

# WANTED: HEALTH & SAFETY REPS

*All employees have the right to work in a healthy and safe environment. This right does not just include protection from obvious physical hazards –it also means that we all have a right to work in an environment free from:*

- *unhealthy levels of stress,*
- *unreasonable work expectations,*
- *intimidation (including by students and parents),*
- *unpleasant temperature, noise or lighting levels,*
- *repetitive strain*
- *any other preventable hazard to your ongoing health, safety and wellbeing*

Providing a safe and healthy work environment is the responsibility of the employer, but we all have a role to play by building the strength of the sub-branch and ensuring an OHS Rep is elected and properly trained.

Under OHS law, OHS Reps have a unique set of powers, rights and protections. It is important to understand what these powers, rights and protections are because they have been designed to help maintain workplace safety and to deal with any OHS issue that may occur.

The IEU supports OHS reps with training, advice and practical assistance.

OHS matters for schools because effective OHS management leads to improved morale and staff motivation, reduced sick leave, improved retention of staff, greater job satisfaction, and ultimately better student performance. OHS is union business because it involves protecting the most important worker right of all – the right to a safe and healthy workplace.

## Get Started!

### Does your school have an OHS rep?

Your OHS rep must have been elected by the whole staff within the last three years. If this is not the case in your school, follow the steps below:

#### Step 1. Call for an election.

The sub-branch notifies the principal that they would like to elect an OHS rep. The principal has to agree to this by law.

In most schools there will only be one elected OHS Rep, but there can be more. You should have a discussion with your principal and your IEU Organiser about whether one OHS Rep can meet all employees' needs. If you work in a large or multi campus school or if you are unsure whether you need more than one OHS Rep, call your IEU Organiser for advice.

#### Step 2. Call for nominations

Nominations are called for from the whole staff. Ideally someone from the sub-branch will nominate.

#### Step 3. Hold the election

If there is more than one nominee then an election needs to be held. Ideally staff should run their own election. The election can be a show of hands or it could be done by secret ballot. Once elected, health and safety representatives remain in office for no more than 3 years before the position comes up for election again. Don't forget – if you need advice on any part of the election process call your IEU Organiser.

#### Next Steps

Once your OHS rep has been elected let us know. The IEU provides a range of resources, support and activities for OHS Reps including:

- resources and fact sheets
- access to professional advice
- access to local networks
- access to our 5 day OHS Rep training and refresher program.