

# Branch Out

## Australian Federal Election 2013

### Special Edition

## Federal candidates share education views for over 70,000 IEU members

OVER 70,000 teacher members can now read up on party policy before casting a vote at the September Federal Election.

Issues of interest and importance to teachers working the non-government sector were raised by IEU state branches and collated into a list of election questions put to federal candidates.

The Federal Office has received responses from the Australian Labor Party, the Clive Palmer United Party, the Liberal-National coalition and the Greens. The IEU has not yet received responses from Bob Katter's Australian Party, Wikileaks and Independents Nick Xenophon and Andrew Wilkie. Responses can be read in full on our website at [www.ieu.org.au](http://www.ieu.org.au) and will be posted as they roll in.

Federal Secretary Chris Watt said all responses received so far were supportive of teachers, and the value of their work.

[Continued page 3...](#)



## Election Edition

**ELECTION** What would independent education look like under a conservative government? Page 5.

First in, best dressed. Read responses from the first three parties to respond to IEU election questions. Page 3.

**MEMBERS** IEU Journalists Michael Oliver and Tara deBoehmler talk election priorities with members. Page 4.

**FEDERAL** Federal office and WA staff tour indigenous schools in the East Kimberley. Page 2.

# WAY OUT WEST

(FROM CANBERRA, ANYWAY)

## IEU leaders visit regional and remote schools in WA

FEDERAL Secretary Chris Watt and Assistant Federal Secretary Christine Cooper recently joined with Western Australian colleagues to complete a week-long tour of indigenous schools in WA's East Kimberley region. As one of the nine regions of Western Australia, the Kimberly sits at the northern part of the state, with the Eastern region situated near the Northern Territory border. The IEU delegation included new recruiter Sandy Tasker, who signed up an astonishing 25 new members, and WA Assistant Secretary Kathryn Barnes. Having thoroughly enjoyed the chance to meet with members working in indigenous schools, Ms Cooper said the tour represented a chance to discuss issues of importance to members, and devise strategies as to how their union could assist them further.

"The disadvantage of distance was very much in evidence and IEU members discussed strategies on how their union could support them further, so we got a lot out of it," she said.

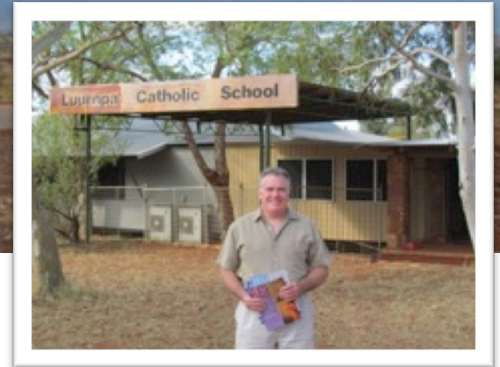
Central to the continuing improvement of member's working conditions, the Independent Education Union believes in regularly touching base with teachers working in the non-government sector and experiencing first-hand the working environments they contribute to.

People from all levels of our organization, from organisers to policy bods and decision makers, strive to gain a "real world" understanding of the issues facing today's teachers.

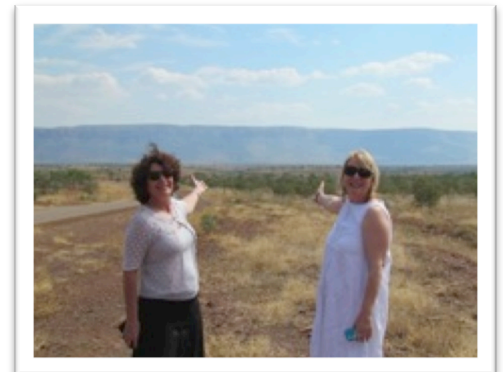
### TOUR GUIDE: WHERE DID THEY VISIT?

#### **Ngalangangpum School, Warmun**

Ngalanpangpum School has 100 students from K-10. With a population of 400, it is part of one of the biggest Aboriginal communities in WA. Residents are members of the Kija language group.



IEU Federal Secretary Chris Watt pictured outside Luurnpa Catholic School.



#### **Warlawurru Catholic School, Red Hill**

Warlawurru has 86 students from K-7 and is staffed by the principal, four teachers and four Aboriginal teaching assistants. A school bus transports students from township to school.

