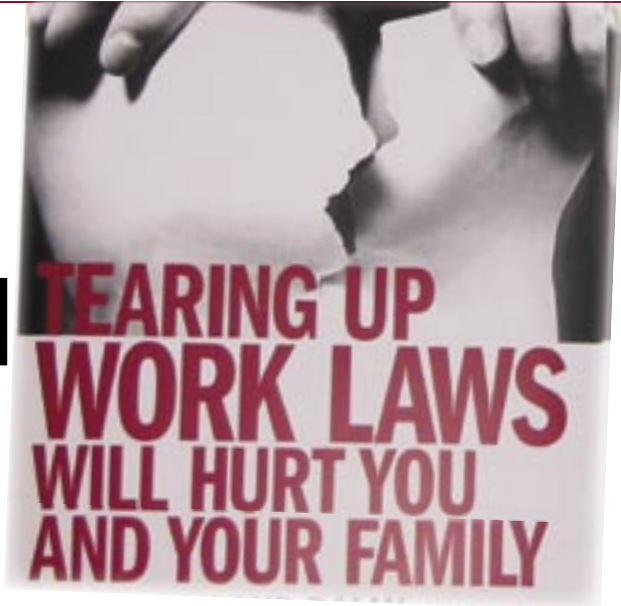




Welcome to Howard's world



It's February 2006 and 37° outside. Your students are hot. You are hot.

The machinery is hot. The workshop has air conditioning, but it's been broken for a week: maintenance has been contracted out.

The College requires you to do a new layer of reporting to meet the latest Commonwealth funding requirements.

You already work a 60 hour week.

Your patience is wearing thin.

The Union has started bargaining for a new agreement. Together you've set a clear agenda: as well as a pay rise, you need improvements in health and safety, more money for new plant and equipment, a cut in workload, and a right to be consulted before management imposes yet more requirements. You also want student fees reduced, and access and equity programs maintained. You want to be sure that no more functions get contracted out. Altogether it is a big claim, but there's not one thing that is not important.

But you have slipped into a parallel universe, and the rules of the bargaining game have changed. The bosses are cocky because they know that:

- your award safety net is absurdly low;
- you cannot take any legal industrial action – not even bans on 'voluntary' duties, let alone a strike – unless there is a secret ballot which will take at least six weeks and possibly much longer. (If the secret ballot votes "no", everyone is legally prohibited from taking industrial action, but if it votes "yes", then every individual has a free choice about whether to take industrial action or not.)
- once industrial action has been authorised, it will be remarkably easy for any student, employer, or even a member of the general public to come along and have the industrial action declared illegal on the basis that it threatens their individual 'welfare' (eg if they have to take time off work on another day to make up a missed class, and lose a few hours pay);
- if you include demands about student fees or access and equity programs in your bargaining claims, any industrial action might be illegal anyway. Even if you don't take industrial action, the agreement you finally reach might not be able to be certified. The High Court is busy redefining what can and can't be in a certified agreement, and the ground can shift at any time, even after an agreement has been certified.

'...they plan to override the state industrial relations systems...'

- after an agreement is certified, the bosses can still pressure people to sign onto individual agreements that have different (and lower) conditions.
- the bosses can just sit there and refuse to negotiate. There is no 'umpire' who can haul them to the bargaining table.

But this parallel universe is not a fantasy. We will slip into it in July 2004 when the Howard Government gains a majority in both houses of Federal Parliament. The Coalition will bulldoze through the draconian industrial agenda it has been dreaming of for so long. Using the corporations power in the Commonwealth Constitution, they plan to override the state industrial relations systems for the vast majority of workers.

The Federal Government's agenda is clear.

This is not just another round of 'reform'. This is a revolution in workplace power. The Coalition wants to eliminate trade unions and leave workers to negotiate

individually with employers, in an industrial system which guarantees workplace conflict and tension.

It will be a long hard few years ahead, but we should not be despondent. Howard and his mates have misjudged the spirit and determination of working Australians, who will defend our right to organise collectively. That right is recognised in international law, and is deeply embedded in Australian working culture.

