

## **President's Report to the AGM Friday 4 November 2022**

I want to commence this report by thanking the members of the Council for their commitment and support during the past twelve months. Over the course of 2022, PFWA Councillors, some of whom face the challenge of being regionally based, have been called upon to participate in a wide variety of reviews and meetings while still running their schools. All this in a time of great uncertainty as a result of Covid and the ongoing staffing issues experienced by many. Special thanks also to Kyle Lister, who provided the technical support required to effectively manage our membership and website. I am pleased to be able to say Kyle's contract with the PFWA has been extended for a further three years. Many thanks also to Mike FitzGerald, Industrial Advocate, whose advice and counsel is highly valued, particularly during the bargaining periods.

During the course of this year two elected members of our Council, Bruce Nind (Retired) and Adam Inder (accepted a position in the private sector), relinquished their positions on the PFWA Council. On behalf of the members, I thank them for their contribution to the PFWA and wish them well for their futures. Certainly, in Bruce's case, the District High School sector has lost a long-term passionate advocate. The PFWA Rules allows Council to seek expressions of interest from within the affected sectors to fill the vacancies rather than run another election. The outcome of that process has seen Sharon Poett, Principal of Kojonup DHS appointed to the vacancy created by Bruce's retirement, and Kate Grayson, Associate Principal, Churchlands SHS appointed to the vacancy created by Adam's departure. I look forward to Sharon and Kate's contributions to the Council over the coming two years.

This year the membership has continued to grow, reaching 697 members in the week leading up to the AGM, a nett increase so far for 2022 of 92 members when we factor in retirements since 2021. While this represents a healthy growth of 15%, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. As a member driven organisation, membership growth is a key target in our strategic plan, and our goal to reach 800 in the short term, and 1000 in the medium term, is critical to our ongoing sustainability, and relevance, as well as being a major factor in our ability to keep the costs of membership at their current rate. We are only three-short of the target for this year, a testament to the good work of our members in attracting their colleagues to the PFWA by way of testimonials, and the sharing of positive outcomes as a result of our intervention and involvement. This is a major reason for the healthy growth rate, so a huge thank you to you all. Please sustain the energy and keep up the good work.

Council will continue last year's recruitment strategy of offering membership over the final two months of 2022 with deductions commencing in January 2023. Please make this known to your colleagues who have yet to join. As we negotiate another bargaining period, being able to demonstrate a significant and rapid upward trend in membership growth is important if we want to influence the DoE and Government in the development of policies and agreements that have an impact on the capacity of school leaders in WA to effectively perform their roles.

Over the course of 2022, the PFWA has been involved in a number of processes and consultations, influencing the development of policies and strategies that impact on the role of the school leader. Principally, we aim to not only improve current practice, but also to partner with the DoE in working to achieve national and state goals for public education and building an understanding that school leaders are critical to this. Understanding that compliance and many clauses in our current industrial agreement have a detrimental impact on school leaders and their workload is an important part of this process.

While our involvement in these reviews is important, the two issues members are mostly interested in are the Classification Review and what is in store for the PFWA post the recent bargaining period. The outcome of the Classification Review should be known by the early part of 2023, and should that be agreed to by the parties, it will then

be up to Government to implement it. Salary levels will be debated at that stage, and as we will be approaching the bargaining period for the next Agreement it will be an appropriate time for that discussion. Bargaining for a replacement Agreement will commence in semester two next year, so it is important we are well prepared for what lays ahead. To that end we have established a working party made up of members from all four sectors, adding Remote Community Schools as well.

As you are all aware the PFWA was not a signatory to the 2020 Agreement, a decision based on the wishes of an overwhelming majority of members. By comparison the SSTUWA signed the Agreement based on the wishes of approximately 15% of its membership, ignoring the fact that the Agreement does not recognise the role of the school leader in any way, shape or form. Adding insult to injury since August has been the evolving Government wages policy which has rewarded employees on incomes less than \$104 000, to the detriment of school leaders who did all of the heavy lifting, along with the increased levels of workload and accountability, during a two-year period of anxiety and uncertainty, a period from which we have yet to fully emerge.

The report of the Productivity Commission highlights the need for innovative practice and innovative leadership in our schools if the performance of Australia's students is to keep pace with other developed countries. This resonates strongly with the position the PFWA has consistently emphasised, that it is the school leadership that sets the conditions in a school in which staff, students and the broader school community thrive. The PFWA is using this platform to focus DoE and Government attention on school leadership as the critical factor in developing a collaborative and innovative culture in its schools. It is on this basis that we need to have an industrial agreement that supports school leaders to achieve that. Our membership has given Council the green light to pursue a separate Agreement, by an overwhelming majority. The working party has already commenced its work in this space and members will continue to be advised of progress.

So, looking ahead to 2023, the major focus areas for the PFWA remain much the same as 2022, with the addition of a key point or two:

- Membership growth with every member promoting the PFWA at every opportunity with their own leadership teams and across networks. We mustn't be shy about comparing the quality and cost of our representation of, and service to, school leaders when compared with the SSTUWA.
- An Agreement that recognises the demanding role of school leader with all of its responsibilities and accountabilities, and provides rewards in terms of both salary and conditions
- Influencing government and DoE to review the funding of public education, with a focus on school leadership. This work will involve our strong partnership with the APF and SASSLA, developing an ongoing and regular conversation with the Federal Minister's office.
- Arguing the case for a salary structure to fit a new classification model, one that clearly and significantly separates the salaries of entry level school leaders (Principals and Deputy Principals) from those of classroom teachers, with significant increments to each level above as a means of incentive to attract and retain.
- Influencing the development of the DoE's strategy for managing students with disabilities, so that mainstream options for these students are adequately resourced and supported.
- Continuing to influence and shape the development of a Leadership Strategy that is strategic and rewards those, in terms of a remuneration package, who decide on a leadership career path.
- Continuing to develop and nurture relationships with the DoE that enhance support structures for school leaders.
- Influencing the DoE and Government in their understanding of the dire need for change in order to address the many challenges facing regional and remote WA. This must include equity of access to programs for students as their needs demand, cost of living adjustments for staff and affordable, quality housing.



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I wish to thank our sponsors – Fotoworks, Zart Art, WMP, Their Care, and Safe Watch Global - for their continued support of our members. The partnership with sponsors, added to continued membership growth, ensures the financial strength of the organisation, so that support is available to members when they require it. Their support has also assisted me to travel to the regions to attend networks and forums, sharing information and gathering feedback, so that the views of all our members are represented.

In conclusion I thank every member for their commitment and support during 2022. Special thanks to the Networks and Collegiate Groups who invited me to their meetings providing me with the opportunity to share the good work we do. Finally, best wishes for the remainder of the year.

Bevan Ripp  
President  
4 November 2022

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