

Greeting

MICHELE O'NEIL PRESIDENT
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS

On behalf of the Australian union movement, I'm honoured to congratulate the Australian Education Union ACT Branch on reaching the remarkable milestone of 50 years fighting for educators and education.

Teachers, school assistants, school leaders and TAFE teachers are the beating heart of our education systems. Your work, time, expertise and care are essential. The work you do today will reverberate for generations. You quite literally shape the future of our nation.

Educators are often undervalued by policy makers and governments, forced to fight for pay and conditions that recognise the critical importance of the work teachers do, making a strong union voice vital. For 50 years, the AEU ACT branch has been that voice - advocating fiercely and unwaveringly for ACT educators and the integrity of the ACT education system.

The ACT branch has notched up many hard-fought wins over those five decades. You've won nation-leading improvements to pay and conditions. You've held the line against short-sighted cuts. You've put educational equity and access at the forefront of the political agenda in Canberra. Our public education system is the bedrock of a more equitable, sustainable and inclusive future for Australia.

Those victories have taken determination, solidarity and a steadfast commitment to the collective over the individual - the union way. We know we are stronger together.

The pay and conditions secured by your union have led the way, showing all of us what can be achieved when a union branch is united, focused and ambitious. As we face the challenges ahead - insecure work, low wage growth, rising inequality and a rapidly changing economy - the importance of unions has never been greater.

As you meet the challenges of the next 50 years, know that you have the support and solidarity of the Australian union movement. We stand with you today, and always, in the struggle for justice and dignity for all workers.

Congratulations on 50 tremendous years. Here's to 50 more.

In unity,

Michele O'Neil