

10th ANNUAL REPORT

A. Secretary's Overview of 2002

The 2002 school year began with the employment of 45 new permanent and additional teachers to primary schools, the first group of an eventual 180 new primary teachers added to the primary staffing formula to reduce K-Year 3 classes to 21 by 2004. This major funding boost was the direct result of the ongoing campaigning for improved funding for public education undertaken by the ACT Branch.

The improved staffing for primary was followed by a range of announcements for additional funding for Information Technology, students at risk, High School Development, student pathways, a Centre for Teaching and Learning Technologies, on line curriculum, a boost to staffing in the Schools Office, teacher fellowships, improvements in induction arrangements for beginning teachers, adolescent mental health programs and more permanent employment in CIT.

Funding for these new initiatives was the product of election commitments from the new ACT Government leading to budget funding increases and the scrapping of the 2001 free school bus scheme delivering \$27m in new funds for schools by 2004. The AEU's campaigning (along with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association), was again responsible for the funding improvements.

The spending initiatives were paralleled by a significantly improved access to the new Minister Simon Corbell, the Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and to a range of new advisory structures created to involve stakeholders in providing advice to government. The most significant of these was the Government School Education Council on which AEU President Jan Day and Vice President Peter Kent work with Chair Professor Eddie Braggart and community representatives to advise the Minister on education issues.

The GSEC was an initiative that the AEU conceived and campaigned for as a part of the process for the development of the new Education Act.

The improved relationship with the new Minister was highlighted by his personal intervention to break the stalemate over the new Principals' Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. Forced into a mediocre separate EBA by the Carnell Government in 1999, principals received a 14% increase in salary for their new and interim agreement plus 1% in professional developments funds. The new Agreement expires in August 2003 to allow the Principals to become a part of a consolidated teachers' agreement in accord with AEU policy supporting a single agreement. The shape of the new Agreement will be determined by negotiations to begin in February 2003. The consultations to develop the AEU's claims have been ongoing since July Council.

The Minister has intervened in several other policy areas after lobbying by the AEU. These included the casual relief teachers' dispute, limited time placement for beginning teachers, ACTAP reporting and has been open to a variety of proposals from the AEU on future funding priorities.

While there has been a sense that there has been some major improvements this year the ACT public education system (preschools, schools and CIT) is still suffering from the funding pressures of the early years of self government.

Workload concerns of members were highlighted when teachers across all sectors were interviewed in November 2001 by National Schools Network researchers Lew Zipin and Viv White, commissioned by the ACT Branch. Published in August, the report "Too Much With Too Little" received national attention from teachers and commentators. The report demonstrated the significant workload pressures experienced by the profession and highlighted a way forward to negotiated support for teachers, improved professional relations and an insistence that new initiatives only be taken on if adequate resources are provided.

The report's findings were reinforced through the Union's survey of members' priorities for the next EBA undertaken in August/September, with workload then salary levels rated as the most significant priorities for ACT Branch members. CIT members carried out their own workload survey. With major salary increases achieved in NSW and Victoria and in the private sector, the 3% on July 2002 and 3% on July 2003 will leave ACT classroom teachers behind their eastern state counterparts for the last year of the Agreement. Before August 2003 we will have to have reached agreement on a salary increase to be paid as the catch up within our current Agreement. The new EBA will have to contain substantial increases to ensure the ACT can remain a competitive recruiter of teachers in a time of international and national shortage, to say nothing of the need to properly reward the profession for the value of their work.

The teacher shortage was brought home to the ACT community, schools, government and the bureaucracy at the beginning of Term 2 when schools experienced a major shortfall of casual relief staff. After years of punitive treatment of day casual staff, including wage cuts, the number of teachers available to work day relief has declined markedly. Action by the AEU, including the active roles taken by the Relief Teachers' Sub-Branch and Calwell High School Sub-Branch highlighted the personal and educational costs of the wrong headed treatment of casuals in the past. The threat of industrial action and the publicity given to the Calwell High School Sub-Branch saw the Department provide additional staffing support to the school during the worst of the casual relief shortage. Minister Corbell, at the request of the AEU, established a departmental working party to examine issues of teacher recruitment and the casual relief problem. The working party has recommended a range of improvements, particularly to the remuneration of casual relief teachers and improvements to their conditions. An online casual teacher placement system has been trialled with some success in Terms 3 and 4 and it is expected that such a system will be introduced in 2003.

The introduction of the Professional Pathways in 2002 saw Union Officers busy in schools and liaising with departmental officers ensuring that the program which underwrites incremental progression was supportive, developmental and not onerous. Interventions in a number of workplaces and regular journal articles kept members informed.

As a further component of the enhanced professionalism of our current EBA in schools, the award of over forty Teaching Fellowships during the year recognised and rewarded the commitment of members to improved practice. The Union was represented by the Secretary and then by the Branch President on the Awards panel. The \$0.5m pa available for the Fellowships program needs to be renewed for the 2003-2004 Budget and the AEU will be lobbying Government to this end.

