



At the Australian Education Union's national Indigenous education seminar in Hobart were, centre, Carol Fisher, from Townsville, and, from left, NSW Teachers Federation representatives Phyllis Bird, Wayne Donovan, Shanene Phillips and Mavis Feier.

Education union call for action



Public school students have virtually no chance of being taught by Indigenous teachers, or educators who have received training in Indigenous history and culture, the Australian Education Union says.

The union says figures show that although 4.5 per cent of students are Indigenous, only 0.8 per cent of all public school teachers are Indigenous and just 3.7 per cent of teachers have received any in-service training on Indigenous studies.

The union says that this lack of training for public school teachers robs all students of the opportunity to understand the culture and history of Indigenous Australians, with Indigenous students having the most to lose.

Delegates and officials at the union's national Indigenous education seminar in Hobart called on all political parties to meet the needs of Indigenous students. They said the Government must:

- ensure Indigenous students



In Hobart were, from left, Kiritina Johnstone, of the Te Rio Roa Institute in New Zealand, Deidre Heitmeyer from the University of Newcastle, and the University of Tasmania Riawunna Centre's Tjanara Goreng Goreng and Sharon Dennis.

receive a quality education that takes on board their culture and learning needs;

- establish a national strategy to increase the numbers of Indigenous teachers; and
- ensure all educators receive training on Indigenous culture and history.

AEU Federal Aboriginal education officer Darcel Moyle said it was vital teachers were trained to understand the specific learning needs of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander students. "All students have a right to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture from educators who have received quality training about Indigenous issues," she said.

"The Federal Government must fulfil its responsibility to increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators across all levels and sectors of the public education system."



Merredin Senior State High School principal Alison Woodman with the union's National Reconciliation Award.

Reconciliation awards to WA and Qld schools

A feature of the Australian Education Union's national Indigenous education seminar in Hobart was the presentation of the union's National Reconciliation Award.

The winner was Merredin Senior High School, based in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia.

The union praised the efforts of the school, under the leadership of principal Alison Woodman, in working towards reconciliation.

A special award also was

presented to Yarrabah State School, near Cairns in north Queensland.

Ms Woodman said her school, about 260km east of Perth and with about 30 Aboriginal students, was committed to reconciliation.

"We teach self-respect in our students and this has had some good results for all involved," she said.

"We are explicit on racism – if incidents arise we get all parties involved, with education rather than punishment the goal."



Yarrabah State School's Susan Clement with the honourable mention award.



'All students have a right to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture from educators who have received quality training about Indigenous issues' – Darcel Moyle