Members benefit from union wins

By Natalie Blewitt
Growth Team coordinator

A new school year is well underway and 2022 has started like no other.

Uncertainly reigns with COVID-19 concerns and we are five months into negotiations with the Department of Education (DoE).

Against the backdrop of EBA negotiations, it is timely to look back and see the critical impact the State School Teachers' Union of WA has had and the vital seat we hold at the negotiating table.

Flicking through the first "little red book", the certified agreement from 2000, the most obvious difference is the size of the book.

The earlier version is a mere shadow compared to our current agreement, which is testament to the numerous gains we have achieved over many years. With so many improvements it is easy to see why teachers, school psychologists, education officers, swimming instructors, school leaders, directors of education and TAFE lecturers join and remain members.

Another pronounced difference is the salaries. Back in 2000, if you were a four-year trained teacher, your salary was $34,702 while the top principal salary was $83,278.

Fast forward 20 years and the starting teacher salary is now $72,137 and top principal salary is $173,192, even after four years under a state wages policy of capping pay rises at $1,000.

This increase over time happened because of lobbying and where necessary, industrial actions from the SSTUWA.

We all remember our first teaching position and for many of us, support was limited to resources available at the school.

Over the past 20 years, measures have been put in place to assist our early career teachers with a raft of support structures, allowances and a reduced face-to-face teaching load.

This assistance has proved invaluable to so many teachers across our schools, and the SSTUWA is looking to make improvements to Clause 13 to further support our early career teachers.

Gains and improvements across the areas of teaching and leading, system support, attraction and retention and safety have been made and these include wins such as an increase in primary DOTT; a reduction in class sizes; the inclusion of domestic violence leave and cultural leave; improvements to other leave entitlements such as parental leave; sick leave and carer's leave; an increase in professional learning opportunities; curriculum support and so much more. But these gains have not come about by accident.

The collective voice of the SSTUWA membership is the key component to make the change we want to see happen.

We have proved that time and time again over the years and it is time to make your voices heard. Standing together, following the directives, we can achieve great outcomes.

Only members will be able to vote on the offer that comes from the DoE. So, if you are not a member, now is the time to join, ensuring you will have a say on your terms and conditions of employment.

Members can see the current log of claims through the members homepage at the SSTUWA website.

The SSTUWA is the only union recognised to represent the industrial and professional interests of all educators in WA public schools and TAFEs. You are not on your own when you have membership with us.

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