) CIT Teacher

College:  Business, Tourism, Accounting & Communication  
 Trade Skills & Vocational Learning  
 Building, Technology & Design  
 Health, Community & Science

Work Location:  Bruce  Reid  
 Fyshwick  Tuggeranong  
 Gungahlin  Woden

Gross Annual Salary: .....

Employment Status:  Full time permanent  Full time contract  
 Part time permanent % load: .....  
 Part time contract % load: .....  
 Casual Average hours per week:  
 0-6  7-14  15-20

Position:  Teacher  Subject Speciality: .....  
 Teacher: Educational Development & Support  
 Education Manager  Head of Department  
 Head of College

## 6) Membership Agreement

I hereby apply for membership of the ACT Branch of the Australian Education Union and if admitted agree to abide by the Rules of the Union. AEU Rules can be found at [www.aeuact.org.au](http://www.aeuact.org.au). I agree to pay to the AEU fees owing in accordance with the Union's schedule of subscriptions. I understand that my fees will be adjusted automatically in line with salary movements. I recognise that I must inform the Union of any other salary or status adjustments otherwise I will not be a fully financial member and may not be eligible for the full range of services. I understand that the Union's Rules require me to give written notice of resignation.

## 7) Payment Options

### Fortnightly Payroll Deduction (permanent and contract staff only)

I authorise the AEU to contact ETD to commence fortnightly deductions at the appropriate rate as soon as possible. I authorise the AEU to access my salary and other employment details from the Education and Training Directorate for the purpose of updating AEU membership records.

AGS Number (found on payslip): .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Monthly Direct Debit

I authorise the AEU to commence a monthly direct debit from my nominated account at the appropriate rate to be debited on the 11th of each month using the bulk electronic clearing system (BECS).

Name of Financial Institution: .....

BSB: .....

Account Number: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Monthly Credit Card

I authorise the AEU to commence monthly charges at the appropriate rate to be debited on the 11th of each month.

Card type:  MasterCard  Visa

Card Name: .....

Card Number: .....

CSC: .....

Expiry: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Thanks for joining our community of 3,500 ACT educators and nearly 200,000 educators nationwide! We'll be in touch soon to confirm your membership and tell you more about how you can access the benefits of being a member and take an active role in our union.

### PRIVACY STATEMENT

The AEU will not sell or provide any information regarding AEU – ACT Branch members to third parties. The AEU's Privacy Policy may be viewed at [www.aeuact.org.au](http://www.aeuact.org.au).

### DIRECT DEBIT SERVICE AGREEMENT

#### DEFINITIONS

THE "UNION" means the Australian Education Union ACT Branch

MEMBER a financial member of the Australian Education Union ACT Branch

#### SPONSOR

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION a financial institution or agency with whom the Union has an agreement to enable participation in the Direct Debit Scheme

#### 1. PAYMENTS

1.1 The Australian Education Union ACT Branch (the "Union") shall use the funds collected under this Debit Request Service Agreement for the sole purpose of paying the members subscription payment.

1.2 All such membership payments shall be collected every four weeks in advance for the previous four weeks.

1.3 The Union shall provide not less than 14 days notice to members of any proposed variation to these arrangements.

Such notice shall be published in a union publication circulated to all members or by means of an individual notice to each participating Debit Scheme member.

#### 2. DEFERMENT OF DEBIT ARRANGEMENTS

A participating member may request deferment of or alteration to his/her debit arrangements.

Any such requests must be in writing addressed to the Branch Secretary of the Union.

#### 3. CANCELLATION OF DEBIT ARRANGEMENT

A participating member may cancel his/her debit arrangement by giving notice in writing to the Branch Secretary.

All requests for cancellation must be forwarded to the Union in the first instance.

#### 4. DISPUTED DEBITS

Any participating member who wishes to dispute a debit item related to this Agreement shall direct their queries in the first instance to the Union.

Any such queries or matters of dispute shall be addressed in writing to the Branch Secretary who shall investigate and adjudicate on the matter within 14 days of receiving any such correspondence.

#### 5. DIRECT DEBIT ACCOUNTS

Direct debiting through the bulk electronic clearing system is not available on all accounts. If in doubt please refer to your financial institution before completing the Direct Debit Request. It is the member's responsibility to check that account details are correct.

#### 6. COLLECTION DAYS

When the due date for collection is not a normal business day (normally a state or national public holiday) the collection shall be made on the nearest normal business day after the regular due date.

If a member is uncertain as to when a debit will be processed to his/her account they should enquire direct to their financial institution.

#### 7. REJECTED DEBITS

It is the responsibility of the member to have sufficient clear funds available in the relevant account by the due date to permit payment of debit items included under the direct debit request.

If a direct debit is rejected by a member's financial institution their Union membership fee remains due and payable.

The member shall also be responsible for any fees related to the rejection applied by the financial institution.

#### 8. PRIVACY – Access to Information

The Union shall preserve the privacy of the member's records and account details whilst noting that these details may have to be divulged to the sponsor financial institution when requested.

Thanks for joining our community.



# The AEU ACT Office Team



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## More info

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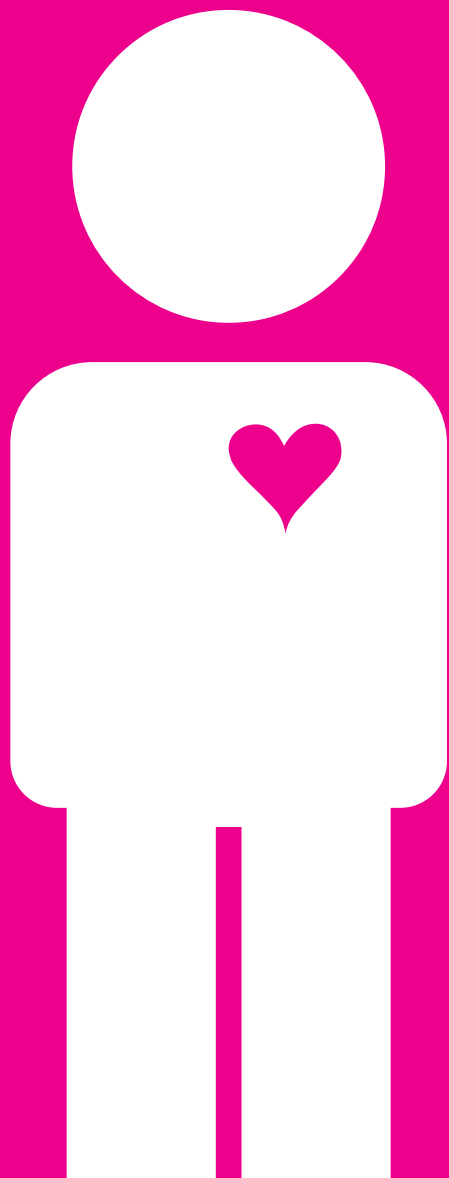
W: [www.aeuact.org.au](http://www.aeuact.org.au)

E: [aeuact@aeuact.org.au](mailto:aeuact@aeuact.org.au)

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