

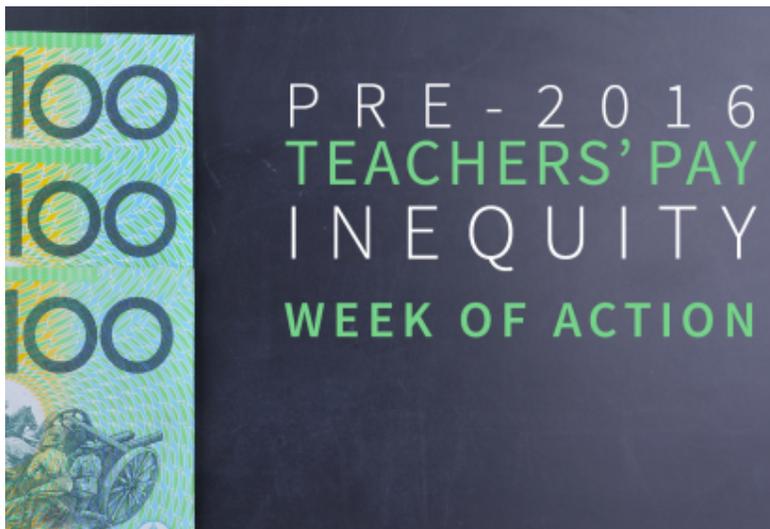
NSW Government's unjust wages transition motivates unified member response

August 12, 2019

Federation members are taking collective action to fight pay inequities inflicted upon their public school teacher colleagues by the NSW Coalition Government.

Thousands of experienced teachers are being paid significantly less than their less experienced co-workers, due to the NSW Government's 2.5 per cent wages cap at a time when teachers are being transitioned from the common incremental salary scale to standards-based remuneration. The divergence in wages particularly affects teachers who commenced teaching in the years immediately prior to 2016.

Keen to see the pay discrepancy rectified, Federation campaign activities are being planned for a [Week of Action](#), starting on 12 August.



Members in schools and associations are organising delegations to their local NSW MPs.

Teachers personally affected by the pay disparity will explain their plight to their MP, supported by colleagues as part of a united union focus on fair salaries for all.

Hastings Secondary College (Port Macquarie campus) teacher Amanda Leach will be joining [Week of Action](#) activities, despite not being disadvantaged by the situation herself.

"It's not fair — that's the bottom line," Ms Leach, Fed Rep at the school and Port Macquarie Teachers Association Treasurer, said.

She will be part of a Port Macquarie Teachers Association delegation to local state MP Leslie Williams and will be there to support affected teachers as they give their firsthand accounts.

Ms Leach encouraged all teachers to participate in the Week of Action. "All teachers need to work together to create change," she said.

Macksville High School teacher Aaron Parker — who estimates he has been left many thousands of dollars worse-off by the anomaly — says it's "really nice" to have the support of colleagues who are not personally affected. Workplace meetings have called for the Government to resolve the matter for affected teachers and Nambucca Teachers Association has set up a pay anomaly committee.

Mr Parker said members plan to speak with parents and the media about the situation during the Week of Action, and share their stories at an association meeting. Ahead of the Week of Action, teachers have signed individual letters to local state MP Melinda Pavey, demanding the Government resolve the issue. Mr Parker said the MP had so far ignored requests for a meeting about the issue, but the committee would try again

during the Week of Action.

Hannah Archer Lawton said she felt frustrated and deflated when, in 2018, teachers eligible for standards-based remuneration — with less teaching experience than herself — moved up a salary band and started earning significantly more than herself, especially when the issue has been rectified in the Catholic sector.

“There is no point individually being upset,” Ms Lawton, now a Federation City Organiser, said. “We need to work collectively to make change.”

Federation is asking members to meet during the [Week of Action](#) to vote on a motion calling on NSW Education Minister Sarah Mitchell to immediately resolve the pay inequalities caused by the NSW Government’s use of special laws targeting public school teachers.

The NSW Government has enabled the Independent Education Union and the Catholic Education system to address the inequities for teachers in private school systems without disadvantaging other teachers, as the laws do not apply to the private sector. But, without the NSW Government changing its public sector wages policy, any parity for the pre-2016 teachers could penalise all public school teachers, including the pre-2016 teachers themselves, through lower salaries over time.

— Kerri Carr