



# 11th Annual Report

*November 2003*

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## Officers and Staff

**Clive Haggart** - Secretary

**Jan Day** - President

**Robin Ballantyne** - Assistant to the Secretary [Professional]

**Penny Gilmour** - Assistant to the Secretary [Industrial]

**Bill Book** – Schools' Organiser

**Cathy Smith** – Schools' Organiser

**Tim McNevin** - TAFE Organiser

**Sue Billington** - Executive Officer

**Janet Anderson** - Steno Secretary

**Ros Tovey** - Membership Clerk

**Terry Butters** - Finance Clerk

**Elaine O'Mara** - Receptionist

**Bev Evans** - Part Time Stenographer

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## **A. Secretary's Overview of 2003**

In the 10th Annual Report in November 2002 I wrote "2003 will be a very challenging year for the AEU, public education and members". In providing the Overview of this year's activities it is clear that the ACT Branch has met the challenges of 2003 in a successful and productive way for both the members and for public education in the ACT.

At the end of 2002 Minister Simon Corbell was replaced as a consequence of a reshuffle and expanded Cabinet by Katy Gallagher MLA, who was given the significant portfolios of Education and Industrial Relations. Despite the challenge of being new to the Ministry and relatively new to the Legislative Assembly, Katy Gallagher has worked closely with the AEU throughout the year and has been a thoughtful and forceful advocate for public education in her first year in office.

Assistant Secretary Penny Gilmour's Industrial Report outlines the history of the development and serving of our Enterprise Bargaining Agreement Claim in February, the record of negotiations and the significant victory of the re-establishment of the principle of parity of salary or better with NSW for teachers on the Level 1 salary scale. This achievement with salary increases to be paid from 1 October 2003 allows the continuation of negotiations whilst also ensuring that outcomes in the public sector in NSW are known prior to the ACT Branch reaching a final agreement with the employer in March or April 2004.

In the negotiations with the Department and with Government following the expiration of the 2000/2003 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement on 10 August 2003, the fact that we were able to generate a significant degree of public support of our Claims for our historical salary position with NSW, and the willingness of members to commit themselves to industrial action, was sufficient for the Government to make a third and acceptable offer in negotiations for the initial increase.

Members' determination to achieve a good outcome was reflected in Sub-Branch motions and the individual efforts members went to, to write to politicians and to the media in defence of our Claims.

Recruitment during the year as detailed in the Organisers' Report was the highest ever for the ACT Branch for an equivalent period of time. This is a product of increasing numbers of teachers being recruited to the Service to fulfil the Government's commitment to lower class sizes in Kindergarten-Year 3, as well as the replacement of increasing numbers of teachers resigning/retiring from the Service. As we move into 2004 the early settlement in the new year of our next Agreement is vital to achieve the salary and working conditions outcomes needed to make teaching a more attractive profession. The recruitment activity of the Branch, particularly that of its members in schools, will have to be re-emphasised to ensure our bargaining capacity is maintained. We are and will continue to be the largest Union of ACT Government employees and the second largest overall in the ACT.

Given the history of Enterprise Bargaining in the ACT, it is unwise to be optimistic when discussing Enterprise Bargaining issues, but in addition to the salary outcomes already achieved, there are significant other improvements currently being negotiated that will see more money in the pockets of members and improvements to overall working conditions.

The 14 weeks maternity leave currently in place is but one example. It will also be vital for us to address further improved outcomes for casual relief teachers and to address the issue of relativities between promotions and classroom teacher positions in both schools and the Canberra Institute of Technology as we negotiate the EBA to finalisation.

The *Public Education Works* campaign remains the major vehicle for the Union's activity in the industrial [EBA], professional and budgetary fields. The highlight of the *Public Education Works* public activity in 2003 was the celebration of National Public Education Day on 22 May as a part of our national celebrations. Professor Phillip Hughes provided the keynote address at the highly successful dinner, whilst the Director of the National Museum of Australia, Dawn Casey, provided a stirring address to TAFE members and students at a lunchtime celebration at the Canberra Institute of Technology.

The quality public performances of our teachers and students on the day was recognised by one media commentator for its twofold purpose. Firstly, the celebration of the achievements of those involved in public education in the ACT, but also as an effective campaigning device for reminding the Government and the Canberra community of the need to value our teachers and the public education system.

Membership involvement in Public Education Day continues to grow, but there still remain pockets of apathy where some members and school communities prefer to leave it to others. The continuing success of the day as the premier event in the public education calendar around the nation and in the ACT is assured.

The valued place of public education in our community was further demonstrated on 18 January and the subsequent recovery period from the ACT bushfires. AEU members and other Department of Education, Youth and Family Services' [DEYFS] employees were everywhere. They formed crews in the fire fighting units, staffed recovery centres, counselled victims, defended their own and neighbours' homes and demonstrated a powerful sense of community spirit in their care and consideration for affected students when they returned to the schools to begin first term.

As it moved into its second year of government, the Stanhope Labor Government not only had to deal with the aftermath of the bushfires, but it also had to ensure effective planning for what will be a radically different Canberra in the future. The bushfire recovery period has been one in which opportunities have been provided to create a better Canberra and a better public education system for the future.

The destruction of the Birrigai Outdoor Education School and its re-creation as a larger and vibrant outdoor education and environmentally focused institution on several campuses is testimony of the efforts of members and other staff, but also of the value that the community and subsequently Government placed on the institution. The AEU Officers and members were heavily involved ensuring that Birrigai would not be lost. The AEU Executive also approved from the Teacher Welfare Fund the provision of nine \$500 emergency grants to members who had lost their homes in the conflagration.

With the ACT Government moving into high gear for its future planning, AEU Officers took the opportunity to provide input to the consultative processes. These included consultations on the Economic White Paper, the Spatial Plan and the Social Plan, as well as other consultative forae that are outlined in Assistant Secretary [Professional] Robin Ballantyne's report.

The July 2003 Budget which provided major increases for schools also provided new and/or additional funds for a range of other projects within DEYFS in which the AEU is involved. These include Reviews of School Based Management, Curriculum and Careers. We still await outcomes from a number of ongoing reviews and pilots, these include Alternative Settings, Counselling, Special Education, and a Review of Principals' Selection methods. The recommendations of the DEYFS Committee on Casual Relief which included electronic placement and salary increases are being implemented but still remain to be fully satisfied. The major issue of concern in this Budget was the fact that there was no net increase to the CIT. Council determined that CIT funding had to be a major issue for budget lobbying for the 2004 Budget.

