

Vice President report: PAVCSS Annual General Meeting 2013

Multi Employer Agreement

The key focus throughout the year has been working with the CECV negotiators on the new MEA which was finally settled at the end of October.

The CECV negotiating team sought the assistance of the PAVCSS in March to identify areas of leverage in the negotiations with the IEU. These began formally after the State Government settled with the AEU in April. After meeting with John Jordan and Vin McPhee on two occasions, it was agreed that the PAVCSS would conduct a piece of research to assess principals' responses to particular aspects of the IEU log of claims. Ms Chris Heffernan was engaged to conduct the research. She constructed an instrument based on key questions the CECV team had raised with us. The response rate of nearly 60% was excellent. The analysis Chris provided was very detailed and formed the basis of the negotiating team's position on many issues. John and the team were very appreciative of the work done. It was a substantial piece of work which was funded from our reserves and which will provide a foundation for ongoing data gathering on matters of substance in relation to Industrial Relations.

Occasional meetings were held with John Jordan and Vin McPhee as the negotiations progressed. These included Leonie Keaney, Julie Ryan, April Honeyman and Christopher Houlihan. Other principals were also consulted on a diocesan basis by the IR team.

In September, as the negotiations were entering the final stage, two key issues emerged which John Jordan and the team sought further feedback on. These were the inclusion of extras in the 20 hours face to face teaching and the status of the call back days for Category B School Officers. When John contacted us, the talks were at a crucial stage. The positive partnership that existed between the employer negotiators and the PAVCSS was apparent in the work that was done over a crucial few days when, as John said, they needed 'something' to work with at the negotiating table. In the space of 24 hours, detailed responses on the two key matters were provided from 40 principals. The solid data this produced and the subsequent meeting between the CECV team and Leonie Keaney, Julie Ryan and Michael Twigg ensured that the extras matter was rejected strongly, the Cat B School Officer issue was better understood and agreed to on the basis of State Government parity. The reduction in extras to 14 hours and the increase in POL allowances were offered as 'gains' for the union which in the end contributed to getting the Agreement over the line. In discussion on all these matters, the particular nature of the secondary setting was better understood by the negotiators and the outcome was one that could have only been achieved by working with the PAVCSS.

The outcome for the PAVCSS and CECV is an established model of participation in Industrial Negotiations, one which augments the work of Christopher Houlihan and April Honeyman on the Employer Relations Committee. It places us in a good position as the new MEA is implemented and for the next round - which will begin sooner than we might think.

The unfortunate timing issue which surrounded the release of the details of the MEA by the IEU more than a week before it was formalised by the CECV has been noted by both the PAVCSS Executive and the IR Unit personnel. All agree it was not ideal and needs to be avoided in the future.

School Improvement Framework

Another area in which there has been significant participation by the PAVCSS has been in ongoing review of the School Improvement Framework. Frustration with a number of aspects of the Insight SRC product was expressed strongly at the February meeting. Mary Oski was invited to speak at the June General Meeting. Following this, an SIF reference group was set up which included four secondary principals: Anne McDonald, Mark Murphy, Mark Brockus and Leonie Keaney. The group has met three times with the final meeting for the year scheduled for December 10. Peter Hart has been present at two of the meetings and members have been able to articulate concerns about a number of features of the SIF. A wide range of concerns have been expressed.

Key matters were the complex nature of the reporting tables, the language used with specific SIF meaning that sometimes led to misunderstanding of tables and feedback. Difficulties with gathering data from parents was also a common frustration. A regularly made observation from secondary schools was regarding the negative nature of the feedback. For a number of schools, the inadequacy of the Insight SRC instrument in providing for strategic planning for the range of issues in their school was raised frequently. The need for annual surveys was also questioned.

In seeking to address some of these issues, CEOM and Insight SRC staff have made a number of changes to the Survey reporting. The SIF reference group includes primary school representatives as well and so some of the changes are sector specific. Of interest to secondary schools will be the development of a Workbook/interpretation guide to assist schools with analysis of data. The workbook provides a model set of data which is annotated to assist with explanations of items which have been a source of confusion. A new table on school effectiveness has also been developed which links SIF data and other data on Academic achievement. Aggregate Indicators for Staff Climate, Teaching Climate, Student Engagement and Community Engagement have been developed which it is hoped will be easier to interpret in conjunction with the existing current percentile graphs.

The SIF team and CEOM have been active in seeking to assist principals and schools to use the Insight SRC instrument more effectively and easily. The required number of goals within each of the five spheres has been reduced and it has been acknowledged that many schools will develop their SIF within a wider Strategic Planning exercise.

Schools will have received their data 2013 data on November 6. Feedback on the new reports and accompanying documents can be sent to any of the SIF Reference group members noted above. It is expected that the Reference Group will continue to meet in 2014.

Leonie Keaney
Vice-president, PAVCSS