The issue of Professional Standards has been a matter of serious consideration by many members with a high profile federally funded seminar on Professional Standards being held in Canberra in April. AEU representatives and members reinforced the role of the AEU as the voice of public education teachers and reiterated that the vehicle for recognising and rewarding teachers needed to be the Enterprise Bargaining process so that professional improvement was rewarded financially. With a MCEETYA taskforce working on the issue of standards further consideration will have to be undertaken by members in 2003.

In addition to a wide range of reviews on which the AEU was represented or had input the Union made a major contribution to the development of the system Strategic Plan "Within Reach of Us All" and particularly its component plans for students at risk. Assistant Secretary Fiona MacGregor, having been seconded during 2001 to develop the students at risk initiative, was successful in winning the Manager, Student Support Services position in the Department. Fiona left the AEU Office to take up her new position at the beginning of Term 2 with former TAFE Organiser Robin Ballantyne being appointed by Council to replace Fiona. The ACT Branch Council in recognition of Fiona's services as an Organiser and as Assistant Secretary (Professional) has nominated Fiona for a life membership of the AEU.

The other major staffing change in the AEU Office took place with the appointment of Assistant Secretary (Industrial) Peter Malone to the position of Interim Secretary of the ACT Trades and Labour Council to replace Jeremy Pyner who retired from the position after eight years at the head of the ACT's peak union body.

Peter was elected unopposed at the Council's AGM to a four year term as Secretary, the first AEU member to hold the position. Peter joined the ACT Branch in 1996 from the WA Branch following the death of Industrial Officer Don Cameron and was responsible for major successes on behalf of members in negotiations with Government, MLAs, the Department and CIT. His expertise and political networks greatly assisted the work of the Union over the six years of his employment. Peter has been replaced for Term 4 by Organiser Penny Gilmour and Executive member Annamaria Zuffo has taken on the role of Acting Organiser. AEU representation on the TLC has never been stronger with the Union taking a leading role in supporting TLC activities such as May Day, Common Core Conditions and human rights issues.

In our campaigning for a better deal for public education in the ACT the occasion of National Public Education Day on 23 May provided a huge boost to the image of our schools and the work of the members. In addition to many school based events, library displays and a schools concert in Civic, the ACT Branch was honoured to have the President of the National Education Association of the USA, Bob Chase, address members at the Public Education Dinner. ACTU President Sharan Burrow spoke at the inaugural Public Education Day address at the CIT. Guests at the dinner included the Minister Simon Corbell, Bob Chase and four State representatives from the USA, Federal Secretary Rob Durbridge and Assistant Secretary Susan Hopgood, CEO Fran Hinton, CIT Director Peter Veenker, MLAs and MHR Annette Ellis as well as parent, departmental and principal representatives.

In addition to the NEA delegation, the AEU was visited by the President of the British National Union of Teachers John Illingworth who met with Executive members following the Federal Conference and the President of the Columbian Teachers Union, Gloria Ines Ramirez. The overseas visitors highlighted the common concerns that unite the teaching profession in their dialogue with members. Teachers the world over are not simply concerned with their own employment conditions, important as

they are, but also concerned about fundamental questions of human rights and freedoms.

This commitment to social justice was reinforced during the year with the active support given by the AEU nationally and locally to refugee and social justice issues. AEU Officers spoke on the asylum seekers incarceration at several public rallies calling for the release of children in detention.

The ACT Branch on behalf of members reinforced its support for human rights in practical terms in 2002 by donating \$5,000 to the AEU's International Trust Fund, \$3,000 to APHEDA (the Australian Trade Unions Overseas Aid Fund) and locally \$1,000 to Barnados and \$1,000 to the Stewart House Foundation (for disadvantaged students). Many members contributed financially to Stewart House and APHEDA individually.

The make up of the ACT Assembly with the new Government has seen continued lobbying to influence Government and other Assembly members. This has included a variety of presentations to Assembly Committees on the Education Budget, VET, and meetings with individual members of the Assembly and MHRs. Officers used the Assembly's Estimates Committee to expose cuts to CIT's funding base. Ensuring a significant public presence for the AEU in these forums means that a greater level of attention is paid to our issues.

In lobbying activity, submissions and presentation, the AEU was often in accord with positions taken by the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations. The close working relationship fostered over recent years between the organisations again paid dividends for public education.

At the national level, the major lobbying of Federal parliamentarians by TAFE was strongly supported by ACT members. The ACT Branch was visited by all Federal Officers during the year and was kept in close touch with national developments through national meetings of the Federal Executive, Industrial, Research, Women's and TAFE Officers.

Members continued to receive the national journal, *The Australian Educator*, and the *Australian TAFE Teacher* which supplemented the more local perspectives in *The ACT Teacher*.

Relations with other AEU Branches remained strong with information exchanges a regular feature of the work of the Union.

Legal defense of members facing both criminal and disciplinary action was significant this year with the ACTLAW Agreement with Pamela Coward and Associates providing an excellent service for members. Seventy five members used the legal firm for general legal matters, including Comcare, transfer, superannuation, grievance and harassment issues, as well as basic services of Will preparation, family law and conveyancing. The Branch Executive has renewed the ACTLAW Agreement for 2003.

