

An article in the West Australian newspaper (Mon 2 May 2022) requires clarification in a number of ways.

Unlike the Principals' Federation of WA, the SSTUWA is one of the group of public sector unions forming the PublicSector Alliance (PSA), launched in June last year to end the McGowan government's \$1000 p.a wages policy. As a result of the work done by the PSA, a review of this policy was secured with the outcome being an increase of 2.5% across the board plus .25% p.a OR a \$1000, one off sign-on payment and the capacity to bargain for additional conditions.

The government also committed to another review of the policy at the end of 2023.

Let us be clear – the SSTUWA is not saying that principals and teachers are not deserving of a significant pay rise – they are.

The SSTUWA is well aware of the inflationary pressures which currently apply and the legacy of four years of a stringent wage cap which undermined hard won relativities gained by unions over many years. The \$1000 p.a represented increases of less than 1% for all school leaders and 0.58% at Level 6.4. Achieving a return to percentage-based wage increases is significant and will see increases between \$3,200 p.a at L3.1 and \$4,700 p.a at L6.4.

What this union is saying is that, given the two year cycle of bargaining, commencing in December 2021 and concluding in December 2023, by December 2022 members will have received two payments of 2.75%, back paid to December 2021 if they vote to accept the in-principle agreement.

The danger in members rejecting the current offer will be that there will be no guarantee of members receiving any increase at all in the near future. Certainly, any notion of backpay will be gone.

Further, the proposed new agreement has a number of additional conditions for members which will be lost if the offer is rejected. **You can see the full details of those improved conditions [here](#).**

It is one thing to 'vow to keep fighting' knowing full well that any benefits secured by the SSTUWA will flow onto PFWA members.

It is quite another to be able to leverage sufficient industrial power to effect a change to government wages policy within months of others having achieved exactly that.

"Low key industrial action", especially of the kind mentioned in the article, will achieve nothing.

An important factor in the SSTUWA accepting an in-principle agreement was the achievement of many of our other claims for improved conditions. This underlies the need for union claims to encompass a range of issues which are achievable in bargaining. **Significantly all of the leader improvements secured in the Agreement-in-Principle were tabled by the SSTUWA.**

Our executive is of the view the two year agreement positions the union well for the next round of bargaining. Accepting the government's offer does not prevent this union from continuing to support efforts to improve wage outcomes across the board and we will continue as part of the broader PSA.

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

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