The AEU also provided representative input to the Federal Government's examination of Professional Standards at a second National Conference in February and responded to the handing down of the Connors' Report into Non Government School Funding and the Legislative Assembly's Report into Vocational Education commented on elsewhere.

The funding divide between public and private education in the ACT addressed by the Connors' Report saw a campaign launched by the Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools [APFACTS], the organisation representing many of the schools in the private sector in the ACT.

APFACTS, with the active support of some of the elite private schools, began a lobbying and community campaign to achieve funding increases for the private school sector from the ACT Government. This is despite the fact that without question significant need still exists in public education and the fact that private schools in the ACT continue to benefit from significant annual increases from the Commonwealth Government. As a result, the AEU commissioned, in conjunction with the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations, a researched response to the APFACT claims followed up by a media and lobbying campaign to ensure that the Government is not swayed by the tactics of the private sector.

Locally, the AEU continued to provide leadership for the profession particularly in the areas of Professional Learning Standards, with the effectiveness of the work of the ACT Branch being underwritten by the recent launch of the Federal Government's Report on the profession "Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future" where many of the fifty-four recommendations for improvements in teaching, recruitment and retention echo the work undertaken by the ACT Branch through Enterprise Bargaining negotiations, Budget Submissions and its lobbying activity.

The Professional Learning Fund created as a result of AEU negotiation with the previous Government, achieved the million dollar a year mark in the July budget, although the issue of the continuation of Professional Fellowships and the appropriate use of the Professional Learning Fund remain issues for negotiation over the next few months.

Financial rewards for teachers achieving additional qualifications were implemented and backdated to 1 January 2000, while in the Recruitment Round for 2004 held this year, initiatives to improve our competitiveness in recruitment such as recognition of other work experience for incremental purposes were achieved. The AEU will seek participation in the Federal Government's National Institute for Leadership and Quality Teaching recently announced by Minister Nelson and continues to monitor the work of the MCEEYTA Taskforce on Professional Standards.

Professional issues have also been enhanced by a closer working relationship between the AEU and the Australian College for Education with Executive giving approval for a joint professional seminar to be run in the ACT on the issue of the future of the profession as a response to "Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future".

The AEU has been active in addition to its professional and industrial responsibilities, taking a stand on issues of major social concern during 2003. Many members took up the call of the Federal Conference of the AEU to oppose the war on Iraq, to participate in an Anti Poverty Campaign, to oppose the treatment by the Federal Government of asylum seekers and their families and to inform themselves on the issue of globalisation.

Because of the stand taken by the AEU nationally and endorsed by the ACT Branch Council, I was asked as Branch Secretary to speak at the major Anti War Rally in February attended by 25,000 Canberrans. Objections to the stand taken by the AEU on this issue were received from three members. The AEU also supported a range of other activities sponsored by Unions ACT [The Trades and Labour Council].

The ACT Legislative Assembly has, of course, been a major forum for debate on public education issues but with a Minister more in tune with community and professional feeling on public education, Assembly action and Government decisions have not presented the problems for AEU members and public schooling that they have in recent years. However, the major disappointment from this year's Budget was the failure to improve on the funding regime for the Canberra Institute of Technology and this issue has been addressed specifically with the Chief Minister, Treasurer and the Minister for Education. We are hopeful that there will be significant increases in CIT funding in the next Budget.

The issue of a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement was also pursued with the Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, the Treasurer Ted Quinlan and the Minister for Education, whilst the Officers had the opportunity to meet with Minister Katy Gallagher on a monthly basis to address all aspects of the operation of the system. One meeting was held during the year with Opposition Education spokesperson Steve Pratt and other meetings were held on an informal basis with MLAs Kerrie Tucker, Karin MacDonald, Roslyn Dundas and Wayne Berry.

The issue of violence in the workplace was addressed, both formally in the development of a Discussion Paper provided to members, the Department of Education and the Government, as well as a series of negotiations underpinned by the OH&S Legislation and in one instance dispute settling procedures to ensure members' right to a safe workplace were upheld. The need to protect staff and students' safety remains a high priority, with AEU pressure leading to improved funding and procedures being introduced in DEYFS.

Workload remains a particular concern with the preferred vehicle for negotiation being the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and whilst at this time the Department appears to be paying lip service to workload concerns, the AEU Office has intervened with several initiatives to eliminate or reduce the workload required. Hopefully, further negotiations through the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement will lead to a more serious consideration of work/life balance issues by the employer in accordance with stated government policy.

AEU Officers continued the close working relationship with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations. Officers met regularly with P&C Council representatives and the Secretary addressed the Council's full Executive on one occasion. The joint research on Non Government School Funding and the support of the P&C Council for teachers' salary increases were particular examples of the benefits for close co-operation.

The AEU also formed a working relationship with the ACT Youth Coalition and met with its officers on two occasions to discuss issues of concern.

AEU Officers also provided support to the NTEU campaign against the Federal Government's higher education reforms linking university funding to anti union requirements. This remains of particular concern as the same funding and legislative pressures could be placed on TAFE and schools by the Federal Government ideological anti union agenda.

The ACT Branch on behalf of members reinforced its support for human rights in practical terms in 2003 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 Barnardos and \$1,000 to the Stewart House Foundation [for disadvantaged students]. Many members contributed financially to Stewart House and APHEDA individually by subscription and to other significant causes like the anti war movement and to funds to support refugee issues via direct donation and the purchase of materials.

At the national level, the major lobbying of Federal parliamentarians in the advancement of 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, Training, Women and TAFE Officers.

As a Federal Executive Member, I was able to participate in the national lobbying effort with the new President, Pat Byrne. Pat is a highly experienced President of the WA Branch and will address Executive and Council when she takes up her full time national role in 2004. Pat led a team of national representatives to Parliament in October beginning a targeted strategy for public education lobbying in the lead up to the 2004 national elections.

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*. *The ACT Teacher* became a colour journal in 2003 which made it a visually more attractive as well as an informative communication device.

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. Large numbers of 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 2004. Outside of the ACTLAW Agreement, the Union has incurred significant legal costs defending a member in a criminal matter.

It is important to recognise those many members who have undertaken representative roles, whether on Executive, Council, Committees, the Trades and Labour Council, Boards, in the workplace etc. All 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.