Promotion, selection and transfer issues at the system level remained vexatious during 2002 with the Department unable to address concerns first raised in 2001 in any effective way until finally July saw the establishment of a working party and the appointment of a human resources consultant to develop proposals for reform. Major problems of communication, timing, panel make up and training, consistency of

outcomes and procedures are all to be addressed as the system moves to a more transfer oriented selection process.

As part of the national advertising of some positions, the ACT again saw some new appointments to the principal ranks from interstate. With the exception of one individual, all newcomers have joined the AEU and involved themselves in Union activity. ACT members underlining the global nature of the profession have been successful in winning overseas appointments in Asia and Europe. Classroom teachers have been given leave to teach overseas, particularly in the UK.

The membership of the AEU has grown this year by over a hundred members beyond the resignation and retirement rate. This is due in part to increased efforts by Officers and members to encourage colleagues to join. With over 400 new teachers to the system in 2003, an extra effort will have to be made to ensure overall membership growth.

Those members who have undertaken representative roles, whether on Executive, Council, Committees, the Trades and Labour Council, Boards, in the workplace etc deserve an accolade for their commitment and efforts on behalf of members and public education. We all rely on their efforts, supported by the work of the AEU Office. During 2002 by any measure, the ACT Branch remained an effective and efficient democratic organisation fulfilling its significant role in the ACT community.

2003 will be a very challenging year for the AEU, public education and members. With the expiry of the current EBAs, it will be imperative that a unified effort of the full membership is made to achieve the best possible outcomes for members and schools. Intelligent targeted campaigning to reinforce the value of our schools and TAFE and their teachers will be the key to achieving success.

B. Assistant Secretary (Industrial) Report

Legislation/Political Lobbying:

Since the election of the Labor Party to ACT Government in October 2001, the Union has made a concerted effort to establish a productive working relationship with the new Minister for Education, Simon Corbell.

This has borne fruit over a range of issues:

- The establishment of an ACT Education Funding Review, chaired by Ms Lyndsay Connors.
- The full reinstatement of \$27m “free bus” money into the public sector Education Budget.
- Constructive amendments being made to the proposed Bill to change the Education Act.
- An increase in real terms of 5.4% to the ACT Education Budget.
- An extension of the class size reductions to include Year 3.
- Agreement to remove the 50 day casual teaching requirement.
- Agreement to allow the three year mobility rule to be released in special circumstances.

Although insufficient money was provided by the Government’s first Budget to assist TAFE, the past 12 months have overall seen a much welcome reinvestment in ACT public education.

Industrial Outcomes:

A. Principals

The first challenge the AEU presented to the new Government was to deliver a decent salary outcome for all our Principal members, whose previous EBA expired in December 2001.

Despite vigorous opposition from the departmental bureaucrats, the Minister for Education accepted the Union’s position that a 14% salary increase over 18 months was both necessary and reasonable.

The EBA was endorsed by 96% of all Principals and apart from the salary increase, included:

- a \$75,000 professional development fund;
- commitment to negotiate a new “Principal Class”, incorporating both Principals and Deputy Principals;
- no reductions to any other conditions [ie no trade offs];
- agreement to amalgamate the Teaching Service and Principals’ EBAs into a Single Agreement in the next round of negotiations’
- maintenance of the budget model classification structure.

B. TAFE

TAFE this year saw the finalisation of a long standing dispute over the employment of casual teachers. Historically, CIT had allowed teachers to be employed as casual for indefinite periods of time. This practice saw about 100 members having worked as a regular casual teacher for at least two years, up to in some instances, 15 years. A combination of membership activism, Australian Industrial Relations Commission

assistance and Union Office negotiations, were victorious in ending this abusive process. As a result, most long term casual TAFE teachers who wished to gain more secure forms of employment have now achieved this, through either contracts of at least two year duration or permanency.

In the future, any casual teacher who works on average of eight hours a week over four semesters has the right to request the position be advertised as either permanent or at least, a two year contract. At the end of any two year contract period, the teacher has again the right to request that they be made permanent. While no system is perfect, this new arrangement should ensure that there will no longer be teachers employed against their wishes as only casuals for excessive periods of time.

A second win in TAFE this year has been the concession by CIT to finally offer a new round of Advanced Skills Teachers. The Union has been fighting off and on since 1996 for this to occur. At least those members who believe they meet the AST criteria will have the opportunity to be rewarded for their expertise.

C. The Next EBA Claim

Throughout 2002 the Union Office has been seeking the views of all our members on what they believe should be within our next EBA claim. An EBA survey was conducted to gain a sense of the priority issues for ACT teachers.

The clear message given by AEU teachers was that they want:

1. action taken to alleviate excessive workload they are currently experiencing;
2. a significant salary increase, particularly for beginning teachers, in order to keep the profession competitive;
3. additional resources provided so that behaviour management issues may be better addressed for the sake of all students.

The emphasis placed on workload by members was also consistent with the findings of the Zipin Report released in August 2002 and interstate reports, eg Vinson in NSW. This Survey, together with the views of Sub-Branched put directly to the Union's Branch Executive and Branch Council has now informed the creation of a Draft EBA claim.

This Draft EBA claim once prepared will be distributed to all Sub-Branched for consideration and suggested changes. Branch Councillors will finalise the EBA claim at its December meeting, so that formal negotiations may begin with the Department in February 2003.

