

# Stories: Geoff Regan



## Geoff Regan

**Acting Superintendent,  
Aboriginal Affairs Division, WAPOL**

Acting Superintendent of the Aboriginal Affairs Division of the Western Australian Police Force, Geoff Regan has been policing since 1991.

**WARNING: The following article contains words or terms that readers may find offensive.**

**Western Teacher: Which public schools did you attend?**

**Geoff Regan:** My parents were involved in mining, so I attended a couple of public schools. I mainly remember attending Neerigen Brook Primary School in Armadale, enrolling in Year 5 after returning from travelling around Australia in 1980. I went to Cecil Andrews College in Seville Grove in 1983. In 1985, I attended Mount Magnet District High School, completing Year 10. The next year my family moved to Alice Springs where I finished Year 11 and 12 at Sadadeen High School, later known as Centralian Senior College.

**WT: How was your public school experience?**

**GR:** My general school experience was positive, although I did struggle with some academics, but still managed to scrape through. I was generally there to play footy and catch up with friends.

**WT: Did you encounter racial issues in your years of schooling?**

**GR:** I experienced racial issues in both my primary and secondary school experience. Being called a nigger and racial slurs, of that nature however, I did not handle those situations in the best way I could have and I did spend some time being suspended.

**WT: How did your public school education help to shape the person you are today and help you to achieve your goals or success?**

**GR:** I don't believe it was the education alone that helped to shape the individual I am today, but more about the teachers who came across my path and their commitment to me and every student. Teachers, like police officers, are born to that profession – it is a true calling.

I chose policing as I wanted to be a part of something where I could make a change and a difference in a positive way. My parents were reluctant in me choosing policing given the history between Aboriginal people and the Police, but they were still supportive of my choice.

**WT: Did you have a teacher or staff member in your schooling that made an impact on you?**

**GR:** There were two teachers who had a real impact on me as a young person and they were both at Neerigen Brook PS.

Dawn Paxton, who was the deputy principal, got to know me very well as I tended to be sent to the deputy's office more than one should. Dawn had a very caring nature. She took the time to understand you as an individual, what made you tick, and why you may have reacted in a certain way. There was never any judgement.

The other was Geoff "Ted" Penny, I was in his Year 6 class. Ted was an Aboriginal man, so the issues I faced as a young fella, he was able to work through these with me. He did not tolerate the use of fighting back but instilled a sense of pride to

be Aboriginal and to not let the words of others impact on you.

I learnt not to expect anything to be given to you, but through hard work, commitment and ability, a person could achieve anything they wanted to. Ted's outlook was very much in line with the value systems my parents had instilled in me.

**WT: What advice would you have for teachers working with Indigenous students?**

**GR:** I would say listen and be prepared to think outside the box to facilitate a full learning experience for Aboriginal students. Be willing to compromise/adapt to cater for the students' circumstances. And be patient. For some Aboriginal students, school is seen as the only safe place for them.

**WT: What would you like to see for Indigenous students and education?**

**GR:** I would like to see higher graduation rates for Aboriginal students and for them to be adequately equipped to deal with life.

**WT: Is there a message you would like to give young Indigenous people today about their education?**

**GR:** I wasted a lot of opportunity that today I wish I hadn't. Your education is your investment in your future and when opportunities come, grab it with both hands and make the most of it. If you're deadly at sport, remember a sporting career does not last forever, it is just a small window to be successful, so make your schooling count. Some will not always be supportive of your career/job choices but remain focused on your goals and stay true to your values.



Authorised by Mary Franklyn, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.

ABN 54 478 094 635 © 2025