

# Australian Education Union

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January 14, 2003

## INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM STRATEGY LAUNCH

The Australian Education Union will launch its Indigenous Activism Strategy at its Annual Indigenous Seminar, being held in Adelaide today (Tuesday 14 January 2003).

AEU Federal Aboriginal Education Officer Darcel Moyle says the strategy will provide a framework to schools and educators wanting to embrace reconciliation and equity.

"Unions are recognising they have an important role to play in fostering reconciliation – the question is, how can they achieve that most effectively?"

"The AEU Indigenous Activism Strategy is a practical document to help union activists acknowledge past problems and set about fixing them."

It has 3 key objectives:

- *To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members in our Union;*
- *To actively engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all levels of our Union;*
- *To improve understanding of all Australian Education Union members about to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, specifically as they relate to education, but also as they relate to general society.*

"The Strategy covers a series of issues – tackling racism, encouraging tolerance and acceptance, appreciating cultural difference, including Indigenous elements in general curricula and measures to improve Indigenous retention rates and encourage Aboriginal students to pursue further education."

"The AEU also recognises that statistically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander workers are the most disadvantaged members of the workforce. Their employment in the education industry is characterised by high rates of casualisation, low incomes, limited career pathway opportunities, and high attrition rates. It's time to grasp the opportunity to work with Indigenous members to improve these circumstances."

"The strategy also offers advice and examples to promote community participation in Indigenous initiatives in schools, to ensure the good work doesn't end at the school gate" Ms Moyle says.

"What this strategy aims to do is harness the determination of individuals to achieve change – be they Indigenous or non Indigenous. Often effort by a few can be the key to achieving improvements for the majority... as the song goes, 'from little things, big things grow!'"

Ms Moyle says the strategy ties in with the theme of this year's Annual Indigenous Seminar, which is "Forging partnerships and making agreements between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and education institutions".

"Clearly we cannot solely rely on governments to achieve reconciliation, rather, it's something which needs to capture the hearts and minds of ordinary Australians to be successful. Strategies such as this are important because schools, and teachers in particular, hold the key to the hearts and minds of future generations" Ms Moyle says.

**The AEU Indigenous Activism Strategy will be launched at 1pm, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January at the AEU conference centre, 163 Greenhill Road Parkside. Media welcome.**

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