Annual Report

2024-2025

Australian Education Union
Tasmanian Branch

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Australian Education Union
Tasmanian Branch

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1. State Manager's Report

Prepared by Brian Wightman

Introduction

The past twelve months have seen unrelenting activity as the AEU has rolled out a new bargaining campaign, responded to new threats to TasTAFE, and increased our focus on recruitment and retention activities in line with our revised Strategic Plan. We have been pleased to welcome several new faces to our team across our three office locations, including our newly located Launceston office at 1A/22 Cameron Street. We have worked as a united union to harness our members' collective strength to build the power needed to force the government to respond to unprecedented workforce shortages, stemming from a crisis of untenable workloads, rising classroom violence, understaffing and a government with no plan to recruit and retain the educators we need to provide universal, quality public education in Tasmania. Organising to respond to that challenge remains the AEU's core objective.

Budget and Financial Position

Membership figures show a net decrease of 45 members. This is reflected in a net increase in both member joins and losses in comparison to the previous financial year; this is a positive trend we attribute to a significant investment of resources into making improvements to our membership systems, cleaning up data and strengthening membership incentives. We continue to focus on improving our procedures for onboarding student members and better educating new members on the value of membership via an improved onboarding journey in their first year of membership.

Our growth in membership supports our stable financial position, which has supported modest growth in our staffing compliment. This is thrilling to see and puts us in a stronger position than ever to tackle a critical upcoming year in collective bargaining for members' conditions and pay. We continue to explore measures to optimise our financial position including a new lease for our conference space at our Hobart office.

Strategic Planning

Staff and elected member leaders have met continuously over the past year to progress our refreshed Strategic Plan, which was endorsed by Branch Executive this year as the *AEU Strategic Plan 2024-2026*. This plan is a living document, the result of one which reflects the values and knowledge of educators and responds to the needs of an evolving membership base. At its heart are our revised core values:

1. **Member-led:** We are a union of educators, for educators. Members lead everything we do.
2. **Democratic:** We create structures for members to participate in our union. We are transparent, accessible and inclusive in the way we work.
3. **Integrity and Respect:** We model an inclusive, effective, ethical, and professional culture.
4. **Progressive:** We insppire our fellow educators to create meaningful change though progressive, courageous leadership.
5. **Evidence-based:** We harness our shared knowledge and wisdom as communities of practice to inform our work and seek tactics that create lasting impact.
6. **Solidarity:** We stand up for fairness, social justice, social opportunity, collectivism, and equality in our workplaces and our world.

This process of deep reflection and collaboration has been essential to developing a strong message and powerful plan, to better agitate and inspire potential members looking for a powerful and uncompromising voice willing to hold the State Government to account and fight for what's right. We look forward to more discussions as we continually assess our work against these principles and key objectives. Our union is more united than ever around our common mission: to organise to build power and leadership in our workplaces, and to use that power to improve public education policy, increase community support and respect for our profession, secure better pay and conditions for educators, and a fairer society for all.

Industrial Coordination

Throughout this financial year we have been heavily focused on implementation and enforcement, as well as consulting broadly with members on a new log of claims for the next round of collective bargaining. We have seen existing challenges in classroom violence, short staffing, collapsed classes, principal wellbeing, inadequate in-class support, and untenable workloads. We responded to a call from our Branch Executive for a stronger focus on workplace health and safety with our Safer Together campaign, which included a statewide recruitment drive for Health & Safety Representatives and dozens of new materials publicly available at https://aeutas.org.au/WHS.

We have also maintained a strong focus on TasTAFE, with the member leaders of our TAFE Division leading a strong campaign in response to a devastating gas leak at the Campbell Street Automotive Workshop. By taking advantage of staff professional learning and a renewed focus on WH&S campaigning, we were able to bring to light multiple failures of transparency by TasTAFE leadership. This included uncovering two independent reports that substantiated TasTAFE was aware of risks to workers and students and failed to act. AEU members self-advocated strongly after flooding caused TasTAFE to shutter the workshops and leave several employees jobless.

Reps Conference

The 2024 AEU Reps Conference, held in Hobart at the Old Woolstore Hotel, saw us strengthen our unions' WHS organising toolkit with a focus on our campaign *Safer Together.* With workshops on how to identify and report hazards and incidents, as well as the unique challenges of psychosocial hazards, this focus helped support our workplace organising campaign to build stronger workplace structures. This has supported a stronger union voice at work, identifying and mentoring new member leaders, put a spotlight on the untenable conditions facing educators at work and emboldened members to take action. We're thankful to terrific keynote speakers Jessica Munday (Unions Tasmania) and Liam O'Brien (ACTU); AEU Federal Deputy-President Nicole Calnan; as well as conference sponsors MyState, Teachers Health and Spirit Super.