D. Joint ACT Public Service Common Conditions Claim

The ACT Labor Government has taken steps during the year to honour its pre-election commitments given to the ACT Trades and Labour Council before the October 2001 election.

In particular, it has begun negotiations with the ACT Public Service Unions over a set of common conditions which will apply across all of the Service. The outcome of these negotiations will have no affect on ACT teachers until our EBA negotiations commence next year.

C. Assistant Secretary (Professional) Report

1. Research and Professional Issues

Since gaining government in the Territory the ALP, through its Minister for Education Simon Corbell, has encouraged input from a variety of sources including the Union to the future of education in the Territory. The Government Schools Education Council, established this year, is an important source of ministerial advice on a range of funding and educational issues. Thus far, a submission has been made to the Council on the question of future funding priorities for schools in the ACT, and input has been given on curriculum reform by AEU Officers and Council representatives.

Other input to funding decisions has come through the AEU's Budget Submission, which achieved many of its aims including funding for important initiatives in the high school arena and in students at risk of non completion of their schooling. The Union Office also made a submission to the Lyndsay Connors Funding Review of School Education during 2002.

Class Sizes Initiative

The ALP Government initiative, the result of an election promise in 2002 regarding the reduction of class sizes in early childhood, was implemented from the start of this year. Schools were funded to reduce class sizes in K-2 to cluster around 25 students. Over the next two years, this will be extended to Year 3 and classes will drop to 23, and then 21 students.

The Union's Class Sizes Survey 2002, conducted early in the year by Ian McPhee, showed that schools were reaching these targets, and in many cases lowering class sizes below the required level. The Union will continue to monitor the implementation of the program over the next two years, as it represents the achievement of one of our most important goals.

Research Initiatives

A major focus of the Union's research work this year has been the Lew Zipin report on ACT teacher workload *Too Much With Too Little*. This report is forming the basis of claims within the EBA process. The Union Office is concerned that no additional workload should be accepted by teachers without proper resourcing and/or substitution for existing work. The Union Office has been called on to give advice to members on this point in relation to OH&S inspections, End of Year Assessment for PIPS, the Exhibitions Project and Moderation.

Other research undertaken for the Union this year includes:

- *Building Community in West Belconnen*
- *The Relationship Between Poor Health, Low levels of Academic Achievement and Low Socio Economic Status*, a submission to the Legislative Assembly's Standing Inquiry into the Health of School Age Children in the ACT
- *Class Sizes Survey 2002*, a study of the implementation of class size reductions in the early primary years
- A discussion paper on the future of preschool structures in the ACT

- *Non Traditional School Structures Review*, a position paper regarding industrial issues connected with schools which do not follow the traditional K-6, 7-10, 11-12 division.

The Assistant Secretary (Professional) also provided a submission to the Federal AEU Curriculum and Professional Issues Committee on provision for disadvantaged students in the ACT. The submission was based on input from a wide variety of members and will help inform future national Union action in this area.

Members have been asked to provide information through a variety of surveys in targeted areas important to the Union's work, eg the Communications Survey, the IT Survey, Class Sizes Survey, EBA Claims Survey.

Professional Issues

Formal responses have been written to: the Needs Based Assessment Reference Group regarding a proposed assessment tool for funding of students with disabilities, the Volunteers Policy, The Department's Literacy and Numeracy Plan, the Preschools Quality Framework. Input will also be made to the Review of Counsellors and to the Review of Alternative Settings.

Senior Officers have also made contact with the Youth Coalition of the ACT, and Executive supported the Union joining the Coalition as a corporate member. It is hoped that some future joint action may grow out of this contact, particularly in the area of training for members in issues of relevance to students at risk.

The Union has also been represented on various departmental committees during 2002 that have focused on professional issues:

- Needs Based Assessment Reference Group
- High Schools for the New Millennium Reference Group
- EEO Consultative Committee
- LA Reference Group
- Professional Learning Fund Committee
- Promoting Positive Behaviours in Primary Schools

At the national level, Senior Officers have been involved in the National Schools Network and the Australian Council for Education seminar/workshops on teaching standards. The Federal AEU is also a party to the National Coalition Against Poverty, which presented a petition signed by over 19,000 people and organisations to Parliamentarians in a ceremony in Canberra on 17 October, the National Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The *ACT Teacher* also carried a research article from Federal Research Officer Roy Martin on Education and Poverty.

A new forum *The Pedagogy Page* has been initiated in the *ACT Teacher* to allow the Assistant Secretary (Professional) to communicate with members regarding research issues, and to stimulate member contributions on important curriculum/pedagogy debates.

2. Training Program

The Union continues to expand and refine its training program for members. Attendance at some sessions has been low, with others cancelled, mainly due to the shortage of relief personnel to backfill teachers' release from classroom duty whilst attending training. Next year, we intend to trial a limited number of out of hours training sessions at night or on Saturday mornings, if the relief shortage continues.

New courses offered this year include:

- Seeking Promotion
- Conflict Resolution in the Workplace
- Speaking Up With Style Plus
- Dealing with Difficult People for Level/Band 1 teachers
- Dealing with Difficult People in the School/TAFE context for teachers in promotional positions

Evaluation of these courses and their presenters continues to be very positive, with participants enthusiastic about the value of the training program.

