



THINGS are definitely hotting up in the Northern Territory which is currently in the grip of an underfunding crisis. This has become particularly clear with the outcomes of the intervention, the inquiry into the *Little Children are Sacred* report and the national focus on Indigenous communities and conditions. It has been shown that if every Indigenous child went to school there would be a severe lack of resources, including teachers, to provide the services to which every child in NT is entitled. Furthermore, dysfunction in communities is increasing domestic violence in remote schools and affecting the safety of our remote teachers and trainers.

Teachers and educators EBA

As we head into Enterprise Bargaining for teachers and educators, remote issues are of great concern. Whilst there is disagreement on the quantum figure, much of the unions log of claims also revolve around attraction and retention of good quality teachers, working conditions, class sizes and remote allowances and entitlements.

Due to the NT government's refusal to

address all condition items in the AEU log of claims, teachers and educators have commenced an unprecedented action of rolling strikes and industrial action and made over 10,000 pamphlet drops to inform parents of the real issues behind the campaign. Negotiations are continuing.

Charles Darwin University TAFE issues

The AEU is one of five combined unions collectively negotiating with CDU management with a joint log of claims.

The skills shortage is already kicking in, with large gaps in teaching staff and existing staff workloads increasing to keep up with industry demands for skilled students. This will increase over the next two years, with many TAFE teachers considering early retirement, few new staff coming through, and a particularly robust mining and construction industry in the Northern Territory. TAFE trainers, whilst undervalued, are a finite commodity in the NT and the barrel is just about empty. We will continue to bargain.

Housing and fuel prices are currently going through the roof, with very little relief in sight.

At the time of this report diesel was \$1.86 per litre at the bowser in Darwin, so it leaves little imagination to work out the price variations in the bush. One can only deduce that all programs delivered in rural and remote areas are now increasingly expensive, with no budget increase from the Department of Employment and Training in the vital area of remote skills training since 2003.

Batchelor Institute bargaining for new agreement

A log of claims for a new Agreement with BIITE Management is being lodged in June. The management are threatening job losses if a 20% increase in salary is pushed by the combined unions. Major restructuring and lack of consultation around the translation of staff from lecturer classification to Administrative officers and redundancies treated as terminations have angered staff and unions. ❖

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