Retiring Vice President, Bea Thompson in particular is being recognised for her contribution over many years with her nomination for Life Membership of the AEU.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of retiring TAFE Vice President Moir Holmes as an effective and passionate advocate for CIT members.

Financially, the AEU - ACT Branch remains in a strong position and is on track to produce a small surplus for 2003. This is the result in part of the growth in membership numbers, securing a favourable mortgage arrangement with the AEU Federal Office, a secure tenancy for the rented unit at 40 Brisbane Avenue and a quick settlement on the initial salary quantum.

However, next year the EBA, and ACT and Federal Election campaigns will make 2004 an expensive year for the AEU and members will be asked to approve a budget that allows for significant campaign expenditure to ensure that our messages are effectively heard by government and the community.

Finally, I would like to record my own appreciation of the support I have received from Officers, Staff, Executive, Council and other members throughout 2003.

**Clive Haggar**  
**Branch Secretary**

## **B. Assistant Secretary [Industrial] Report**

### **EBA Negotiations:**

The Schools EBA Claim and CIT EBA Claim were served on DEYFS and CIT respectively in February this year. Since that time, negotiations have been progressing slowly, but steadily. The AEU believes there is value in leaving open the option of a single Agreement to cover CIT and the Schools sectors, and so negotiations have been premised on ensuring that where appropriate there is as much commonality as possible between the outcomes of CIT discussions and discussions with the Schools sector. In the event of a single Agreement, both the employers' representatives and the AEU acknowledge that there will need to be separate sections in the Agreement to cover conditions and provisions which are not the same in both sectors. This internal separation will be in addition to any appendices covering specific sectional matters in each sector's provisions.

At both negotiations the very time consuming first stage of the process has been the comparison of the AEU Claim with the ACT Public Sector "Template Agreement", which resulted from negotiations on the ACT Joint Public Service Conditions Claim which were finalised in February 2003. In most cases, the AEU and the respective employers have been able to reach agreement on the substitution of superior "template clauses" for matters in the Claims, and to some improvements/clarifications in some "template clauses" that cover matters not addressed in the AEU Claims. The decision by ACT Government to flow on improvements in public sector maternity leave provisions and other "family friendly" measures from March 2003 irrespective of when Certified Agreements expired has meant that ACT government school teachers have been able to enjoy improved benefits ahead of finalisation of the current EBA process. Such changes will be contained in the next Certified Agreement in the terms of the "Template Agreement".

The month of August saw a change of focus in the discussions, with DEYFS and CIT finally making an offer of an initial increase to comply with the 2000-2003 Certified Agreement provision. The first and second offers in respect of the initial increase were unacceptable, and were rejected by the AEU membership. At the eleventh hour, DEYFS made a third and final offer which the Branch Council considered met the key priority of parity with NSW at the top of the Level 1 Scale. At the same time, CIT made an offer that TAFE Council believed met the minimum requirements for acceptance. The outcome of these developments was that industrial action planned for 28 August did not proceed.

Arising from settlement of the issue of the initial increase, ACT teachers also determined not to take industrial action as part of the 17 September National Day of Action, although Sub-Branches met and carried a resolution in support of interstate colleagues and the conduct of a summit to address national recruitment and retention issues in the public education sector.

Following Branch Council's acceptance of the *initial increase*, negotiations have continued at both bargaining tables. With the comparison of ACTPS Template matters complete, discussions have begun to move on to more substantial issues in the respective Claims. While progress is still slow, and there is a seemingly endless list of matters still to be canvassed, at the time of writing matters are progressing positively.

The *initial increase* will be back paid to 1 October 2003, but no money can be paid until a new Agreement is certified. The AEU believes that, unless Government makes an offer of quantum so substantial that outcomes in other States are irrelevant, ACT teachers cannot afford to settle an Agreement without knowing the outcome of salary matters in other States. For this reason, the parties have reached very broad agreement on an approach to the rest of the negotiations where matters that involve significant monies may not be finalised until the outcome in NSW [in particular] is known. This knowledge will allow an assessment of the quantum necessary to maintain parity with NSW classroom teacher rates, and address the relativities between ACT classifications. In the light of such an assessment, consideration can be given to what funds are available to support other cost items in the Claim, and therefore what is achievable in terms of implementation in the next Agreement.

The practical outcome of this situation is that negotiations are unlikely to produce a draft Agreement for members' consideration much before March/April 2004. While this timescale delays the actual payment of 1 October 2003 increases, the AEU believes that delaying finalisation of the next Agreement is in the best interests of ensuring ACT teachers are not disadvantaged in the total outcome by better-than-ACT outcomes in other jurisdictions.

#### **Next ACTPS Common Core Conditions Claim:**

With the success of the first ACTPS Template Agreement, public sector unions have begun to develop a Joint Claim for the next round of bargaining. The Draft Claim picks up some issues from the original negotiations, along with some changes/improvements that have been achieved by various public sector unions in their own bargaining. At the time of writing there is still a long way to go, with the unions yet to finalise the Joint Claim much less serve it on Government. There may be outcomes from this new round of Common Core discussions that assist ACT teachers, but depending on the timeframe such matters may not be able to be included in the CIT/DEYFS EBA negotiations this time around.

#### **Mobility in Schools:**

The introduction of mobility provisions for new permanent teachers in schools was a feature of the 2000-2003 Certified Agreement. Arising from lobbying by the AEU, DEYFS developed some procedures for the consideration of extension of placement for teachers required to move under mobility provisions. The AEU policy is that initial placement should be 5 years duration before compulsory mobility transfer occurs, but DEYFS has been intransigent in its view that 3 years is the limit unless a one-year extension is granted. The Minister[s] have been unwilling to change the current length of placement, although it was the intervention of then Minister Simon Corbell which resulted in the DEYFS issuing Guidelines for application to extend placement.

The AEU will continue to advocate a 5-year placement as part of the EBA negotiations. In the meantime, the Union has continued to assist individual members with applications for extension beyond 3 years.

#### **CIT Conversion to Permanency:**

Conversion to permanency for CIT contract teachers and access to more secure employment for CIT casual teachers has been a long-standing issue. Despite the optimism which followed the AIRC decision providing a mechanism for CIT contract teachers' conversion to permanency, it has not been smooth sailing.

