

Workplace contacts

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Thinking of being a Federation Representative at your school? It's not as daunting as it sounds and the union has tailor-made courses and resources to smooth the way.

Micaela Cecire, in her first year as Fed Rep at Erskineville Public, has held other Federation workplace positions and said some members had misconceptions about the role.

"People often think that you have to be a Federation expert in order to be Fed Rep, which isn't the case," Ms Cecire said.

"For future Fed Reps, I would highly recommend attending training courses that will help when taking on the role, and I'd clarify that a big part of being Fed Rep is being a point of contact at your school, someone who colleagues can go to for clarification and support."

The music teacher and band coordinator at Erskineville Public, Ms Cecire said the importance of the position was reflected in a recent case at the school, and highlighted the structures Federation has in place for members.

"A recent incident I have dealt with as Fed Rep was regarding a colleague's leave during the vacation period," she said.

"I rang Professional Support for advice and was also sent supporting policy documents. I then spoke with my colleague and passed on the advice and policy, which allowed them to figure out what had gone wrong with their pay, and follow up accordingly."

She was encouraged by a friend's mother, who is a principal, to become involved with Federation and take on a leadership role.

"I've always been passionate about advocating for workers, so it was a no brainer for me to put my hand up to be Fed Rep," she said. "I think being Fed Rep is an integral role within a school."

"Having a good Fed Rep means the school staff is supported and there is a strong line of communication between the school and Federation."

Ms Cecire was proud that the entire Workplace Committee attended the first Association meeting for the year.

"Our Workplace Committee is fantastic, and keen Fed members, so encouraging them to get involved is never an arduous task," she said. "I also liaise with our Women's Contact, Alusha, regularly and she is an immense



help.

And for the year ahead? "I think that the most important issue affecting teachers right now is workload and how significantly the expectations on teachers have increased.

"I'm in the union because I believe in workers' rights and being part of a strong, unified union; who doesn't love a bit of comradery?"

Scott Coomber is a staff writer