

**Submission
No 12**

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2019 NSW STATE ELECTION

Organisation: Australian Education Union New South Wales Teachers Federation
Branch

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**AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION
NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION BRANCH**

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SUBMISSION TO

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

ON

**INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2019 NSW STATE
ELECTION AND RELATED MATTERS**

Authorised by



John Dixon

**John Dixon
General Secretary**

Australian Education Union New South Wales Teachers Federation Branch

8 October 2019

SUBMISSION

INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2019 NSW STATE ELECTION AND RELATED MATTERS

1. The Australian Education Union New South Wales Teachers Federation Branch (The Federation) is the registered trade union which covers NSW public school teachers. The Federation represents all teachers in New South Wales public pre-schools, infants, primary and secondary schools and TAFE Institutes. Teachers in Schools for Specific Purposes and Corrective Services are also members.
2. The Federation has approximately 60 000 members and is affiliated to Unions NSW and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) (through the Australian Education Union).
3. The Federation is not affiliated with any political party.
4. The Federation advocates for a well-funded, universally accessible, world class public education system staffed by highly qualified teachers being the professional advocate for our members. We are committed to improving the working conditions of teachers and the learning environments of students in NSW public schools and TAFE colleges.
5. The focus of the Federation's campaigning in the lead up to the 2019 State election was focussed on securing the following commitments from all political parties:
 - Ensuring all public schools are fully funded to 100 per cent of the schooling resource standard (SRS) to equip teachers with the necessary resources to meet student needs.
 - Restoring government funding of TAFE by ensuring at least 70 per cent of vocational education funding from state and federal governments is provided through the public system.
6. The above campaign priorities were determined by members of the Federation through our decision making structures.
7. As a registered third party campaigner, it is evident that the Federation strongly believes that there is a place for campaign activities from bodies other than political parties.
8. As a registered third party campaigner, the Federation complied with the requirements of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 (EF Act).
9. It is important in our democratic society that debate, particularly in the lead up to an election, is not limited to political parties. Other organisations must not be limited (either by monetary caps or limitations to acting in concert) in their capacity to promote their interests to the broader community. The Federation would oppose any regulation that would restrict election campaigning to political parties only.

10. Unions play an important role in elevating issues affecting their members in public debate. Efforts to prevent unions (and other organisations) working together weakens the fabric of democracy. Limiting the capacity of organisations such as unions to work together in the lead up to an election to promote common issues that have been determined through democratic processes of the unions involved, to promote the interests of their members to the broader community by imposing additional electoral funding caps, denies union members the opportunity to engage in the political campaigning process.
11. The Rules of the Federation state *"To co-operate with and assist other organisations, associations, institutions and groups in the pursuit of these Objects"*. Therefore, working with other organisations, but in particular other unions who we may share the same values and campaign objectives as, is core business of the union and not limited to campaigns at election time.
12. Electoral funding laws need to facilitate transparent and open processes so that no one group has undue influence over the political process.
13. Our members care deeply about the students they teach and for the communities in which they work. They are valued and respected members of the community. They work with a range of other organisations in the interests of their students and the community regularly, both through the course of their work and in the daily lives.
14. The curriculum taught in all NSW schools (both primary and high school) incorporates civics and citizenship content across all learning areas. Members of the Teachers Federation teach these perspectives every day in their classrooms. The NSW Department of Education website states:

Civics and citizenship

Our schools produce active and informed citizens through knowledge and understanding of Australian society – our institutions, values and heritage.

Civics and citizenship education builds students' knowledge and understanding of the ways in which citizens can actively participate in Australia's diverse and inclusive society. Students learn about the civic institutions and the processes through which decisions are made for the common good of the community and they also develop the skills and understandings that relate to the organisation of a harmonious democratic society.

Students are encouraged to develop skills such as participating in discussions, working cooperatively with others, negotiating issues and developing the ability to make decisions. These are the skills that will allow students to effectively participate in society and become responsible, informed and active citizens.

Civics and citizenship content is incorporated across all NSW syllabuses and includes:

- *principles and concepts underpinning democracy*
- *rights and responsibilities of citizens*

- *global citizenship and the influence of global events in Australian democracy*
- *skills for active citizenship*
- *multiculturalism and diversity in Australian society*
- *environment and sustainability*
- *role of the media and democracy*

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-across-the-curriculum/civics-and-citizenship>

15. Unions are accountable to their members for the expenditure of funds.
16. The Federation is democratically run. Our structures are so that every member can influence the actions of the union and help make decisions about the use of union resources. The Branch Council is made up of elected representatives; teachers and principals – from the workplaces they represent. They determine what our union does and doesn't do, with the Officers elected required to carry out those decision.