

Program gives women a motivational push

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Teacher Khrystyna Greenfield credits Federation's Anna Stewart Program for giving her the final "motivational push" to lift her to the next level of advocacy and activism for the union.

Ms Greenfield, who teaches at Mt Colah Public, and Lynn Brettle, of Chatham Public School, spent two weeks in the program in September.

She said the experience gave her the confidence to ma-



ke a difference and reach for further opportunities.

"You don't think you've got it in you [and] I think the overwhelming response I got from the people here is that, from a women's perspective, most of them thought that as well and they needed a motivational push from people around them to say 'You can do that, give it a go' before they found they actually did have what it took to be in a position," Ms Greenfield said.

"It's a testament to the Anna Stewart Program...it took everyone here to tell me I can...I've been given a really big motivational push."

Lynn Brettle, Manning River TA president, said the highlight of her stint on the program was meeting the Executive and Officers and following their work.

"For me it would be meeting all of the Executive and the Officers and seeing how Federation operates but also how that then relates back to members and how members are supported by Federation," she said.

Ms Brettle hopes to inspire her Association and discuss with the Fed Reps more motions about issues in her area and "to get our country voice heard".

"We're not remote but we're still from the country and we have particular ideals that have to come through to Council," she said.

"I've only been active in the role for 18 months but I haven't seen many motions coming from our Association and we need to start getting a voice and letting other people hear our voice as well."

One of the issues she would like to take action on is class sizes in her region.

"I have issues from my school and it's about class sizes and let's start pushing back. We've had the K-2 reduction, the 11-12 reduction but there hasn't been that reduction in between, so we need to look at across-the-board class-size reduction," she said.

“And now we’ve got the issue of the Federal Government’s \$4.6 billion to fund the independent and Catholic schools. So we’ll be working hard at our Fair Funding Now! campaign, working with our parents and the P&C.”

A long-time Federation Councillor, Ms Greenfield, was impressed by the union’s professional support unit at work.

“My highlight was going to professional support out of all the different areas because I didn’t realise how busy it was there and how much of an impact that job has on most of our members,” she said. “I didn’t realise the attitude they have to have to keep serving our members and sometimes in incredibly difficult circumstances. It takes a special kind of person to do that work and all power to them because they’ve got a huge job.”

Ms Brettle described the Anna Stewart program as “a wonderful opportunity for women” activists.

“I’ve been a Federation member for all of my teaching career, but have basically been a mushroom, not understanding about Federation,” she said. “But I think that I’m going to encourage others to apply [for the program]; pushing it at the Association but also the school level too, that this is such a great course to do.

“I didn’t realise how much learning there was available to you, from the Trade Union Training courses for learning Federation and activism learning but then you can apply that within your workplace as well.”