The AEU, together with other unions and community organisations, will campaign actively to expose the unfair nature of Howard's industrial agenda, and to protect our members and other workers from the worst effects. The AEU, its Branches and Associated Bodies, will continue to bargain strongly and assertively, including exercising the right to take industrial action.

That old slogan – **Teachers Need Unions Need Teachers** – has never been more true. ❖

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TAFE LECTURERS' Certified Agreement 2005

Ramona Mitussis

The Union has signed a new three year agreement from 1 January 2005 which has been overwhelming supported by TAFE lecturers in Western Australia.

Major points include:

- Annual 3.6% salary increases.
- The reduction of lecturing hours by one hour per week.
- An increase in Activities Related to Delivery (ARD) time by one hour per week.
- A new nine grade salary classification scale. The bottom two grades of the current salary classification scale are deleted. The existing Grade 3 becomes Grade 1 and the existing ASL 1 first year of service becomes the new Grade 9.
- The ASL 1 classification will contain only two salary points.
- Implementation of New TAFEWA Qualifications Framework, including enhanced salary progression rules.

- Colleges will pay tuition fees and lecturing relief of 160 hours for survival skills and the Certificate IV in Training & Assessment.
- Lecturers will use their own time, Study Leave and Accrued Professional Development Time for the more advanced Framework qualifications.
- Career Development and Performance Enhancement Policy and Guidelines to be implemented.
- Enhanced provisions for Personal Leave.
- Paid parental leave increased to 7 weeks in 2005 and 8 weeks in 2006.
- Additional salary location allowances included for lecturers teaching in remote locations.
- Provision for lecturers to transfer between colleges and the Department of Education and Training by agreement.
- A Deferred Salary Scheme of six months leave after two years included.
- A set of principles for determining class sizes will be trialled during the life of the agreement

under a Memorandum of Understanding agreed by the parties.

- Provision for piloting of case loading, or other non-traditional lecturing hours models during the life of the agreement.
- ATERC to consider issues about delivery of training by casuals.
- Liberty to apply for changes to casual clause during life of agreement.
- Part time Clause updated with increased provisions.
- Fixed Term Contract Clause updated to include ATERC conversion policy. ❖

Ramona Mitussis is the TAFE Organiser, SSTUWA.



A tribute to Arthur Hamilton

Arthur Hamilton, a proud Palawa man, passed away last year after a career which spanned 34 years as a teacher and activist.

The 2005 AEU Federal Conference decided to rename the Reconciliation Award the Arthur Hamilton Award for Outstanding Contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

Arthur meshed his work with his desire to recognise the rightful history, culture and contribution of Aboriginal people in our society. Having a strong equity and social justice conscience, he was a tireless advocate for the rights of both Aboriginal people and those with disabilities.

He began teaching in 1970 at Claremont High School in Tasmania, then later taught at Warrane High, Ogilvie High School, Rokeby High, Claremont College and in 2003 he became Acting Principal of Ouse District High School. Over the years Hamilton helped a number of Aboriginal students to realise their potential and provided support and mentoring to Aboriginal staff members.

Hamilton was Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Education Unit in the Tasmanian Department of Education for seven years. Amongst other achievements, he developed a three year strategic plan for Aboriginal education; produced, organised and encouraged the writing of a range of teaching resources; co-authored a research report with Professor Paul Hughes and was selected to be on the MCEETYA Taskforce on countering racism.

Arthur had a keen sense of social justice, fairness and equity that led to a parallel career as a union activist. He represented Tasmania on the National Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee and held many positions within the Tasmanian Branch. He was active in prompting recognition of Indigenous people, cross-cultural awareness and played a major role in counteracting and eliminating racism in the AEU and in schools.

Hamilton was an initiator of the AEU National Reconciliation Award and was himself awarded it in 2003 for his work at Claremont College.

Arthur Hamilton was greatly respected in Tasmania and Australia and is held in high regard for his outstanding contribution to Aboriginal education and trade unionism. He was a brother, comrade and friend and will be missed by all. ❖