While some CIT contract teachers have achieved conversion to permanency, it is disappointing to note that to date, a significant number of CIT contract teachers are still awaiting decisions on their applications in what has become a very long and drawn out process.

In delaying a formal decision on these outstanding applications, CIT has relied upon its view that it cannot rule out the possibility that a full selection process would not identify a more meritorious candidate to preclude appointments under the conversion provisions. There are a number of members adversely affected by this situation, and the AEU is working with those members to explore options to redress this situation.

### **Recognition of Prior Experience:**

For some time the AEU has urged DEYFS to develop procedures to recognise prior experience in determining the salary of teachers permanently appointed in the ACT. Such recognition would be consistent with other jurisdictions, particularly NSW which is the ACT's nearest competitive market. Earlier this year DEYFS provided initial discussions papers which proposed recognition of employment and recognition of parenting experience similar to provisions which apply in NSW.

Both matters are contained within the AEU's School Sector Claim, but DEYFS indicated it wished to finalise matters and implement changed procedures as part of the 2003/2004 Recruitment Round. Since this matter is not contained in the 2000-2003 EBA, there has been no impediment to the introduction of such provisions, and the AEU has engaged in lengthy discussion on the issue.

Since the initial proposal, DEYFS has withdrawn its proposal to recognise parenting experience. While this is a blow, the AEU took the view that, since there was no retrospectivity in the proposal no current ACT teacher would be disadvantaged by DEYFS' decision. Accordingly, having expressed dismay with the decision, the AEU has not sought to oppose it. There will be another opportunity to discuss the issue as part of the new EBA negotiations, but DEYFS seems unlikely to modify its position.

Other experience relevant to teaching will be recognised on the basis of 1 salary increment for each completed 3 years of full time paid employment work [including pro rata consideration of part time work], and 1 salary increment for each 2 completed years of service as a qualified teacher teaching, lecturing or tutoring at a non affiliated/certified school or institution.

This recognition is in addition to the current procedures which recognise teaching experience in a school/college setting. The AEU believes implementation of this recognition will provide an attractive incentive for teachers considering the ACT as a prospective employer.

### **Assessment of Qualifications:**

DEFYS has also provided the AEU with documents indicating changes it intends to make to recognition of qualifications from the 2003/2004 Recruitment Round. While the AEU believes that there are good measures in the proposal, the Department appears not to have included some key recognition aspects in this initial round. The AEU will be considering how best to pursue our concerns as part of the EBA negotiations, with a view to ensuring agreed outcomes are included in the Certified Agreement.

### **Review of Principals' Selection Procedures:**

The 2000-2003 Principals' EBA required a review of selection procedures. Work on this matter has been underway for the last 12 months, and the Department is nearly ready to launch the new procedures. Consultation to develop the procedures has been conducted via a Working Party, with regular meetings of a Reference Group.

The AEU has been represented on both bodies, and has been a keen contributor in the process. Regular reports have been provided to Executive and Council on this matter.

The new procedures involve a move away from selection criteria to Capabilities. This is in keeping with *best practice* recruitment procedures, and is seen as desirable because it invites candidates to present much broader and deeper material in support of their claims to a position. General professional development in *writing to capabilities* was conducted in Term 3, and JSC training for a small cohort of potential panel members will take place in the first half of Term 4. The premise of the project has been to hasten slowly in order to ensure that implementation is thorough and thoughtful. This means that it is likely that the new procedures will not be used to select Principals until 2004, but there is no discomfort from the Union with this extended implementation. A review of the new procedures will need to be conducted in 2004, to ensure that fine-tuning occurs as appropriate.

Once the Capabilities Selection Procedures are bedded down at Principal level, it is expected that work will commence on developing a capability framework for Level 3 teachers and so on, so that eventually all promotions positions will be selected using capabilities rather than selection criteria.

### **In Summary:**

The last 12 months have been challenging and productive on the industrial front. Apart from the bigger ticket issues specifically covered in this report, the regular work of advice to members, production of written materials including circulars for members and reports for Executive, Council and *The ACT Teacher* has continued, along with occasional material for the AIRC such as the annual Safety Net Wage Adjustments to the AEU's Awards.

**Penny Gilmour**  
**Assistant Secretary [Industrial]**

## C. Assistant Secretary [Professional] Report

### 1. Research and Professional Issues

#### **Written Submissions:**

The following submissions were made during the year:

1. To the Government Schools Educational Council, on funding priorities for the use of the leftover money saved from scrapping the free bus plan. The Union's submission to the Council highlighted areas of need previously included in Budget submissions.
2. To GSEC on funding priorities and strategic directions for education funding in the 2004-2005 ACT Budget. The Union's submission focused on claims under the EBA as well as other areas of particular need.
3. To the Treasurer and to the Standing Committee on Education re new initiatives to be funded through the 2003-2004 Budget.
4. Reaction to the Lyndsay Connors' Report of the Inquiry into Education Funding in the ACT.
5. Reaction to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee Report on VET *Pathways to the Future*. Union Officers earlier in the year appeared before the Standing Committee during its public hearings into this issue.
6. Reaction to the Draft Children's Plan for the ACT.
7. Input to the Review of Provision of Counselling Services in the ACT Government Schools and Colleges.
8. Input to the Review of Alternate Settings [verbal].
9. Input to a number of DEYFS Plans including the Equity and Diversity Plan, the Literacy and Numeracy Plan, the Strategic Plan for Students with Disabilities.

#### **Surveys:**

The Union has undertaken surveys into PIPS resource provision and TAFE teachers' Professional Development needs, and is using the results of these surveys to inform current and future policy and claims. In addition, a survey was conducted of Branch Councillors to assess Union members' training needs and interests.

Once again this year, the Union conducted its Class Sizes Survey for Primary Schools. This survey seeks to monitor the implementation of the Government initiative in reducing class sizes in early childhood.

#### **Papers:**

A major AEU Position Paper was devised, with substantial membership input and in the light of similar AEU statements around the country, regarding Violence in Schools. The recommendations attached to this paper are being pursued with DEYFS and with the Minister outside the EBA negotiations.

With the P&C, the Union has sponsored the writing of a major research piece which analyses the claims of the non government schools parent group APFACTS regarding government funding of private schools. The paper, entitled *The Facts on Non Government School Funding in the ACT* has been widely distributed and has received some media attention.

