

## Fair funding campaign driven by grassroots

June 15, 2019

At June Council, Federation placed on the record its heartfelt thanks to the thousands of members, officers, staff, parents, community activists and allied organisations for their commitment and work over a long period to sustain the Fair Funding Now! campaign.

Election day was an important phase of the campaign and featured a strong contingent of Fair Funding Now! supporters, who took every opportunity to engage with voters at the gates of public schools across six electorates in NSW, joining hundreds of other public school campaigners in electorates across the country.

As has been a feature of the campaign, it was driven by grassroots activists committed to a better funding system for their students.

Inner West Teachers Association President Greg Blundell, who spent the day talking to voters outside Homebush Public School in the electorate of Banks, said it was a great experience standing at the front of his school on election day, promoting public education with all the other supporters of the Fair Funding Now! campaign.



“The swing at our booth made me realise that community members are responsive to our presence,” said Mr Blundell. “When voters know the facts they are very supportive.”

“We had some great conversations on the day and it was clear many people do not support the education policies of the Morrison Government.”

Inner City teacher and campaign volunteer Kelly Marks assisted in coordinating a group of volunteers in the Banks electorate.

“I really enjoyed the sense of camaraderie with fellow union activists from the Change the Rules campaign and the nurses association, and voters responded well to me, trusting my judgement of the parties’ education policies as a local public school teacher,” Ms Marks said.

Paul Lang, a teacher in the western Sydney electorate of Lindsay, said the best part of election day was catching up with past students and finding out what they were up to.

“Every parent happily gave you time to explain how the election outcome would affect their child’s school,” he said. “No-one is going to get upset at a teacher who is volunteering their time to tell parents how their vote could prevent the loss of resources that should be supporting their child’s education.”

“The second best part was watching the Liberals getting frustrated as you had a cordial conversation with parents as you escorted them past the opposing how-to-vote leafleters.”

Michael Sciffer, an executive member, drove from Armidale to Woolgoolga in the electorate of Page to volunteer on election day.

“Coming from the seat of New England with some of the most disadvantaged public schools in NSW, Armidale Teachers Association stood in solidarity with its colleagues in the seat of Page in the Fair Funding Now! campaign,” he said.

Campaign volunteers in Gilmore were enthused throughout the day, having had a presence at pre-poll booths in the lead up to election day. Long-term campaigning and trust within the community was no doubt a contributing factor that led to the seat being lost by the Coalition Government.

Local activist Diane Ridley said: “I feel pre-polling made a difference in the result. People responded well being approached by a teacher. Feedback from most voters was positive.”

While disappointed, the overall election result will not diminish the union’s resolve to continue to fight for a wellresourced public education system.