

The bulletin

national news from the federal office

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IEU's Students with Disabilities campaign is now in its second phase, which will see an email campaign by members to their local MPs and a letter to principals, encouraging them to help the IEU raise awareness regarding the underfunding of the educational needs of SWD. The letter to principals will also contain a survey link- to collect data for the campaign's later stages.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMIC APPOINTED FOR IEU RESPONSE

Fran Press will draft the IEU's response to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Child Care and Early Childhood

Learning.

Ms Press' assistance was approved by the Federal Executive at its meeting in July.

An Associate Professor at the School of Teacher

Education at Charles Sturt University, Ms Press has been appointed to draw on research and key policy documents such as the OECD's Starting Strong reports, which emphasise the importance of policy being driven by children's needs not workforce needs.

These reports also highlight the cost-benefit of high quality Early Childhood Education, the importance of teacher qualifications across the

age ranges and the importance of universal access in redressing educational disadvantage. Her teaching and research interests cover the areas of early childhood policy, the sociology of early childhood and the leadership of early childhood Programs.



Associate Professor Fran Press

PREPARATIONS FOR NATIONAL CONFERENCE UNDERWAY

The 2014 IEU National Conference will be held in Sydney on October 2 and 3 for Branch

Executives/Committees of Management. The theme of the conference, leading up to World Teachers Day 2014, is Quality Education: What we do, who we are. The Conference will consist of panels exploring issues relating to the provision of quality education including early childhood education, engagement with parents, issues for students with disabilities, collaboration with education support staff and quality professional learning for teachers. The Conference will also receive

addresses from ACTU President Ged Kearney and NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter.

INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE PAVES THE WAY TO IMPROVE MODERN AWARD

As part of its core work, the Industrial Committee is considering ideas from branches to improve conditions in modern awards as part of the 4-yearly reviews of those awards. The awards themselves influence bargaining outcomes for all members but more importantly, they set pay and conditions for members without agreements – our lowest paid members.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE EXAMINES TEACHER REQUIREMENTS

The IEU Education Committee has committed to undertake work on mapping a number of current issues across jurisdictions including beginning teacher induction processes and teacher registration fees and requirements across Boards, Colleges and Institutes.

IEU CONDEMNS TASMANIAN PROTEST LAWS

Pending Tasmanian Protest Laws, which are currently before the Upper House, have been condemned by the IEU. The laws target those who support a protest and are found to be 'hindering business activities'. Penalties include fines up to \$50,000 and 5 years imprisonment. The IEU views these laws as an attack on the rights and freedoms of Australians in supporting community issues. The meeting carried the following resolution: This meeting expresses its deep concern at the move by the conservative Tasmanian Government to



Penalties for protest: up to \$50,000 fine and 5 years imprisonment.

silence legitimate protest. The Bill introduced, euphemistically entitled the Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Bill 2014, is a move to criminalise participation in the democratic right to protest. It places an onus on police to move on or arrest citizens for doing nothing more than publicly expressing

their views where this creates even the slightest inconvenience to a workplace. It is oppressive in the extreme and goes too far by making the convenience of workplaces supreme and the right to protest illegal.

In more news from Tasmania, the IEU is concerned by shameful behavior exhibited by Tasmanian Catholic employers, passing a recent resolution condemning their bad faith in capriciously withdrawing from negotiations, refusing to provide job security for support staff or regulated workloads for teachers and trying to force their own non-union agreement on their employees.

WOMENS COMMITTEE IMPROVES FLEXIBLE WORK RIGHTS AWARENESS

After collecting members' stories and identifying problems for parents in the workplace, the Women's and Equity Committee have produced an informative Flexible Work Arrangements Guide. "The committee was able to ascertain that although there were good provisions existing in collective agreements, members still weren't able to access them –so our focus became about education of rights for members," said Assistant Federal Secretary Christine Cooper. In a submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission Inquiry *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work* National Review, the IEU recommended legislative changes for employers to justify flexible work refusal, a formal appeals process and awareness campaigns to alert employers of employees' rights.

NAPLAN TESTING FAULTS BEGIN TO SURFACE

The release of state-based data for the 2014 NAPLAN tests have seen considerable commentary of issues in relation to the Writing element.

This year's results reveal that outcomes across all domains, other than writing, are the same as last year. ACARA also reports a significant decline across all year cohorts in the writing element since 2011- although not a significant decline since last year; unlike previous years, the writing task was not advised beforehand and therefore, there was no opportunity for total focus on one writing type (some media picked up on this up as a possible reason for decline).

A problem exists with the test item itself; one of the issues is having the same task for all year cohorts so that there is a continuum of performance for reporting purposes; consequently ACARA are now going to look at different 'prompts' or tasks for year 3/5 compared to year 7/9.

The IEU's media release said: "The need for an expert review of NAPLAN is now more apparent than ever, and has been highlighted by this year's low-test scores in writing skills on account of testing problems... additional matters requiring further attention include the value of NAPLAN as a diagnostic tool for teachers, the negative impact on schools of publishing results on MySchool, and the needs of students with a disability. The IEU encourages the Australian Government to undertake an urgent review of NAPLAN and its reporting, ensuring that all stakeholders and especially teacher experts are involved."