Inspiration, cooperation and salutations





The backstories and legacies of being part of the union movement were a major highlight of the November State Council Conference, held recently at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The two-day conference, which facilitates the meeting of the highest decision-making body of the SSTUWA, saw a former union president conferred with life membership, as well as outgoing senior officers being acknowledged for their tireless contributions to the union.

Conference delegates also started working on the SSTUWA's Log of Claims for the next General Agreement (2026) by participating in two workshops to provide ideas and feedback for the next Log.

Delegates also heard updates from the AEU Tasmanian branch, as well as the Queensland Teachers' Union about their EBA negotiations, with both unions fighting for improved pay and working conditions on issues similar to those in WA.

State Council Conference is held twice a year, in June and November and is the SSTUWA's highest decision-making body. Elected delegates meet to discuss, debate and vote on motions that determine the direction and activities of the union.

For November State Council Conference, more than 125 delegates were in attendance, in addition to seven SSTUWA life members.

UnionsWA Secretary Rikki Hendon was a keynote speaker at the conference and shared her story about how she joined the union movement.

Ms Hendon said she was inspired as a high school student to campaign for human rights during the Tampa refugee crisis in 2001, attending protest rallies – and her personal values about social justice influenced her decision to pursue social work as a vocation.

She encouraged all those present to reflect and share their motivations for being involved with unions.

"I've not yet met a union leader who intended to become a union leader," Ms Hendon said.

"I've often reflected on how the heck did this happen and the short answer is, I got here by saying, 'yes'."

"I'm sure this is a familiar scenario to anybody who's in this room. Because I'm sure you said yes too, at some point ... yes to standing up and being active in your union."

"For you all in the room today, you're all union leaders in your workplaces."

November State Council Conference honoured many contributors to the SSTUWA and the union movement.



Pictured: UnionsWA Secretary Rikki Hendon

By Minh Lam

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