

Country Matters Report



Based on concerns raised by members at the June State Council the SSTUWA began a GROH Campaign from June.

As you are now fully aware the SSTUWA has been seeking the following:

- **A reversal or freeze of 2017 increases for teachers and school leaders.**
- **Gain further commitment that further increases will not be happening from 2018 -2020.**
- **A full review of the mechanism for rent level fixing.**
- **GROH related conditions included in the 2020 General Agreement.**

A GROH Campaign Working Group has been established involving country members, external organisers, senior officers and the Communications Manager to develop a campaign strategy. I would like to acknowledge the following country members on this working group.

Arty Dimitrof - Roeborne DHS

Renee Skehan – Bolgart PS

Jasmine Harris-Derby DHS

Heather Riseberry- Hannans PS

Jasmine Porteous- Bremer Bay PS

Robert Dalton-Manjimup SHS

Melissa Hatwell – Hedland PEAC

As part of this campaign the following actions have taken place:

1. An extensive GROH Communications campaign was established:
2. Over the course of Term 3 we have asked members to sign the online petition or hard copies of the petition at district council meetings and school visits during August/September/October. Currently we have over 1,300 signatures as well as around 300 detailed comments from people who signed online.
3. Based on feedback from Country Members on the GROH committee recommendations, identified country politicians were contacted via a letter from the SSTUWA outlining concerns raised by country members within their electorate over GROH rental increases and the associated GROH Campaign as a precursor to a country member making contact with the local member. A copy of this letter was sent to the country member as well.
4. To date two country politicians have been in contact with the SSTUWA over the GROH letter: Kevin Michael, Member for Pilbara who Robyn Parker and myself met with Tuesday 31 October and Kyran O'Donnel, Member for Kalgoorlie, who we meet with on Tuesday 21 November.
5. A delegation of country members Heather Riseberry and Melissa Hatwell, external organisers Robyn Parker and

Antony Pearson and Senior Vice president Paul Bridge attended the hour long meeting at parliament house.

The delegation handed the Minister the 1300 signature petition including comments by Country members. We advised the Minister that over 100 of those commenting said GROH rental increases were prompting them to rethink their decision to locate in regional areas. This is in direct contradiction to the advice the Department of Education is giving their minister.

Both Heather and Melissa did a brilliant job in giving first hand examples from country members that were impacted by the GROH rental increases and the dis-incentive these increase are and will have in attracting and retaining teaching staff in their country locations.

The Minister said that he would not reverse the rental increases and was asked if the GROH review was still taking place and he confirmed it was. He posed the question what would be an alternative to current rental fixing framework and asked for feedback from the SSTUWA to the GROH rental review framework.

Regional and remote communities deserve the best quality education and GROH increases impact on the ability of school communities to recruit and retain staff in these locations.

The SSTUWA will continue pursue the need for a reversal in recent rent increases and a freeze on any further increases pending a full review of the mechanism for rent level increases.

The SSTUWA will also be seeking from the State Government that GROH related conditions be included in the 2020 General Agreement.