#### **Luurnpa Catholic School, Balgo Hills (350km south of Halls Creek)**

Here, all students are Indigenous and most students speak Kukatja as their first language. Luurnpa has a Kutjungka Trade Training Centre for secondary students, and each year group has a teacher and an Aboriginal Teacher Assistant.

#### **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Kununurra**

St Joseph's is a K-7 remote country school with 220 students including Aboriginal and non Aboriginal children. Kindy students attend school 3 days per week with a total of 18 hours contact time and Aboriginal Teacher Assistants visit families to promote school attendance.

# Branch Out

Australian Federal Election 2013

Special Edition

## Election Forum

Responses from all parties can be read in full at [www.ieu.org.au](http://www.ieu.org.au)  
Here are some key points from the first three parties we heard from...



### On Funding

The Greens highlighted their support of the Government's recent school funding reforms, which proposed increases in funding to non-government schools. Their response also pledged to fix gaps in the current framework, including the consistent provision of proper assistance for students with a disability.

### On Industrial Relations

The Greens support better entry rights for reps, including to remedy breaches of OH&S, breaches of the Fair Work Act and relevant awards or agreements, for activities relating to strengthening worker's organisations and to have discussions about union membership.

### On Asylum Seekers

Earlier this year the Greens moved a motion in the Senate to 'reject the vilification of refugees and asylum seekers'. They pledge a commitment to speaking about refugees in humanitarian terms and basing policies on the evidence and advice of human rights and legal experts.



### On Funding

The Government's Better Schools Plan, formerly Gonski, will provide \$690 million in additional funding in 2014 compared to 2013 funding levels, growing to an additional \$18.8 billion in extra funding by 2019.

### On Industrial Relations

Federal Labor's *Fair Work Act* supports collective enterprise bargaining and agreement making. The Government has recently simplified key parts of the right of entry framework, including ensuring that where a union and employer cannot agree on a suitable location for discussions during meal or other breaks that the default position for those discussions will be the place employees usually spend their meal break.

### On Asylum Seekers

In response to the IEU's question regarding the vilifying debate regarding refugees, the labor response referred to its National Anti--Racism Partnership and Strategy and public awareness campaign Racism.itstopswithme to stamp out racism in our community.



### On Funding

In relation to additional funding for the non-government sector, the Palmer United party highlighted that their policy would ensure the widest possible freedom of choice in education, promoted by diversity of systems and schools. PUP seeks to increase funding to all schools by \$20 billion to raise the standard of education across both the government and non-government sectors.

### On Industrial Relations

In a response to the IEU, the Palmer United Party said it did not have any planned changes to Industrial Relations that would create additional barriers to our organisers assisting members in their workplaces.

### On Asylum Seekers

PUP believes in a more humane approach to asylum seekers. Opposed to offshore processing, PUP said it encouraged refugees to fly to Australia to be processed at airports, "rather than pay up to \$20,000 to people smugglers to risk their lives trying to enter the country illegally."

Responses from all parties can be read in full at [www.ieu.org.au](http://www.ieu.org.au)



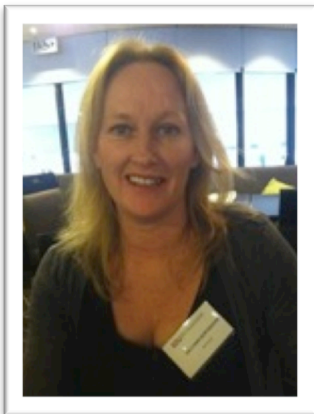
# Branch Out

Australian Federal Election 2013

Special Edition

## Members speak

3 teachers, from 3 states, were asked 3 questions about their priorities for the September election.



**NSW Sallyann Burtenshaw, St Bernards Primary, Batemans Bay**

**What is your priority at the upcoming election?**

The economy is my biggest priority and the largest issue on which I'll base my vote. I want to see the economy managed responsibly, along with a commitment to honesty and transparency. I want to see the actual figures so we know exactly what's going on and what we've got to spend.

**What is the biggest challenge faced by teachers in your state?**

New technologies, limited training opportunities, parents with different priorities, discipline in the classroom and respect of teachers. Another issue is teachers having to go into the Institute, and all that paperwork involved - especially in rural schools where there is not of staff to help and limited in-servicing.

