Power in participation



Whether it is via committees, District Councils or State Council, members drive everything we do at the SSTUWA.

One of the reasons we have record member numbers is the drive and inspiration we draw from collective actions that work to protect and improve public education in WA.

It is our fundamental mission to protect and improve our industrial and professional rights and to promote quality public education for all – and that is not only the role of four senior officers and 15 Executive members – it is the core task for all members.

As we state repeatedly, the SSTUWA is as strong as its members. Through the collective strength, wisdom and engagement of members we are powerful and influential in the community.

Our democratic processes at branch level, District Council, Executive and State Council ensures that our decision making and our actions are inclusive, representative and powerful.

That's why during Term 3 senior officers join with the school organiser team to meet with delegates from across the state as part of District Council industrial training and council meetings.

Twice a year delegates gather from as far as Broome in the north to Esperance in the south, east to Kalgoorlie and districts in between.

For me that meant heading to the districts of Goldfields-Roe (Katanning and Esperance), and meeting with delegates from the districts of Belmont, Kalamunda, Maylands, Swan, Fremantle, Jandakot, Perth, Riverton and Victoria Park.

Prior to attending District Council, delegates need to meet with their school branch to discuss items members would like to see included in their branch reports.

Members at a school branch level should know what their delegate will be reporting on.

Delegates will often include in their formal reports what is going well or what challenges their branch is facing, or even items

they think need to be improved during negotiations.

District Councils are an excellent opportunity for delegates to ask questions, share their understandings, get to know colleagues in their districts, speak with their school organisers and senior officers as well as seek information that will assist their branch to understand what is happening in the wider work of our union.

They are also a vital component of the work that we undertake as senior officers and all four of us prioritise these meetings and training days to hear directly from delegates across the state.

Connecting with SSTUWA members at District Councils is one of the ways we ensure we understand members' concerns and issues affecting them on a daily basis.

The most recent tranche of District Council meetings saw a range of issues raised by members including the teacher shortage, curriculum changes, an increase in meetings, violence in schools, increased internal relief, increased parental demands, changes in information communication technology (Kaartdijin and sensitivity labels), workload, the Country Teaching Program, Government Regional Officer Housing, a lack of respect, reporting to parents and documented plans

Sometimes, issues such as these end up in a Log of Claims, are raised formally with the Department of Education, are the focus of a campaign (such as respect at work and Target 27) or they are even taken directly to discussions with ministers.

Where matters pertain directly to individual schools and are not felt district wide, our school organisers and if required, senior officers work directly with members involved at a branch level to assist in resolving the issue.

That's why being part of the democratic process of our union is so important. Your voice, raised on an important issue, can start the process that leads to improvements for all.



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