

R-E-S-P-E-C-T



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President
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These are indeed unprecedented times. Your days and weeks have blurred into one, as you've turned yourselves inside out and delivered over and above the call of duty. Your dedication and commitment to the cause of public education has been truly remarkable.

What politicians seem to forget is that you are also brothers and sisters, mums and dads, uncles and aunts and grandparents. Just like every member of the general public, you too have been personally affected by this pandemic, stressed and anxious about what it will bring to your families, immediate and extended.

Notwithstanding some recent platitudes, you have too often been but an afterthought in the considerations of many politicians. Thrust onto the front line of this crisis, at times you have, quite understandably, felt that you were dispensable. You never sought recognition for the discharge of your professional, social and moral responsibilities, but you sure as hell deserved more respect.

The lack of clarity, the inconsistencies, the contradictions and the lack of transparency has contributed to a considerable amount of anger and frustration in what was, and remains, a stressful state of affairs. Learning about things through the media has never been OK.

Learning about things through the media during a crisis is downright disrespectful. Time and time again, politicians have demonstrated a total lack of appreciation, understanding and concern about the impact their announcements have on the organisation and timetabling arrangements of our schools, let alone your well-being.

Their lack of respect has not ended there. We've even experienced the audacity, on the part of politicians, to lecture us about the impact of disadvantage and inequity on the education of our students. Not now, not ever, will we be lectured by politicians.

Inequities we've known about for decades, that we have campaigned to redress for so long, have been laid bare for all to see. Politicians are on notice. Our advocacy will only intensify.

However, just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, we learned the NSW Government is contemplating rewarding you and other public sector frontline workers with a pay cut.

While you have been turning yourselves inside out throughout this crisis, the NSW Government has been



scheming a pay cut.

The Government has been reminded that we have a legally-binding agreement, which was brought into existence by the Industrial Relations Commission. Our message to the government is very clear; honour the agreement.

To invalidate the schools agreement, the Government would need to introduce new legislation into the Parliament. Should the Government proceed with such a brutal proposition, the NSWTF Executive will convene, as a matter of urgency, to determine a detailed and comprehensive course of action in defence of members' rights.

Unlike the school sector, where we have a legally binding agreement, following months of negotiation and agreement, the government unilaterally suspended the further technical actions necessary for the making of a new TAFE Enterprise Agreement which would have delivered a pay increase on April 1, 2020. This is no April Fool's joke. TAFE teachers haven't received a pay rise since November 2018.

As far as salaries are concerned, members need no reminding that salaries do not reflect massive changes in the nature and value of your work. Nor do salaries reflect the skills and responsibilities acquired, and changed social and community expectations of your work since the last time there was an independent examination of such in 2003.

It is for that reason that we launched, in February, Valuing the Teaching Profession – An Independent Inquiry.

[The inquiry](#) is chaired by Professor Emeritus, University of Sydney and former West Australian Premier, The Hon Dr Geoff Gallop AC. He will be joined by former Justice of the NSW Industrial Court and Deputy President of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission Dr Tricia Kavanagh and former head of the NSW Institute of Teachers Patrick Lee.

It is our opportunity to put front and centre the changed nature and value of the work of teachers and principals. Remuneration must take into account the changes since 2003-04; changes in curriculum and technology, governmental and social expectations and redress the decline in salaries when compared with other comparable professions.

Federation Representatives, Women's Contacts and Workplace Committee members have been provided with detailed support material to assist in the development of a collective school submission. To ensure that all members — across all levels of membership — have an opportunity to have their voices heard we have also developed an [online submission platform](#) for individuals to have their say.

Throughout this crisis, and always, we have been motivated by one thing; ensuring, as best we can, to look after your health and safety and protect your industrial and professional rights.

In unity. In strength!