With the Department the Union is to support the distribution of a booklet outlining proper ethical behaviour for teachers. This booklet will seek to give more specific detailed advice regarding acceptable teacher behaviours and student/teacher relationships than currently exists.

**Committees and Boards:**

The Union has also been represented on various Departmental committees during 2003:

- Special Education Reference Group
- High School Development Program Reference Group and Sub-Committees
- EEO Consultative Committee
- LA Reference Group
- Professional Learning Fund Committee and Fellowships Committee
- Review of School Based Management Reference Group
- Curriculum Renewal Taskforce and Consultative Committee
- Review of Counselling Services
- Student Pathways Project Reference Group.

The Assistant Secretary [Professional] also sits on the VETA Board and the Canberra Lifelong Learning Taskforce and the TAFE Organiser sits on the Registration and Accreditation Council, both as nominees of UnionsACT. The Secretary sits on the Knowledge Based Economy Board.

**National Perspective:**

At the national level, Senior Officers have been involved in the National Schools Network and the Australian Council for Education Seminar on Teaching Standards. Through the National Curriculum and Professional Issues Committee of the AEU and through the Assistant Secretary's role as Research Officer, we have had input to the work of the Federal AEU Research Officer's written submissions and papers, including that to the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future - Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics*, and papers going forward to Federal Conference.

The Pedagogy Page of *The ACT Teacher* continues to present articles by members on a wide variety of professional matters, including this year a three-issue focus on ICT in teaching practice.

## **2. Training Program**

The Union continues to expand and refine its training program for members. Following a survey of Branch Council late in Semester 1, the program was adjusted and expanded to reflect members' interests and preferences for training. Attendance at sessions has improved this year, particularly during Semester 2. Few sessions have had to be cancelled for lack of interest or lack of provision of relief for teachers to attend, although relief teacher availability continues to have a strong impact on many individual members' ability to attend sessions, particularly in the preschool sector.

New courses offered this year include:

- Preparing for Promotion for Beginning and Level 1 Teachers
- Inclusivity
- Managing Personal Stress and Workload

- Growing Resilience in Adolescents
- Understanding School Budgets
- How to take people with you to bring about change - for promotional positions
- Tackling Workplace Bullying
- Free and Open Source Software
- Tips for Teachers of Indigenous Students
- Beginning Teacher Program: You and the Law, You and the EBA

Evaluation of these courses and their presenters continues to be very positive, with participants enthusiastic about the value of the training program. This year we have been happy to include more training delivered by our own members in schools.

### **3. Women's Issues**

#### **Training for Women Members:**

The Union continues to offer specific training for women members. This year, *Leading from Within* was offered in Semester 2, along with courses designed with women members in mind, such as *Understanding School Budgets* and *Preparing for Promotion*.

#### **Women Activists Network:**

This group has met roughly once a term this year, including a session at Tilley's where members followed up on their experience of the Women's Forum and were involved in planning for the annual Women's Dinner.

#### **Women's Forum:**

A day long Saturday Women's Forum was held at Olim's Hotel on 10 May which was attended by a small but enthusiastic group of members. Following the results of a survey conducted at the Women's Dinner in 2002, the theme of the Forum was *In touch with others, in touch with self*. Participants listened to talks from Dorothy Horsfield [re a visit to Afghanistan after the bombing], Kathryn Kelly [from APHEDA, re Palestinian women] and Michelle Bryant [TAFE ATSIEC representative, re growing up Aboriginal in WA] in the morning, and in the afternoon engaged in a health quiz led by Rachel Choy [Centre for Womens' Health Matters], ending up with a yoga session conducted by Sandra Wood [TAFE member and yoga teacher].

#### **AEU Women's Dinner:**

Just under 80 members attended the annual Dinner held on 19 September. The keynote speaker was Jo Gordon, on her work for Mahboba's Promise in Afghanistan. Participants viewed a video on the work on the group, and donated \$660 to the cause via a collection at the Dinner. With entertainment by Machitun, members had a lot of fun while keeping up their contacts with women in all sectors of our Union.

#### **AEU Federal Women's Conference:**

The theme of this year's Federal Women's Conference was *Following Through*, building on the work done by the Conference last year. The ACT Branch sent four delegates to the Conference: Robin Ballantyne, Sharon Quinn, Moyra Maestros and Rosemary Byrne. Jo Hansen 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, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program of Action, and Gender Equity. Each workshop formulated a detailed campaign strategy focused on an area of particular concern to women.

This work will be followed up by the new Federal AEU Women's Officer, Catherine Davis, and States and Territories Women's Officers throughout the coming year.

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 Hobart in January 2004.

**ICFTU International Women's Conference and ACTU Women's Congress:**

These concurrently held meetings in Melbourne in February were attended by Robin Ballantyne and Evie Kollas on behalf of women members in the ACT. The range of issues raised by women from around the world at the ICFTU Conference was an eye opener for many of the Australian delegates. Some useful work was done within the ACTU Women's Congress to catch up on issues of concern to all Australian women.

**NSWTF Women's Conference:**

Organiser Cathy Smith lead a delegation of our members [Sigi Kropp, Robyn Craig and Helen Sinclair] to the one day NSW Teacher's Federation Women's Conference in May.

#### **4. Indigenous Education**

**Reconciliation Awards:**

Our annual Reconciliation Awards were given out at the Public Education Dinner in May. Winners were: Nick Harris, Meg Smith, Kerrie Falconer, a group of four teachers from Jervis Bay School, and the staff of Narrabundah Primary School. These worthy winners have been featured on the pages of the *Indigenous News*, a continuing regular feature of *The ACT Teacher*.

**ATSIEC Representation:**

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 Vicki Lucas from the General Division. Michelle and Vicki also attended the ACTU Congress with Senior Officers. Vicki has completed her term as ATSIEC representative and has now retired from that position - we would like to thank her for her terrific work representing Indigenous teachers through the Union. We welcome Beth Craddy from Dickson College who has been elected unopposed as the new Schools Division ATSIEC Representative.

In view of the growing numbers of Indigenous members of our Union, the Union Office is constructing a role of voting members to form the electorate for ATSIEC elections, in line with practice in other States.

**Training:**

Our training program this year included a session by Daniel Greene and Nick Harris on Tips for Teachers of Indigenous Students, following support for this sort of union training in the Council training survey. Our thanks to Daniel and Nick for making time in their busy schedules.