3. Women's Issues:

Training for Women Members

The Union continues to offer specific training for women members. A new course *Speaking Up With Style Plus* was devised and presented by Biff Ward, along with her ever popular *Speaking Up With Style*. Cheryl O'Connor presented *Leading from Within* in both semesters.

Women Activists Network

A new group was formed in August to gauge interest in pursuing activities specific to women members of the Union. A small group of women met in the AEU Office and decided to survey members at the Annual Women's Dinner. Those survey results were collated and will form the basis of activities planned for 2003. The Network has also given input to the Union's EBA claim, and the Federal Union's Women@Unions document.

AEU Women's Dinner

Over one hundred members attended the annual dinner held on 20 September. Cartoonist Judy Horacek gave a highly entertaining speech accompanied by a slide show of her cartoons. The student jazz band *Keep Left* entertained members throughout the night. The annual dinner which is self funding, supports women members to establish networks and celebrate their success as educators.

AEU Federal Women's Conference

The theme of this year's Federal Women's Conference was *Women's Work, Women's Lives*. The ACT Branch sent five delegates to the Conference: Robin Ballantyne, Pam Cording, Lorraine Batterham, Cathy Smith and Annette Burki Lavers, who also represented TAFE women at the TAFE Women's Committee Meeting which preceded the Conference. Workshops at the Conference covered the themes of Women and Activism, Women and the Profession, Women and Human Rights and Women, Work and Life. Each workshop formulated a detailed campaign strategy focused on an area of particular concern to women. Ideas for improvements for women in teaching have been incorporated into claims within the new EBA.

The recommendations and actions from the Conference will be referred to the Federal Executive and will be incorporated into the recommendations to the Federal Conference to be held in Adelaide in January 2003.

In addition, a motion was passed condemning the war on Iraq; this motion was sent to organisers of the rally which took place in Melbourne while the Women's Conference was meeting.

Gender Equity

The debate about the Education of Boys continued throughout 2002, fuelled by the Shadow Minister for Education Steve Pratt, and assisted by the Department's employment of Ivan Lillo to offer PD on the subject. A research paper commissioned by DEYFS and written by Dr Andrew Martin was released in August. Dr Martin's findings challenge the idea of any general failure in boys' achievements at school, but highlight areas for improvements in our delivery of services to boys and girls. The paper is an interesting balance to the simplistic coverage of this subject within much of the popular media.

4. Equal Employment Opportunity

The Department's EEO Consultative Committee has met regularly throughout 2002, discussing and acting on issues such as:

- The draft DEYFS *Equity and Diversity Plan* for 2003-2005
- Employee/er responsibilities in regard to reasonable adjustment
- Online training in workplace discrimination and sexual harassment
- Family friendly workplaces and Work and Life Balance in the ACT public sector
- DEYFS breastfeeding in the workplace policy
- Permanent part time teaching
- Staff Equity Contact Officers
- Indigenous traineeships and scholarships

5. Indigenous Education

The Union has been represented by two Indigenous members on the Federal AEU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee, Michelle Bryant from the TAFE Division and Vicky Lucas from the General Division. Michelle also attended the ACTU Indigenous Unionists Conference in September with ACT Union Office support. Contact between the Union Office and the Indigenous Education Unit of DEYFS has also been maintained, with the Union seeking to publicise initiatives of the Unit.

The AEU's Reconciliation Awards were presented in May at the Public Education Dinner. A number of schools, teams and individuals were celebrated for their contribution to Indigenous education in our system. Some of these winners have been featured on the pages of the *Indigenous News*, a regular new feature of *The ACT Teacher*.

6. Special Education

The new Assistant Secretary (Professional), Robin Ballantyne has been visiting special education sites and familiarising herself with the issues important to members working in this area. A variety of members had an input to the Union's report on the state of provision for disadvantaged students in the ACT, submitted to the Federal AEU Curriculum and Professional Issues Committee. Feedback was also given by members through the Union to the trial of the Needs Based Assessment tool for funding of students with disabilities.

D. Organisers' Report

1. Assisting Individuals - a Major Part of Organisers' Work

Much of the work performed by Organisers is concerned with assisting individual members. From this perspective, it is probably true to say that this important work is also largely invisible - except to those on whose behalf the work is done. Individual assistance - by telephone, letter, e-mail and in person - is "core business" for Organisers and other Union Officers and staff. Recurrent issues that have been addressed this year included:

- Salary concerns
- Individual ratings issues
- Retirement and Super - financial direction
- Playground duty and other duties generally
- Workplace communications issues - harassment, bullying
- Industrial democracy
- Devaluation of specialist teachers
- OH&S - workload and workplace stress
- Leave of every description.

The Organisers have assisted individual members and specific groups of members to access legal advice and workers compensation information and advice. They have also provided workplace advocacy, consultation and negotiation on behalf of members. The Organisers have endeavoured to keep members well informed through direct involvement at meetings of Sub-Branches and some professional associations. Sometimes members are reluctant to approach the Union. Members should always be reassured that contact with the Union is a right, and is confidential. It is often possible for the Union to seek a response to an issue from the employer without mentioning the name of the individual concerned. It is also practice to ensure that the member is aware of the proposed action to be taken by the Union of their behalf before anything happens. Members can seek advice about rights, entitlements and general issues from the Union - whether or not they choose to act upon the information given is always a matter for individual decision.

