Delivering strong action through a strong voice

By Natalie Blewitt
Senior Vice President

As the new school year dawns upon us I am delighted to take up the position of your new SSTUWA senior vice president.

I am excited and looking forward to representing all of our members, and advocating for public education, working alongside the senior officer group which comprises of SSTUWA President Matt Jarman, General Secretary Mary Franklyn and Vice President Sharmila Nagar.

I have been a teacher since 1999 and been involved with the union in capacities such as branch representative and District Council delegate.

I have also been elected as a State Council delegate, Executive Committee member, served as acting Vice President and most recently, Growth Team coordinator.

I am proud to be a teacher in the public school system and I understand the many challenges and complexities that exist within it. I was educated solely in public schools and the values I learnt throughout my education and those taught to me by my father, a proud SSTUWA member himself, ensures I continue to fight for what is right. It is vital we continue to protect education for the common good.

Every child in this country has the right to access high quality public education, irrespective of background, circumstance, or location. After all, education is a basic, fundamental human right.

Public educators themselves are currently faced with a fight on two fronts – not only to protect the public education system and its students, but also to secure the proper conditions that allow educators to be able to deliver the best teaching and learning.

These days educators are being asked to do more with less and workload is having a major impact across our schools and TAFE campuses.

It is essential we continue to reduce the administrative workload, ensuring we can get on with teaching and learning. Burnout and excessive workloads are driving exceptional teachers from our profession. It is time to restore the balance, be proud of our profession and encourage others to become teachers in public schools.

Our union is only as strong as its members and as long as I have been involved in the SSTUWA, the industrial and professional rights of members have always been a priority for me.

I am also passionate about many aspects of our profession, including the development of, and support for beginning teachers and Level 3 Classroom Teachers.

Our teachers and school leaders deserve better and to attract and retain high quality teachers, we must continue to stand in solidarity with the Public Sector Alliance.

By working together, calling for a return to negotiating percentage rate wage increases, we can turn things around.

The past three years have been momentous for public educators, but they have risen above the challenges to be able to do their profession proud. Now we ask you to ready yourselves for a big 2023 and join us to advocate for your colleagues, your students and the sector.

We are a strong voice and will deliver strong action.

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