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Schools Agreement registered, campaign continues

On Tuesday the WA Industrial Relations Commission registered the 2021 Schools General Agreement, with the document being updated to reflect the latest changes in the state government's wages policy, which lifts the agreed increase for teachers from 2.75% for each of the two years of the General Agreement 2021 to 3%.

A one off $2,500 cost of living payment will be made in the first year. This will be pro-rata for part-time teachers and administrators.

These changes will apply to the new General Agreement immediately. A schedule of salaries can befound here (website login required).

Details on the timing of both the backpay and the cash payment are still being finalised. Members will be informed as soon as they are known.

To say this has been an unusual General Agreement process is an understatement. Negotiations began with the state government's $1,000 salary cap still in place and expected to be so for the life of the 2021 General Agreement.

The formation of the Public Sector Alliance (PSA), bringing together 10 public sector unions, with the WA Police Union joining later, brought pressure to bear on the government and the $1,000 cap was removed. The offer of 2.75% per annum, when combined with a series of significant workplace changes, was recommended for approval by Executive. Whilst the member vote was underway there was an explosion in the cost of living.

This led Executive to advise the government that notwithstanding the member vote to accept the Agreement in Principle, the salary component was insufficient. As a result assurances were received that any changes to wages policy after the agreement was accepted would be passed on to SSTUWA school members (the TAFE agreement is still under negotiation).

Hence, the new state wages policy will apply to all SSTUWA members.

Despite having a formal, written, commitment in the Labor Party platform to protecting and advancing the rights of workers to bargain collectively, this government still prefers making wages policy through media statements rather than negotiation.

The state government listening to public sector unions is welcomed. However, listening should be the first step in a negotiating process, not simply a prelude to a public announcement which imposes a new salary level in place of the previous one.

While the new wages policy will offer immediate financial relief to some public sector workers, it obviously does not address the spike in CPI being faced by everyone currently, and which is expected to continue for some time. For this reason, the SSTUWA remains part of the Public Sector Alliance and continues to support it to achieve the goal of genuine collective bargaining.

The SSTUWA has been at every PSA rally and event. We will also be there on 17 August at Parliament House to share the PSA message that collective bargaining is the way forward, not the imposition of arbitrary, one size fits all, announcements.

We encourage members on leave, part-time workers and any retired members to join the SSTUWA delegation.

Union reps and branches will be advised about ways to further support the Alliance action from their workplaces.

You can find the rally details here.

National TAFE Day

National TAFE Day will be held on Tuesday 6 September this year.

National TAFE Day is a day to celebrate the achievements of our national TAFE system, and it provides a chance for us to remind politicians about the precarious state that the TAFE system is currently in across the country as a result of reforms, budget cuts and the activities of private for-profit providers. The day provides us with the opportunity to highlight how important a guaranteed minimum of 70% of total government vocational education funding is to TAFE.

This year you can take action to #RebuildWithTAFE by adding your name to the open letter to the Prime Minister.

As part of National TAFE Day we will send an open letter to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. The open letter calls on the new federal government to implement, in the October federal budget, 70% of total government VET funding to TAFE. This action will be one part of a range of lobbying and other actions organised in Canberra for National TAFE Day.Add your name here: https://www.rebuildwithtafe.org.au/statement

Nominations open

Nominations are called for positions on the following SSTUWA Committee and delegates to UnionsWA:

UnionsWA Council (1 year term)
Fifteen (15) delegates to be elected plus the President and General Secretary who are automatic ex-officio members.

Dispute Resolution Committee (1 year term)

Twelve (12) Committee members are required to form the basis of the Dispute Resolution Committee from which three members' names will be drawn by lot to form the Committee as and when required. No member of the Executive may nominate.

Full details and nomination forms are available here.

Education and Training

Industrial training events for delegates in Term 3
Enhance your skills and knowledge to effectively lead your members in your important union role in your branch. Join us for an industrial training event suited to your needs.

Union Representative Level One: Schools via Zoom: 19 August - Click here

Women's Contact Officer Level Two: Schools: 29-30 August - Click here

Union Representative Level Two: Schools: 5-6 September - Click here

Union Representative Level One: Schools: 8-9 September - Click here

TAFE Union Representative and Committee Delegates Training: 8-9 September - Click here

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