2. Professional Pathways

One of the major implementation issues this year has been the introduction of Professional Pathways in the school sector. While the process appears to have been generally positive, there have been some circumstances where things have gone awry. The AEU has played an important role in assisting individuals to "get it right", and working with the Department to ensure consistent messages are being given about interpretation of the Pathways implementation processes and expectations within it. It is quite normal for any new initiative to encounter at least some teething problems as the system takes on board new ways of working. It is anticipated that the number of members requiring assistance with Pathways-related issues will decline in 2003 as the process of developing a Professional Pathway Plan will not be a new experience for most teachers in the ACT government schools system.

3. Training by Organisers

Training provided by the Organisers fell into something of a hiatus in 2002. Issues that seemed to mitigate against member attendance at Union Training provided by the Organisers included problems obtaining casual relief; too great a workload to be able to take time out to attend training; and perhaps too narrow a focus of training in aiming only at Sub-Branch Executive and Councillors.

During 2002, the Organisers planned to conduct training course for Sub-Branch Executive members (whole day), Councillors (half day), and 2 hour workshops on Meeting Procedure and Negotiation Skills.

The courses that were conducted were significantly under subscribed. As a result of this experience, we are working on reorganising and reformatting courses for greater accessibility and broader relevance. We hope to reorientate the content of Organiser delivered training so that there will be a better take up rate for training offered next year.

4. Recruitment

It is an ongoing challenge to maintain the current level of membership across the sectors. However, even with the gradual increase in numbers of members retiring from the service at 54 and 11 months, membership has increased over the past 12 months. This is aspect of the job requires involvement of the entire membership in promoting the benefits of belonging to the organisation.

It is encouraging to see new teachers joining the Union with an awareness of the benefits and an appreciation of the role of the Union in providing a better working environment and conditions for our members.

In the coming year we will be reinvigorating the Beginning Teachers' Network and Student Teachers' Network in our endeavours to attract members from the earliest associations with ACT education. Having a broader network of associates across sectors will enhance the unity of the organisation and provide new members with ongoing support and mentors.

5. Council

The organisation of Council has been under review this year to provide all Councillors with the opportunity to speak. The workshops that run at every Council have achieved their purpose to some extent although the ability to address all key issues through the workshops is a point of ongoing frustration for many. The trial will be assessed at December Council.

Regardless of the actual organisation of the Council meeting, it remained the single most important forum of the Union during 2002. It provided the members with the opportunity to air their grievances, seek support for their Sub-Branches, and debate issues of significant impact on their working lives. The role of Councillor in Sub-Branches is something accepted with pride and commitment by members. The Councillor's commitment means joining with colleague Councillors on one Saturday morning a month for eight months from March through to December, on time, to advance the position and conditions of teachers in the community. Every encouragement during the year has been provided to ensure full representation at Council to make sure that Sub-Branches commit to working to maintain and improve teachers' working conditions and professional standing.

6. Campaigning for Public Education

Organisers have been very busy assisting members in *Public Education Works* activities throughout the year, but particularly on Public Education Day, 23 May with the displays, concerts and school based celebrations. This assistance will be available again in 2003 to ensure an ever higher profile for public education.

Intrepid participants jogged for public education weekly and have completed more than 150 laps of Parliament House. Joggers ran almost every week on either Monday or Thursday. Parliamentarians are becoming accustomed to seeing *Public Education Works* T-shirts trot past a couple of days a week punctuating the importance of our services. The jog/walk is continuing and participants look forward to seeing more members up top taking in the fresh air and grand vista of Parliament while actively working to improve the lot of public education.

E. TAFE/VET Organiser's Report

2002 was a good year for AEU members both within the CIT and for those members involved in Vocational Education and Training in Schools. Significant gains were made in many areas of members' activity representing a solid base on which to prepare and pursue the next Enterprise Bargaining Agreement in 2003.

1. Casual Teachers' Agreement

2002 saw a watershed reached with regard to the employment of casual teachers at the Canberra Institute of Technology. The 2002 Casual Teachers' Agreement went a long way to making defunct the unjust practice of retaining precariously employed teachers for years with little hope of permanency though they were carrying out the same role semester after semester.

Under the Agreement, negotiated by the AEU and CIT Management, casual teachers that meet the criteria of an average of eight hours teaching per week over a minimum of four semesters have the right to request that their position be advertised and filled either permanently or as a contract of at least 24 months duration.

Further, contract teachers that have held a position for at least two years have the right to request appointment as a permanent officer (subject to the fulfilment of the probationary requirements of the Institute). This request cannot be unreasonably refused and the conversion requires no additional merit selection process to be undertaken.

The Agreement is broken into three parts:

1. Award Clauses - deal with changes to the ACT Government Technical and Further Education Teachers' Salaries and Conditions Award 1999.
2. Agreement Clauses - these arrangements deal specifically with the rights of contract teachers to seek appointment as an officer on probation
3. Transitional Provisions - these clauses deal with the special arrangements that were agreed to with regard to casual teachers that averaged 5 hours per week during the four semesters 2000 and 2001.