**"Everyone talks about raising teacher standards but many of the reforms are not about offering teachers additional support."**

**How do you feel about Gonski? (Better Schools Plan)**

The Union has done a good job of informing IEU reps about Gonski but there should also be discussion from principals. I don't think many of them are well informed. They don't seem to understand where the money is coming from, or how they will be spending it. Everyone talks about raising teacher standards but many of the reforms are not about offering teachers additional support.

**QLD Gerry Kay, Carinda**

**What is your priority at the upcoming election?**

My vote will be based on the party that can best reassure me that my grandchildren will be able to breathe in clean air and be able to appreciate an environment that stays uniquely Australian.

A political party that can assure me that my family will be provided with their basic democratic rights; that the jobs they have worked so hard to gain don't have there benefits taken away; that they feel safe in their employment and that an honest day's work leads to an



Continued from Page 4...

**What is the biggest challenge faced by teachers in your state?**

Conditions and benefits being ripped away by governments who do not see teachers as integral to bringing forward a smarter Australia. A lack of funding for independent schools that are going to go to the wall. The inequity as to how a leading independent boys school in Sydney can get four times the funding that a small independent girls school in Brisbane can get. This is all not even taking into consideration the job intensification impacting on teaching at the 'chalk face!'

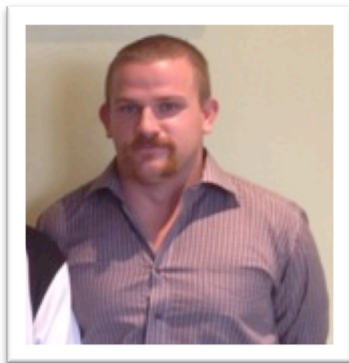
**How do you feel about Gonski? (Better Schools Plan)**

My concern is that the model will continue the status quo in funding in real terms. I hold the view that every Australian student deserves a quality education and that there must be much greater funding of all schools and the tertiary sector. Australia languishes at the bottom of OECD countries for investment in education. The current modeling provided to us would see a reduction of between 19% to 21% , which represents \$787,000. My school for example, in real terms, will go backwards. For a school going through a struggle (as are several others) this is a real voting concern for teachers, staff and parents in the community.

**NT Kieran Curnow, staff rep at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Alice Springs**

**What is your priority in the upcoming election?**

I have general worries about a lack of emphasis on social policy. I



think a lot of the economic talk is overblown, and I care about the delivery of social services more than talk about deficits or surplus.

The nastiness that has entered the debate about asylum seekers is very disheartening. I have a strong fear of Australia becoming more self-centered. I wish people would vote for the common good rather than their individual good. Both major parties are making this self-

centeredness worse. I don't believe a lot of the fear mongering about cost of living. I believe it is not cost of living that has blown out, but rather it is aspirations that are out of line. More than anything I am worried about how we treat the most vulnerable. I thought it couldn't get worse than the negative politics of 2010, but it has. This presidential style of election is just poisonous.

**What is the biggest challenge faced by teachers in your state?**

It is not so much in the Territory; I think this problem is nationwide- I think there is a lot of apathy directed at education. Apathy from parents and students is the biggest problem. Teaching becomes very difficult when you have to fight against this apathy.

**How do you feel about Gonski? (Better Schools Plan)**

To be honest, there is no way I can give judgment. I hear a lot from all sides of the debate but it is still very hard to filter through to the heart of the issue and find out what it actually means for teachers in terms of resources and workloads. Funding is nice. But it is no silver bullet. But yes, I am weary of potential workload increases that may come of the new requirements.

## Election chatter

*Branch Out speaks to Federal Secretary Chris Watt about his predictions post September 7.*

**The Greens provided a response that was very supportive of our role as a union, what is your response to it?**

"The Greens provided a response that supported the role, value and work of teachers, however the legitimacy of the non-government sector is only ever considered as a secondary player rather than a partner in school education.

**What will non-government education look like under a conservative government?**

"If there is a change to a Coalition Government, Independent education probably won't look all that different in the next term of government. The coalition has recently committed to retaining the Better Schools funding increases.

"However, the coalition is unclear about their commitment to some of the new regulations, but interestingly, they're regulations we don't want for example introducing science to NAPLAN and the reporting of results on MySchool.

"Perhaps there will be some scope to consider and manage the apparent difficulties the education Reform Agreement presents. There might be an opportunity to tweak areas of concern.

*"The nastiness that has entered the debate about asylum seekers is very disheartening."*