**Other activities:**

Meetings of the Indigenous Issues Group of the AEU attracted a healthy attendance, and on its recommendations a number of issues [particularly re training and awareness raising on Indigenous issues for new and continuing teachers] were pursued with the Department and Principals.

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. Union funding supports the catering for Teachers of Indigenous Students Network meetings.

## **5. Special Education**

The Assistant Secretary [Professional] has been a member of the Reference Group into Student Centred Appraisal of Need [SCAN] throughout the year. This group has now finished its work in monitoring the development of the new mechanism for assessing funding for Special Needs students. The group continues, as the Special Education Reference Group, with a wider consultation brief.

In view of this role, the Assistant Secretary has formed a Special Education Interest group of the AEU, and the first meetings of that group took place later in the year. A wide variety of issues has already been raised, and feedback given to the Department on implementation of SCAN and on the DEYFS Strategic Plan for Students with Disabilities.

## **6. The ACT Teacher**

Building on the content changes of last year, we have made some presentation changes to the magazine this year, including colour on the front and back pages, and sometimes in the centrefold. *The ACT Teacher* also now includes the AEU membership form. We have made a particular effort to encourage articles written by members and are keen to continue this practice next year.

**Robin Ballantyne**  
**Assistant Secretary [Professional]**

## **D. Organisers' Report**

### **1. The Organisers' Role:**

We take this opportunity to again thank Annamaria Zuffo for her work as Schools' Organiser from October 2002 through to April this year. Annamaria returned to full time teaching at that time because she missed the interaction with her students. She did a great job while she was in the role and we were lucky to have had the opportunity to share her knowledge and good humour. Cathy Smith took up the role from the beginning of Term 2.

In the course of any year the Organisers perform a variety of roles in their endeavours to provide an effective service for our members. We also continue to strive toward establishing an active membership in our Union to ensure widespread involvement in campaigns and events. A lot of the Organisers' work has involved individualised advocacy for members. This year we have successfully fulfilled both facilitative and advocacy roles liaising between members and the Department, abusive parents and other members. We have also worked effectively for the collective good providing support for Sub-Branches facing particularly difficult situations involving violent incidents, and other OH&S issues. There have been a few cases involving members who have required support when confronted with allegations and/or charges of professional and criminal misconduct. The issues recognised as being beyond our capabilities and expertise are referred to the Union's legal advisers, Pamela Coward & Associates. Members are able to access a free first consultation and special rates for subsequent visits. We of course continue to provide support to those individuals as they are steered through the legal processes.

Our Union also provides financial advice through the services of Richard Navakas and Associates at Hillross Financial Planners and the Berkley Group of Financial Planners. Both organisations provide a free consultation and discounted services for members of the Union and we have referred many members to the advisers during the year. Hillross has also arranged information evenings for members using their services, most recently an evening at the Hyatt with John Lees, Dr Don Stammer and Dr John Lang providing financial forecasts, other investment advice and strategies.

We have also renewed our subscription to Union Shopper having allowed our subscription to lapse a couple of years ago, as members were not making use of the service. However, due to increasing demand, we have been "active" again since July this year and our members have saved significant amounts [\$1322]. It costs us \$960 per annum to access the service so the general, underlying rule is: use it or lose it.

Two members made use of the Teacher Welfare Fund this year. Members are able to access up to \$3000 to provide them with emergency loans on a no-interest basis. Each case is presented to Executive for consideration and approval on its merits. Ten grants of \$500 were also made to members who lost their homes in the January bushfires.

The new membership database acquired and installed in Term 2 has been very useful for our purposes. We will eventually be in a position to maintain direct email contact with individual members without having to rely on InDecs. It doesn't mean that we will not be seen around the Sub-Branches as much but we may be able to address individual concerns even more effectively than we do now.

## **2. Recruitment:**

2003 has been a significant year in terms of new members. The beginning of the year saw over 200 new teachers enter the ACT Department of Education and 471 teachers join the AEU at the time of writing this report. In addition to new teachers, the other impetus for recruitment has been the negotiation of a new EBA. Membership rates gradually rose month by month and peaked during August, the month our 2001-2003 EBA expired. As a result, the ACT Branch of the AEU in 2003 has experienced the highest recruitment rate ever achieved in a single year. This achievement is due in large part to the excellent work done by members at the Sub-Branch level. While as Organisers we take every opportunity to promote the benefits of Union membership when visiting Sub-Branches, members in schools do the grass roots recruitment work. It is interesting to note that the most common reason why non members haven't joined a union is simply because they haven't been asked.

The AEU provides a number of publications which assist in recruitment and provision of information - *The Survival Guide for Teachers Beginning in the ACT*; a Beginning Teachers' Newsletter; *The ACT Teacher* [which has a membership form inside]; and an information kit for student teachers. Early in 2003, the AEU ran information sessions for beginning teachers about legal and industrial issues. We anticipate offering similar sessions in 2004 to give an opportunity for new teachers to develop a support network and meet Union officials. While our Union was not invited to speak at the Department's Induction Program due to an administrative oversight, we did set up a stall outside the hall at the O'Connell Centre to provide new teachers the opportunity to speak to our Union Officers and access information. We are also negotiating with the University of Canberra to arrange the opportunity to speak to the students in their 3rd and 4th year about the important role of the AEU from both historic and current perspective.

## **3. OH&S Issues:**

The year has been interesting from the OH&S perspective with the introduction of system-wide School Safety Checks. Following discussions it was agreed by the Department that there would be only one comprehensive safety check conducted per annum by teachers in Semester 1 and a less comprehensive check in Semester 2 each year. It was also agreed that teachers would not be involved in the second stage of the checks.

Members applied the OH&S Act [1994] on a few occasions on our advice in their endeavour to resolve issues arising out of violent incidents in schools. The Organisers have been liaising closely with ACT WorkCover in the course of the year to ensure that we achieve a clear understanding and appropriate application of the law. The emphasis of our Union remains focused on the right of members to a safe workplace and we have worked successfully with members throughout this year to ensure their environments are as safe as reasonably practicable.

There are a number of Departmental policies that the AEU has/is contributed/ing to so far this year. Those include Sun Protection Policy, First Aid, Critical Incident [including Bushfire and Bomb Threats]. The policies will eventually be released to schools in draft form for general feedback and amendment and members are urged to review them as a Sub-Branch and to submit their suggestions through OH&S Representatives.

