Secure wins by acting collectively



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General Secretary

I am only too aware that at times members can feel overwhelmed by some of the issues facing the profession such as:

- Increasing violence from students and parents.
- Lack of job options for country and remote staff.
- Forced long service leave practice by this government.
- Administration and accountability overload.
- Policy changes every second day.

However, we do have good news to share and I think it is important to realise that through a shared sense of purpose and a desire to help our fellow teachers, we can overcome adversity.

Our case management team officers work to advocate for members faced with disputes against the employer. This is always a daunting experience for the teacher/lecturer, so having their union in batting for them is critical.

A few examples of our recent work by SSTUWA case manager Mario Schmidt include:

- A member was going to have to pay back $6,248.81. After the SSTUWA questioned and analysed the situation and negotiated with the Department of Education (DoE), the member's debt was cleared.
- A primary teacher's long service leave (LSL) date was originally pushed back and previous years of service cancelled out because the DoE made an error with the contract of employment. The SSTUWA negotiated for the member to access the LSL that the member was entitled to.
- An administrative error processing a member's contract at school led to the member being paid out LSL. This meant the member was unable to register paid LSL as paid leave. The SSTUWA was able to ensure the error was rectified and the member able to use the LSL as intended. We understand the member is currently planning their holiday.
- The DoE argued a member was up for $14,000+ debt. After considerable negotiation, DoE waived the debt and increased the member's level on the salary scale.

These examples show how the SSTUWA is able to support you. By raising an issue with your SSTUWA rep in the first instance, and through proper processes, you can find justice and fair treatment at work.

Update on our Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School members

On behalf of the Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School (KBCHS) members a huge thank you to all the branches that have sent messages and motions of support – this has been so important.

It has been a tough year for everyone but for these members going back to work each day has taken its toll and requires special recognition by us all.

Many of you have heard me talk about the dedication of all the staff at this school – they want to make a difference to the lives of the students in their care.

The lack of on the ground and practical support has let down the staff in the school. We have students who feel afraid to walk the corridors. We have staff who feel afraid for their safety and are just so fed up with having to do internal relief every day, every week. As we have seen, this is a town problem; the solutions and table turning is with the town leaders and our school is part of this town.

Our fantastic KBCHS members have used the OSH Act to demand a safe workplace. This action has required strength as a group and as individuals.

Standing up for what is right and then to stay standing until it is right is what your colleagues are doing.

Help them by sending a message of support via Letters to the Editor by emailing: editor@sstuwa.org.au

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