

eNews: 21 July 2022



Salary increment and backpay advice

Welcome back to all our members for Term 3. It is anticipated that the 2021 General Agreement salary increase of 2.75 per cent will be reflected in salaries as soon as possible after the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) formally ratifies the agreement. The agreement has been lodged with the WAIRC and we are currently awaiting advice of a hearing date.

Government and Regional Officer Housing rent freeze

To support teachers working in regional communities, the WA government has agreed to freeze the rent charged for Government and Regional Officer Housing (GROH) for the 2022-23 financial year. Some staff may have their rent reduced, due to the age or location of their GROH property and will be contacted directly by Housing and Transport.

No culture wars please

Why would a political party sign off on something in April – the new national curriculum – then in July declare the very thing they signed off on is actually the product of a conspiracy by Marxist teachers plotting the overthrow of civilisation? The answer, of course, is because they think there might be votes in it.

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton appears to be taking the same road as right-wing politicians in the USA and setting up schools as battlefields in a culture war.

Putting education at the centre of political debate is something the SSTUWA welcomes wholeheartedly. It was disappointing to see education be something of a footnote in the 2022 federal election campaign. That is a situation that does not reflect public sentiment. One study during the campaign showed over half of voters rated improving the education system as their top priority, even while the subject was virtually ignored by the major parties.

What *is* needed though, is a sensible debate about funding equity, about recognising that teachers are the education experts – not politicians and businesspeople – about tackling violence in our schools and above all about giving teachers the respect, support and rewards they need to do their jobs well and safely.

It speaks volumes that instead of those issues being front and centre, Peter Dutton indicates that prosecuting a "values argument" over the Australian Curriculum will be a main area of focus for his party over the next three years. Absolutely the last thing Australian society needs is the divisive, dangerous and destructive approach seen in the US.

While it would be easy to dismiss the federal opposition stance as simply a distraction, we must call it out for what it is – a calculated attempt to avoid debate around the critical funding and structural reforms which are urgently needed, while at the same time undermining the widespread public regard in which teachers are held. In speaking late last year to a private school gathering, the immediate past federal education minister, Stuart Robert, reinforced this ongoing strategy by blaming "dud teachers" from public schools for the decline in Australia's academic results.

We do not need divisive culture wars, we do not need academies or vouchers or any other neo-Liberal business model. We need proper, equitable, funding and a return to a genuine teaching and learning culture that treats teachers with a respect that elevates the profession to one in which, having joined, people are happy to stay.

Pat Byrne, President

Long service leave and casual employees

Government agencies have started making payments to some casual and former casual employees representing historical long service leave entitlements. Learn about the background to these payments, issues that might arise and what members can do to get further advice and help in resolving any problems. [Read more.](#)

Tax statements

SSTUWA members' 2021/2022 statements of contribution are now available by [logging into our website](#) or through our app.

Members have also received statements directly via email.

Don't have the app? [Download it here.](#)

PD and scholarship opportunities

Check out these great PD and scholarships opportunities for members. Apply now via the links below; application forms are brief.

Anna Stewart Memorial Project

Monday-Friday, 19-23 September in Perth.

Four places available.

Travel/accommodation assistance available for one successful country applicant.

[Apply here](#) by 4pm Friday 5 August

AEU Federal Women's Conference

Friday-Saturday, 7-8 October in Melbourne.

Four places available. Expenses covered.

[Apply here](#) by 4pm Friday 5 August

Lynette Virgona Scholarship

\$1,500 available to assist one member with PD in the areas of student behaviour and/or instructional strategies.

[Apply here](#) by 4pm Thursday 18 August

SSTUWA Scholarship Program

\$10,000 prize pool available to assist members in professional/industrial learning opportunities.

[Apply here](#) by 4pm Thursday 18 August

Education and training

2022 Annual Early Childhood Conference K-2 (TUT) Friday 16 September

Well-being, Workload and Work-life Balance for Early Childhood Teachers

The context and the challenges we have all lived through have had particularly significant impacts on teachers' mental health and well-being. The conference speakers will provide top practical strategies and ways to support each other, return balance to life, and to be, or stay, well. Join your fellow ECE educators for a day of learning and development and ensure all aspects of your life remain in balance.

Keynote Speakers

Peta Slocombe, Psychologist, Author, Speaker, Coach.

Kylie Bice, Scholar, Consultant, Director.

David Koutsoukis, Author, Speaker.

Workshops

- Mindfulness, Resilience and Work/Life Balance - Ian Crosby.
- Assertiveness: Getting the Balance Right - Vanessa Herbert.
- Rights, Entitlements and Your New Agreement - Cherry Bogunovich and Sharmila Nagar.

[Click here](#) to read more and register. Limited seats available.



Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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