#### **4. Campaigning for Public Education:**

National Public Education Day on May 22 was a great success and is set to become a feature in the ongoing struggle to have public education restored to its rightful position of prominence in the community. The celebrations were expanded this year with many more schools involved in the presentation of student artworks and performances to Canberra community and we are looking to further expand them in 2004. The Department also became much more involved in the promotion of public education for the day this year and we anticipate a healthy partnership to this end in future.

We provided every preschool, school and college with a “corflute” *Public Education Works* sign from the end of June as part of the broader campaign and have been rewarded by the fact that many schools have mounted them on the front of the school building, facing the street. The signs are designed for external display and are useful reminders to the public of the depth and breadth of public education in the ACT. If you can’t see the sign on your local school/s please drop in and inquire as to its whereabouts.

We have also provided various campaign memorabilia including, t-shirts, mugs, caps, and drink bottles for sale to members and in the near future will have a new line of Public Education Works items available through our Union Office. It may not appear to be achieving a great deal but the community is now very aware of the “apple with the tick” motif and its association with teachers in the ACT public system. We have to work to keep public education in focus in the community.

#### **5. Council:**

We had a great year in terms of having functional and functioning Council with the Councillors from most Sub-Branched fulfilling their roles and attending the monthly meetings. Every meeting has been quorate and we have been able to start on time at almost every occasion. A minor glitch we have encountered in some of the Sub-Branched is that the information gleaned from Council is being relayed either very slowly or not at all to the members. It is important to keep all members informed of developments in our Union by the Sub-Branch Executive, Councillors or the Organisers. The Organisers have been making efforts to ensure that any Sub-Branch NOT represented at a particular Council is privy to the information and decisions of that Council.

We look forward to working with you and for you in the New Year and thank you for your support in the course of the current year.

**Bill Book**  
Schools’ Organiser

**Cathy Smith**  
Schools’ Organiser

## **E. TAFE/VET Organiser's Report**

2003 has been dominated by the development and serving of the EBA claim for the CIT. 2003 has also been a year of review with regard to the broader Vocational Education and Training [VET] agenda with investigations into VET being carried out by a range of stakeholders including the ACT Legislative Assembly, the House of Representatives and the AEU Federally. This activity in 2003 points to a crucial year for VET in 2004 with the outcomes of these processes being enacted as well as an election at the local and Federal levels of Government.

### **1. EBA 2004:**

As mentioned previously, and elsewhere in this Report, 2003 saw the culmination of an exhaustive process of consultation with members to develop what has been described as "the most comprehensive Log of Claims on record" in relation to the working conditions of AEU members at the CIT.

This Log of Claims was served on the employer and a process of negotiation around these claims has been occurring throughout 2003.

An interim salary outcome was secured, payable from 1 October, which insulates members against the situation of receiving no salary increases throughout the period of negotiation. Members would recall the 2000 EBA negotiations where CIT members were without a salary increase for 2 years while negotiations dragged on.

The EBA process must deliver salary outcomes to CIT teachers that are at least equal to those of our interstate colleagues [at all levels where comparisons are possible] and initiatives that will satisfactorily address the workload pressures experienced by all classification levels at the CIT.

### **2. ACT Budget:**

While the ACT Budget brought significant increased funding to the schools sector in 2003; for the CIT the Budget outcome was yet again very disappointing.

While the ACT Minister for Education Katy Gallagher has taken an active interest in TAFE matters, aside from salary increases delivered in October this year, the Stanhope Government is yet to demonstrate an understanding of the VET system and to adequately recognise and support the invaluable contribution that the CIT makes to the ACT community.

2004 must be a year where the ACT Government commits to an objective of growth and significant financial investment and support for the VET system in the ACT.

### **3. Sub-Branch Operations:**

In a year where EBA negotiations have dominated, Sub-Branches within the CIT have functioned very well. Sub-Branches are vital to ensuring that the directions being taken by the AEU are representative of members' views and opinions. Participation in Sub-Branches throughout 2003 has been strong with a number of members nominating for Executive positions for the first time.

Our gratitude is extended to all the Executives of all the Sub-Branches in operation at the CIT: Reid Campus, Bruce Campus, Weston Campus, Southside Campus, Canberra Avenue, TAFE Casual Teachers and the Faculty of Design.

#### **4. Public Education Day 2003:**

Thursday 22 May was National Public Education Day. The day continues to be the premier occasion for the 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 the delivery of the annual Public Education Day Address at the Reid Campus by the Director of the National Museum of Australia, Dawn Casey, the performance of student bands at a number of campuses, BBQs at every campus, a gala fashion parade and a number of cultural displays and performances. The day culminated in the Public Education Day dinner where Jane Williams, a student of the CIT contemporary music department, delivered a wonderful solo performance in front of the large crowd of attendees at the dinner.

Public Education Day in 2004 promises to be greater than ever.

#### **5. Flexible Delivery:**

Flexible delivery continues to be an area of challenge for the Union in relation to its impact on workload and the broader working conditions of members.

Throughout 2003 a pilot program aimed at supporting teachers in negotiating their workloads when engaged in flexible delivery has been underway. The pilot began in a very limited way in semester 1 and was extended to include representative departments from a number of Faculties in semester 2. The outcomes of the pilot will need to be evaluated and may well influence industrial instruments in the future.

#### **6. Representing Members' Interests:**

The AEU TAFE Division continued its representation throughout 2003 on the ACT VETA Board, the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council, the CIT Advisory Council, ACT VET Co-ordinators' Network, the ACT Trades and Labour Council, the Capital Region Student to Industry Association and the BSSS VET Sub-Committee.

A number of members represented the AEU on a variety of internal CIT committees and forums including, for the first time, a dedicated AEU position on both the CIT Resources Board and Board of Studies. Other AEU representation included positions on the Asset Management Working Party, the Succession Planning Working Group, the Professional Development Fund Committee and the Qualifications Committee.

#### **7. VET in Schools:**

2003 was an important year in determining the future of VET in the ACT and more broadly across the country. A number of reviews were carried out at both the Federal and Local Government levels. The AEU Federal Office engaged in a discussion process with all Branches and Associated Bodies to develop a policy on VET in Schools to be debated at the Federal Conference in Hobart in January 2004.

In the ACT the High Schools Development Program underpinned the extension of formal VET delivery into ACT High Schools. A number of ACT Government High schools partnered with ACT Colleges to provide Certificate 1 in Information Technology to ACT High School students. 2004 will see an extension of this program and a broadening of the industry areas being delivered in ACT High schools.

