

## A model of teacher union effectiveness in changing times

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A new doctoral thesis outlines how Federation has strategically responded to neoliberalism and marketisation affecting the working conditions of teachers in NSW.

The research project informing the thesis examined the tactics and strategies used by Federation to defend and advance the rights and entitlements of teachers since the mid-1980s. Taking a longitudinal perspective on the work of Federation, the thesis relates the union's effectiveness in broadly resisting neoliberal influence in Australia, which hasn't felt the full force of privatisation, commercialisation, competition and choice as seen in other countries such as the US and UK.

The thesis highlights the importance of using tactics that respond to the industrial environment at the time as well as showcasing the value of teachers' work in society and the democratic principles of public education. It also emphasises the importance of building strong internal power through ongoing recruitment, fostering engagement and activism, and encouraging democratic practices.



The research is timely in an era where trade unions, globally, are considering strategies to better secure the rights and entitlements of their members, particularly as neoliberal government agendas seek to weaken union power.

The study would not have been possible without the time given by many participants who were interviewed. A total of 71 interviews were carried out with Federation officers (many retired), Federation members, as well as senior officers of the Department of Education and former NSW ministers for education. This project has also benefited from the ongoing support of Federation's Senior Officers.

A copy of the *Changing conditions of work in neoliberal times: How the NSW Teachers Federation has responded to changes in teachers' industrial and professional working conditions in NSW public education, 1985-2017* is available to download and read via the [Federation Library catalogue](#).

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