2. Representation

Lyn Singleton and Annette Burki Lavers represented the ACT Branch on the TAFE Women's Committee in 2002. Our thanks go out to both Lyn and Annette for their commitment to the advancement of womens' issues within the TAFE sector but also more broadly. Annette will remain as the ACT Branch Women's Committee representative into 2003.

Michelle Bryant joined TAFE Council this year as the first Aboriginal member of ACT Branch TAFE Council. Michelle also represented the ACT on a number of interstate Union and National forums concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our thanks must go to all CIT members that represented the Union on various panels, committees, organised Sub-Branched and all those members that contributed to Union forums generally. Your input and contributions to the overall functioning of the Union were responsible for making 2002 the successful year that it was.

3. Workload

Members continued to experience increases to their workloads in response to ongoing pressure endured at every level of the system. A sea change is needed and in an attempt to promote this CIT members engaged in a Workload Survey in 2002. The survey spanned 2 one-month periods and required members to document where they were expending their effort throughout the eight weeks of the survey period.

The survey highlighted the increasing administrative burden that teachers are being asked to carry. For the vast majority of teachers participating in the survey "Duties Other Than Teaching" demanded a disproportionate amount of their time. This was particularly the case for teachers employed precariously as either contract or casual teachers.

Band 2 members throughout 2002 also engaged in a program of examination of the issues affecting their excessive workloads. The Band 2 Working Party looked at the changing role of Band 2s. The working party continues to review the role of Band 2s with a view to putting in place constructive proposals aimed at alleviating the considerable workload pressures experienced by Band 2 members across the Institute.

Issues surrounding workload will be central to the EBA campaign of 2003.

4. ACT Budget

While the ACT Budget brought significant increased funding to the schools sector in 2002; for the CIT the budget outcome was very disappointing. The 2002 Labor Government Budget reintroduced the 4th year of funding cuts implemented by the previous Liberal Government. Coming completely out of 'left field' these budget cuts demonstrate the lack of understanding at the Government level of the significant contributions that TAFE makes to the social, economic and community development of the ACT and must be remedied.

2003 must deliver significantly better budgetary outcomes for the CIT if the viability of an effective TAFE system in the ACT is to be assured.

5. Sub-Branch Operations

TAFE Council undertook a review of Sub-Branch operations within the CIT in 2002. The review sought to evaluate the effectiveness of existing Sub-Branch structures within the CIT and the degree to which these structures were meeting members needs.

The outcome of the review was to trial a revised Sub-Branch structure in the Faculty of Design. This trial established a Sub-Branch within the Faculty rather than the existing practice of Campus based Sub-Branches. The trial ran throughout semester 2 2002 and an evaluation of the trial will be carried out to determine its suitability and whether or not extension of this model might be possible elsewhere in the CIT.

Also trialed was a team approach to the organisation of Sub-Branches at the Bruce Campus. The traditional Sub-Branch Executive structure of President, Vice President and Secretary was replaced by a team of three persons all sharing the responsibility for the co-ordination of the Sub-Branch. A similar evaluation of this structure will be carried out at the end of 2002 or early 2003.

Our thanks should go out to the Executives of all the Sub-Branches in operation at the CIT: Reid Campus, Bruce Campus, Weston Campus, Southside Campus,

Canberra Avenue and the Casual Teachers. The Sub-Branch is the level of the Union where members' views are most easily expressed and as such represent the foundation of the Union in the CIT. The effective management of all these Sub-Branched meant an effective operation of the ACT TAFE Division throughout 2002.

6. Public Education Day 2002

Thursday 23 May was National Public Education Day. The day was a celebration of the significant contribution that Public Education makes to the ACT Community.

The CIT and the CIT Students Association joined with the AEU in hosting a variety of events throughout the day. The highlights of the day included a breakfast at the Tuggeranong Flexible Learning Centre, the delivery of the inaugural Public Education Day Address at the Reid Campus by ACTU President Sharan Burrow, the performance of student bands at a number of campuses, BBQs at every campus and the celebration of Australia's biggest morning tea. The day culminated in the Public Education Day dinner where Bryson Foote, a graphic design student from the Faculty of Design, was presented with the prize for the winning entry in the AEU/CIT Banner design competition. Annie Marootians, a graduating student from the CIT Contemporary Music Department also delivered a wonderful solo performance in front of the large crowd of attendees at the dinner.

Public Education Day in 2003 will fall on 22 May and advanced planning has already begun in order to build on the success of 2002.

7. Advanced Skills Teachers

The AEU was successful in negotiating a new round of AST positions in CIT in Semester 2 2002. Long overdue, it was the actions of a significant number of members who were prepared to agitate over the issue that brought about a change of heart from CIT Management. The AST category recognises teachers for excellence in their teaching practice.

The AEU as part of the EBA negotiations in 2003 will seek to further enhance the teaching profession within the CIT by increasing the opportunities for professional development and pursuing new opportunities for recognition of teaching excellence.

