

## A different take



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General Secretary  
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As General Secretary of our union, I want to put on record my deep appreciation and admiration for the work of public school and TAFE college teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members deserve acknowledgement and gratitude from our communities for their hard work and professionalism in ensuring support and continuity for the learning of students in a range of different modes over the past 10 weeks.

Additionally, the work of school principals and leaders in responding to the increased demands, whether adjusting programs and timetables or responding to parent, community and department expectations, must be applauded. The positive and rapid response of all members to accommodate the needs of students, parents and their school communities, even while being concerned for the health and wellbeing of their own families, has been exceptional.



Teachers have had to sort their way through often conflicting political advice and directions from state and federal governments that too often have added to the confusion and heightened tension many of our members have endured.

At a time when we are all struggling in our own ways to adapt to the changing circumstances, I want to congratulate you on keeping your focus, supporting your colleagues, and understanding that we all have been under immense pressure and have important roles to play in supporting students and their learning.

The term “pivot” has been widely used in public commentary on responses to our current public health crisis. One of the greatest pivots has been the way that teachers have taken on the challenges of remote teaching and learning.

Whether it has been quickly developing skills to teach students at home using online solutions like SeeSaw, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google classroom, the development of hard copy learning materials, or the adaptation of resources provided by the Department or organisations such as the ABC, teachers have stepped up.

The rapid and collaborative approach taken by teachers to the urgent professional learning required of them has been a real-time example of the very best of teachers and a manifestation of what the international research tells us about how teachers improve their practice.

There is no doubt that parents and the wider community have developed a deeper understanding and respect

for the work of teachers as they observed and tried to support their children's remote learning.

Yes, the COVID 19 crisis magnified the gaps caused by social disadvantage and poverty for schools and families and students. Your union understands these disadvantages and will continue to fight for them to be addressed. Be assured though, all students have benefited from your dedication and perseverance at this time.

Federation has kept its focus on being available for members via phone or email - we have adapted from essentially a central head office orientation to having the majority of our staff working remotely while keeping their focus on our members' needs.