

Art teachers draw inspiration in crisis

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As classes shifted online in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, visual arts teachers faced additional challenges in the pursuit of curriculum continuity for their students.

Working with senior high school students — many of whom were completing HSC major works — was something Kate Mulheron, a Federation member, described as “really hard for everyone”.

“It was particularly hard with my HSC and year 11 students because they’re all working on independent projects, in a range of expressive forms,” she said. “When it came to junior students, delivery was made somewhat easier but was not without its challenges. We could prepare exemplars and prepare demonstration videos for the medium we were working with.”

The barriers experienced when providing student feedback spotlighted the pedagogy and knowledge teachers carry with them into the classroom. “When you’re having a proper in-person discussion, you can tease out conceptual ideas and get a sense of where the students’ work is going. This helps when offering advice and direction and also allows me to make suggestions about other artists for the student to study. It was very hard to give students written feedback on their progress, there is no substitute for those one-on-one teaching moments.”



Federation Deputy President Henry Rajendra said the work of the state’s visual arts teachers highlighted the importance of specialist teachers and drew attention to the union’s school staffing campaign. “The Berejiklian Government must guarantee that every student has access to the full breadth of a comprehensive curriculum, not just in some metropolitan areas, but in every public school, across every community. These teachers should be permanent, qualified and accredited in order to ensure curriculum delivery is to the standard our students deserve.”

Mr Rajendra encouraged all Federation Representatives to call a meeting in their workplace to show support for Federation’s campaign in pursuit of additional release time and a curriculum guarantee for all students.