The AEU VET Committee continued to meet throughout 2003. The AEU VET Committee is a cross-sectoral committee with representation from AEU members in the CIT, ACT Government Colleges and High Schools. The VET Committee provides advice to the AEU Officers on matters to do with VET.

### **8. Occupational Health and Safety:**

Throughout 2003 selection processes were run to fill all Occupational Health and Safety Representative positions across the Institute. With but a few exceptions all Designated Work groups are represented and members should be confident that their interests in relation to OH&S matters are being defended by their respective representatives.

### **9. TAFE Council:**

Members of the ACT Branch TAFE Division were well served by the ACT Branch TAFE Council throughout 2003. A number of members nominated for positions on TAFE Council for the first time as well as a number of TAFE Councillors re-committing themselves to the advancement of members' interests at the CIT. TAFE Council draws representation from all areas of CIT and is vital in setting the strategic direction for the AEU with regard to TAFE matters and VET matters generally.

The opportunity to serve members on TAFE Council is one valued by all current and past TAFE Council members. In 2004 it is hoped that other members may accept the same opportunity and nominate for TAFE Council in a year that will be vital for determining the future of TAFE in the ACT for the next 3 years.

A number of sub-committees were established at the direction of TAFE Council to explore issues and develop proposals or policy. Issues dealt with via this process included managing inappropriate student behaviour and teacher learning and professional development,

### **10. Recruitment:**

Recruitment activity throughout 2003 was strong with the membership of the TAFE Division in the ACT increasing by approximately 10%. These recruitment efforts must be maintained and increased in the years ahead.

As reported in 2003, resulting from the ACT public sector retirement intentions survey, a significant number of teachers at the CIT are eligible for retirement in the next 5 to 10 years. Whilst the members concerned will be looking forward to this stage of their lives the challenge for the membership of the AEU is to continue to recruit those new teachers that join the CIT.

### **11. Union Activism:**

A culture of participation and activism within the AEU has continued to grow within the ACT TAFE Division. 2003 saw the establishment of the TAFE Activists Group. The TAFE Activists' Group has the objective of "delivering improved TAFE education and training to the ACT Community".

The Activists' Group had good success in 2003 with the highlight being a busking performance outside the ACT Legislative Assembly in July to raise money for TAFE. Receiving significant media coverage the event was an example of the type of activity that will be needed in 2004 when both a local and Federal election will be contested the outcomes of each will be vital to the future of TAFE in the ACT.

The National TAFE Activists' Seminar once again proved to be a very effective means of educating and supporting AEU members in advocating for better outcomes for TAFE. The ACT Branch was represented by six members and these members engaged in a program of training, culminating in representations to a number of our Federal Parliamentarians from both Houses of Parliament. The 2004 Activists' Seminar will be crucial as part of the Federal Election Campaign.

Structures were developed throughout 2003 that seek to provide local representation in every work area of the CIT. This delegate structure will be further developed throughout 2004 with training being provided to each of the local delegates. This local delegate structure will ensure that the AEU can more effectively support members in their day to day activities.

The Jog for Public Education pounded the pavement around Parliament House throughout 2003. The Jog for Public Education is a healthy mechanism for keeping the issues surrounding Public Education active. Each week members engage in a walk or jog around Parliament House wearing their *Public Education Works* t-shirts for the advancement of public education. TAFE and VETiS Organiser, Tim McNevin, reached the milestone of 100 laps on the National Day of Action on 17 September. A number of members joined with Tim to celebrate this achievement. The jog continues to grow in popularity with a number of other members scheduled to achieve the 100-lap milestone in late 2003 or 2004.

## **12. Personnel Issues:**

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.

Of particular concern in the latter stages of 2003 was the delay in processing a significant number of members' claims for conversion to permanency. In 2002 the AEU and the CIT reached agreement through the Industrial Relations Commission on a process that allowed long term temporary employees to seek conversion to permanency. Under the terms of the agreement a teacher has the right to request conversion to permanency after a period of 2 years on contract and the CIT can not unreasonably refuse. Though unfortunate, it appears likely that early in 2004 the AEU and CIT will need to resolve this issue and this may involve seeking the intervention of the Industrial Relations Commission once more.

**Tim McNevin**  
**TAFE and VETiS Organiser**

## **F: Trades & Labour Council Report Working with UnionsACT**

The AEU - ACT Branch has continued to have a strong presence within the ACT Trades and Labour Council, now called UnionsACT.

We have continued to fill all 12 Delegate positions, as well as maintaining 12 Alternate Delegates. Attendance at the meetings has been regular, with our Delegates and Alternate Delegates rostered to attend to ensure that the AEU presence is consistent. The TLC meets from 5.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month, with the meetings often finishing after 7.30pm. The ongoing commitment of the AEU - ACT Branch representatives to attendance at the meetings is to be commended.

With the move of former Assistant Secretary [Industrial] Peter Malone to the position of Secretary of UnionsACT, the AEU has an especially strong link. The work of co-ordinating the Branch delegation, and of representing the Branch on the UnionsACT Executive has been taken up by incoming Assistant Secretary [Industrial] Penny Gilmour.

The TLC is also once again co-ordinating the negotiations for the ACT Public Sector *Common Core Certified Agreement*. Outcomes achieved in these negotiations will have direct relevance to teachers. For this reason the AEU - ACT Branch has maintained its involvement in the inter-union discussions around this issue, although we have not chosen to be part of the formal negotiation team.

The AEU has been a strong supporter of UnionsACT, sponsoring a motion to increase affiliation fees to ensure that there is a budget sufficient to allow the TLC to conduct campaigns and other activities on behalf of unions in the ACT. This year the TLC has continued its strong focus on social justice matters. Together with other organisations the TLC has co-ordinated or participated in a number of rallies and other activities in support of causes such as Reconciliation, and protests against the Howard Government's treatment of refugees. Through the TLC, the AEU - ACT Branch has participated in these events as well, and it has been good to see our Union's banner held high in the marches and other gatherings in support of a fairer Australia.

UnionsACT continues to maintain a focus on both industrial and social justice issues in the ACT, and the Branch is proud to acknowledge its part in supporting the on-going activities of the ACT's peak union body.

**Penny Gilmour**  
**Assistant Secretary [Industrial]**  
**TLC Executive Member**