

Your workplace contacts

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Diane Dass Kellyville High School

Encouraging members to understand their working rights and empowering them to speak up is an essential role of being a school Fed Rep, according to Diane Dass from Kellyville High School in Sydney's north-west.

Having taken over from the school's founding Fed Rep, Sasha McHardy, in 2016, Diane has embraced the leadership position and the vital role it plays in giving teachers a voice.

"It is critical in a large high school such as Kellyville High School," she said. "There are so many voices and opinions, ideas and issues; it is easy for them to get buried and lost.



"Members need an advocate and as Fed Rep, I can direct all those things in a positive direction. My job can be difficult, but certainly rewarding."

After enduring some negative experiences early in her teaching career, Diane discovered the value of joining the union and being part of a collective voice.

"Those experiences I had in a difficult placement in another location made me realise how important it is to join the union and be assertive and not complacent," she said.

"It provided a positive force for my wellbeing and career. Luckily, I really love my current school so now I am giving something back.

"Encouragement comes through Fed Rep leadership and the actions of members on a school site, who work together for positive change. It is also good for members to engage at local Association meetings and attend Council and Annual Conference to witness decision-making machinations."

Another driving force in Diane's Fed Rep role is to highlight the importance of teacher resourcing and its value to education and the broader community.

"School infrastructure is an ongoing concern," Diane said. "We are a relatively new school, but we have inadequate cooling and heating.

"We wonder if new state government proposals will deliver what we need. The issues at our school don't just relate to resourcing, but on a broader scale the issue is a relatively antiquated power grid.

"We are in an area of population growth and our school and others in the area are blighted by too many demountable [classrooms].

“Our school has also been proactive in engaging the community on funding issues. We have a diverse student background and funding is key to positive educational outcomes. Members have worked with the school P&C body and the broader community on this issue.”

Diane also has a supportive Federation Committee she can lean on for advice and to help lighten the Fed Rep load.

“They are all very helpful,” she said. “It includes members on Federation Council, ex-Fed Reps and experienced activists.

“They are a great sounding board and offer collective wisdom. I also have a week of release time for Fed Rep duties, which my head teacher has been a great supporter of.”

Away from teaching, Diane enjoys travel, photography and collecting stray pets.

“My husband is Fijian/Indian, and I am originally from Tasmania, so we have family in all corners of the world, which affords me travel opportunities,” she said.

“I also like to help and advocate charitable environmental groups in whatever way I can.”