

## Teachers vindicated and validated

March 29, 2021

It was a privilege, on behalf of all Federation members, to be presented with the final report of the “Valuing the teaching profession” inquiry by its chair The Hon Dr Geoff Gallop.

It was an historic moment, concluding a year-long independent inquiry into the changed nature and value of teachers’ and principals’ work.

The teaching service has been vindicated and validated by this thorough examination of its work; its complexity; the increased demands on teachers’ time that detracts from teaching and learning; and the value and status of the profession in terms of remuneration.

What the Gallop Report signalled was the need for a reset — in compelling and irrefutable language — of the chronic, unacceptable underfunding of our profession and public education.

The report makes it clear that such a reset is well overdue, and 2021 is the year in which we must organise, campaign, and win for the immediate and future wellbeing of the teaching service and our students.

The full resources of the union will be deployed to ensure that our members receive the salaries and status they deserve, and our schools and colleges have the staffing that every public school student needs.

The campaign to deliver such significant improvements — as well as better working conditions for teachers and principals as part of our ongoing demands for additional permanent teaching positions in every school to increase non face-to-face teaching time — culminates this year in the term 4 Schools Award negotiations.

A renewed and sustained commitment to recruitment, engagement and capacity building in every worksite is vital to grow the union power necessary to win this campaign for more release from face-to-face teaching, better wages and improved staffing structures.

The implementation of our plan to win is well underway.

Myself and Dr Gallop, along with Senior Officers Henry Rajendra and Amber Flohm, have been travelling the state over the past month, meeting members, parents and community members at town hall-style meetings to increase awareness of our campaign.

The response from these communities has been tremendous and has been reflected in the overwhelming media interest in the report, from local newspaper, radio and television outlets.

Key to recruitment and engagement is meaningful union presence in every workplace, every day. Our schools



and colleges remain the union's most fundamental and effective sites of industrial and political organisation. The strength and success of Federation is determined by the extent to which we are able to develop workplace union leadership, increase union membership density and engage members in meaningful collective action.

The recruitment of new and potential members is critical, and this will be supported by Federation resources to assist the growth of our membership and density.

The union's Communications team will lead strategic communication over the year, producing material that will support school-based campaigning and build connections with parents and the broader community. It is vital that there is a deepening of the community's recognition of what the teaching service knows and understands: that teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions.

At this time of effective salary decreases — underlined by the disgraceful 0.3 per cent cap the NSW Government imposed on awards — the need for a breakthrough in salaries could not be more significant.

The continued suppression of wages through Government-imposed cuts would be to the ongoing detriment of public education, working people and the economy as a whole.

As unionists, we must, and will, play our part in fighting for a more just and equitable society.