8. Submissions and Representations

The AEU provided input and submissions on behalf of members to a number of reviews and inquiries. These included the ACT Government Review of Education Funding, ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education Inquiry into VET in the ACT, The House of Representatives Committee on Education and Training Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools and the ACT Legislative Assembly Budget Estimates Committee hearings.

The AEU continued its representation throughout 2002 on the ACT VETA Board, the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council, the CIT Advisory Council and the ACT VET Co-ordinators' Network. Branch Officers also met with the ITAB Joint Council.

9. VET in Schools

2002 saw the establishment of a trial of the AEU VET Committee. The AEU VET Committee is a cross sectoral committee with representation from AEU members in the CIT, ACT Government colleges and high schools.

The AEU VET Committee has as its objectives to:

1. Promote relationship between AEU members engaged in VET delivery from all the sectors of the Union's membership involved with VET in the ACT.
2. Provide advice to the AEU on matters impacting on VET in the ACT.
3. Investigate opportunities for partnership between public RTOs in the ACT.
4. Enhance the existing relationships between public RTOs in the ACT.

The Committee has met regularly throughout Semester 2 and has been a successful forum for the exchange of ideas, for the development of partnerships and pathways between VET providers in the ACT and in advancing the issues concerning VET generally.

10. Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

2002 saw the further reinforcement of the Australian Quality Training Framework on all stakeholders within the VET sector across Australia. The advancement of the AQTF included an audit of a number of Departments within the CIT against the 12 standards contained within the Framework.

The process, while somewhat burdensome in regards to the administrative response needed to meet the requirements of the audit, was in some respects a positive process. It pointed to those areas of the CIT where teachers were delivering, in many instances, above the requirements of the AQTF as well as providing an opportunity to enhance the systems and processes currently employed within the Institute.

The workload implications associated with meeting the requirements of the AQTF will continue to be monitored by the AEU both locally and federally.

11. EBA Implementation

The 2000 - 2003 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement set a foundation that will be continued into the 2003 agreement of enhancing the teaching profession within CIT.

Many of the initiatives contained within the 2000 agreement continued to be developed and implemented throughout 2002. These included:

- A model for 360 degree feedback
- Professional Development Fund
- Performance Management processes.

12. Occupational Health and Safety in CIT

Occupational Health and Safety continued to be a focus of Union activity throughout 2002. Many matters were discussed and resolved at a local level through the involvement of local OH&S representatives and committees.

Many OH&S representative positions will be open for nominations in 2003 for the next two year term.

13. TAFE Council

CIT members continued to be well served by their representatives on TAFE Council. Meeting monthly, TAFE Council progressed the interests of CIT members through positive discourse and strategy development for the TAFE Division of the ACT Branch.

Appreciation must be expressed for the efforts of all TAFE Councillors in the contributions made to the decision making processes of the Union at this level. Many of the gains achieved for members within the CIT can be attributed to the efforts and guidance given by members of TAFE Council.

14. Recruitment

The recruitment of new members is a necessary component of all Union activity. The increase in new memberships from the CIT is very positive and points to a healthy and progressive Union culture within the Institute. All members should be congratulated for these increases in membership as they are a direct result of the positive direction in which the Union continues to move and due to the broad involvement of all members in Union activities.

15. Union Activism

The second National TAFE Activists' Seminar was held in Canberra on 25 and 26 June this year. The Seminar is an opportunity for TAFE representatives from across the country to meet and discuss issues in common and to advance the interests of TAFE generally. Jenny Macklin Deputy Leader of the Australian Labour Party as well as representatives from the Australian Democrats addressed the meeting.

The Seminar is a professional development activity for members and is targeted at enhancing the Union's exposure at the Federal level. The program of events saw the ACT contingent meeting with ACT Senator Kate Lundy and ACT Member of the House of Representatives Annette Ellis on the days in question as well as a visit to the electoral offices of Bob McMullan MHR. All of those federal politicians visited listened with interest to the representations made by CIT members and asked that they be kept up to date with developments in the sector.

Resulting from the Activists' Seminar; CIT members Jo Dixon and Marie Zuvich co-ordinated a forum on 16 August examining the issues around the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and the implications of an extension of this scheme into the TAFE sector. Representatives from the AEU, the CIT Students' Association and the CIT addressed a good crowd on the perspectives that they each brought to the issue.

16. Personnel Issues

A number of issues warrant mentioning specifically in regard to the support role that the Union plays in members personnel issues:

The implementation of the Teacher Management System (TMS) was a significant deviation from the traditional "pen and paper" exercise previously utilised within the Institute to record teachers' time. The nature of the change meant considerable "teething" problems were experienced and the AEU was closely involved in addressing these issues and in representing members concerns to CIT management. Casual members were among the members most significantly impacted by the change.

Recruitment and selection processes within the Institute presented opportunities for improvement that the AEU was successful in taking up throughout 2002. A sub-committee of members engaged in a process of review of the then existing recruitment and selection practices within the CIT and presented a suite of proposed reform to the CIT Management. The recommendations were, in the main, well received and went a good way to positively developing the recruitment and selection practices within the Institute.

The AEU continued to support and advocate for members in relation to a wide range of personal personnel issues of both an industrial and professional nature.