Solidarity across the Tasman

SSTUWA
State School Teachers' Union of WA

By Simon Joachim
New Educator Committee member

Teaching tip

Homework policy

Find out your school's policy on homework, and if they don't have one, be sure to develop your own.

Remember that this should always be done in consultation with your team, head of department, line manager or principal.

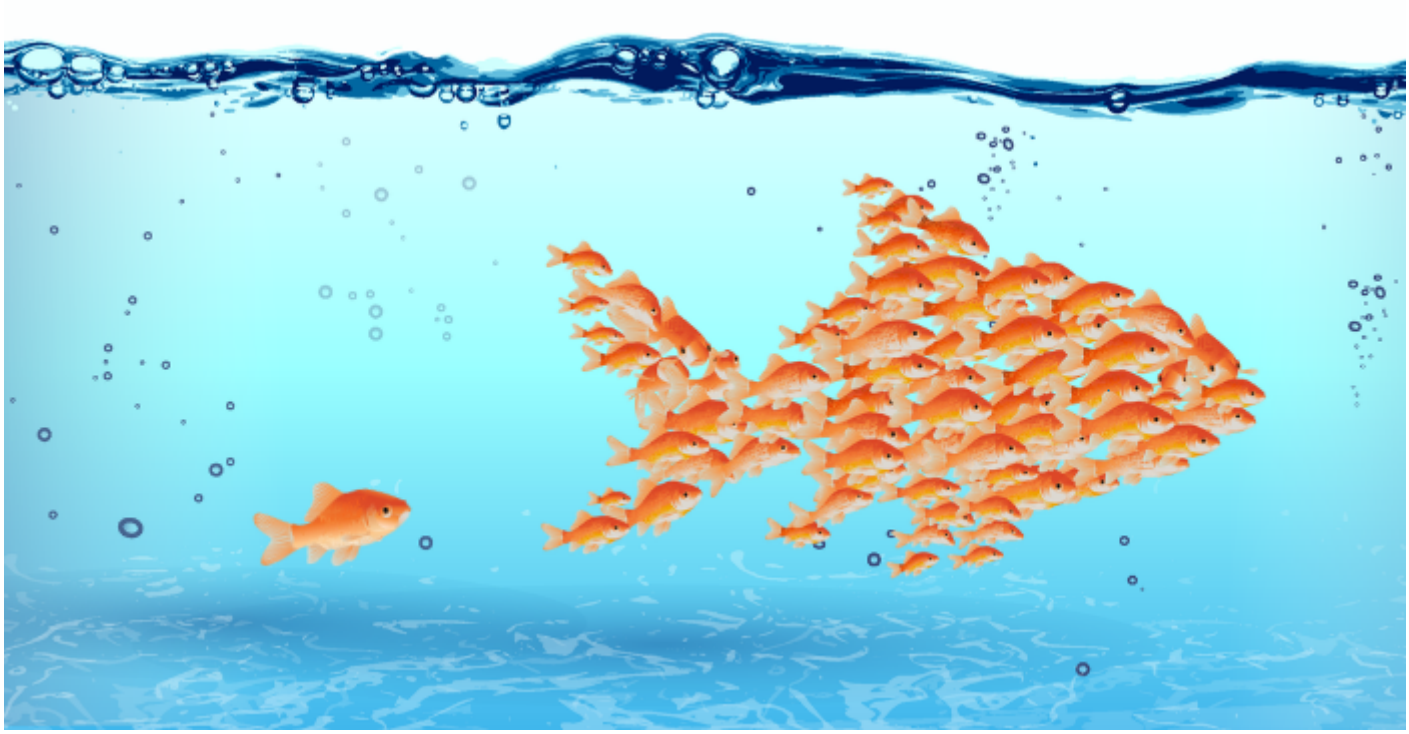
Once you've established your expectations in your own





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Develop a homework policy –



Kia ora! In April this year, SSTUWA Growth Team officer Chloe Hosking and I were extremely privileged to be part of the AEU delegation to the Post Primary Teachers' Association's New Educator Teachers Conference, held in tautahi Christchurch.

It was an incredibly fun and rewarding experience. Connecting with new educators from Aotearoa New Zealand was beneficial for both parties, an exchange of experiences, ideas and strategies.

We returned to Australia with a sense of rejuvenation and hope: rejuvenated with new ideas and hopeful for the future of unionism in our profession.

Our comrades in Aotearoa New Zealand had recently undertaken strike action after rejecting an offer representing a substantial real wage cut. Currently, beginning teachers have a starting salary of just NZD$52,000 (about A$49,000).

On behalf of the SSTUWA, we delivered a workshop which explored the challenges new educators face in Western Australia and the rights our union has achieved for new educators over time.

While many of our challenges were shared, our Kiwi comrades reacted in disbelief to the starting salary for a trained teacher in WA. More jaws dropped when we outlined the support achieved for new educators over time, such as the $1,600 start-up allowance, funded graduate modules, In-Class Coaching Program and additional release time.

If our colleagues across the ditch were shocked by the graduate pay and conditions in Western Australia, they were perhaps more surprised by the Unions for Yes campaign – not because of the nature of the Voice to Parliament, but at the realisation that Australia does not yet have a treaty with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 and is the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. Throughout the conference, the respect and privileging of Maori culture was clear, and we came away with a changed understanding of how far Australia has still to travel on the journey of conciliation and decolonisation.

Following our workshop, we felt both humbled and saddened: humbled, because it really reinforced how impactful the SSTUWA's advocacy for graduate teachers has been, and saddened because our comrades in Aotearoa New Zealand simply do not yet enjoy the same wages and support as our graduate teachers here in Western Australia.

However, it also ignited a spark: this is the power of trade unionism, and we are not done yet.

Simon Joachim is a new educator working full-time at Seaforth Primary School. He is a member of the SSTUWA New Educator Committee and the LGBTIQ+ Committee. Simon was also part of the 2022 State Council Guest Program and is a 2023 State Council delegate.

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