Conclusion

During the Financial Year, we welcomed Ash Ellereay and Damian von Samorzewski, each of whom have in a short time made a substantial contribution. We also farewelled Rosalia Miller and Liam Sheridan, as well as several long-serving team members of the team: Michael Hayen (1 year, 6 months), Jon Stanger (5 years, 10 months), and Paul Kimbell (10 years). We thank them all for their immense contribution to the union and its culture over many years.

This report highlights the AEU Tasmanian Branch's dedication to supporting members, advocating for public education, and promoting workplace safety. We look forward to building on these achievements as we continue to champion educators across Tasmania.

2. President's Report

Prepared by David Genford

AEU Tasmania President

This year has been defined by a relentless fight on two fronts: securing the future of public education through fair funding, and defending the working conditions of our members here and now. While we have faced a state and federal political landscape fraught with challenges, the solidarity and voice of our members have never been stronger. We have campaigned, we have lobbied, and we have held the government's feet to the fire.

The Never-Ending Battle for Fair Funding

The Albanese Government's promise of "full funding" for schools was revealed to be a hollow one. Their announcement of a 2.5% increase from both state and federal governments was not full funding. It was stunt, one we exposed for what it was: a fake 100%. Our strong objection and excellent media work turned what the PM thought would be a good news day into a bad week for him. We successfully argued that the state's 2.5% contribution didn't close the a 4% loophole, denying schools roughly $1000 per student.

Through repeated trips to Canberra, taking members and students to lobby politicians, we helped force a breakthrough. The Senate agreed to change the law to make 20% federal contribution a floor, not a ceiling. While this is a historic step, it is not the end. We continue to push for the full 25% federal contribution we know is necessary, and we remain wary of a change in government. The Senate Inquiry, in which Tasmanian members punched above their weight in submissions, was a powerful demonstration of our collective voice.

Confronting the State Government: Cuts, Privatisation, and Reviews

At a state level, the challenges have been equally stark. The 2024 State Budget brought no good news, with $80 million in efficiency cuts over the forward estimates. We responded with one of our most successful Budget Estimates performances ever, educating opposition politicians to ask the tough questions that put the new Minister, Jo Palmer, under significant pressure.

Simultaneously, we are fighting a government flirting with privatisation. The threat to sell off Government Business Enterprises (GBEs) directly threatens TasTAFE. We have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with other public sector unions under the banner "Stop the Sell Off, Stop the Cuts!" While teachers have been quarantined for now, we do not take them at their word. The announcement of a "DOGElite" to find efficiency savings was a Trumpesque farce, highlighting a government that cannot even define what an essential service is.

The Independent Review into Education has proceeded, despite our strong initial opposition. We have engaged pragmatically, focusing the terms of reference on key areas: the flawed rollout of 'Supercharging Literacy', staff wellbeing, and treading very carefully around the trial of Multi-School Organisations. We will not allow this review to be a distraction or lead us down the failed path of systems like the UK.

Fighting for Members' Conditions

Our core work continues to be improving the day-to-day lives of our members.

- **Public Sector Wages Agreement:** We have finalised a strong joint-union Log of Claims, with our DECYP-specific claims receiving 100% support from sub-branches. The fight for a fair deal is now underway.

- **Hard-to-Staff Schools:** After significant pressure, we convinced the government to start a 'Hard-to-Staff schools' pilot. While frustratingly delayed by bureaucracy, and not as comprehensive as we wanted, it is a start. We will aim to improve and expand this scheme in next year's bargaining.

- **Annualisation for Education Support Professionals:** We have secured back-pay for the three days of Christmas leave and have worked to ensure the process for 2025 is as clear as possible, protecting members' entitlements.

- **Workload & Wellbeing:** The Teacher Workload Reference Group has been frustratingly slow, but we are now building momentum. We continue to push for mental health to be included in School Improvement Plans and even initiated a meeting between Mental Health First Aid International and DECYP.

- **TasTAFE in Crisis:** It has been a devastating year for our TAFE Division. A carbon monoxide poisoning incident and a catastrophic flood at the Campbell Street campus highlighted systemic issues. We celebrated Tristan Sabol being named HSR of the Year for his actions, but we now fight the threat of redundancies and the Minister's unfulfilled promises. The potential for privatisation looms large.

Strength in Solidarity

This year, we have rebuilt and strengthened our relationships across the union movement. Our return to the Unions Tasmania Executive has been significant, allowing us to be part of a collective force against privatisation and for workers' rights. Our members shone at the Unions Tasmania Awards, and our reps were empowered with crucial WHS knowledge at our highly successful Reps Conference.

From the World Congress, where we saw both the demoralising global attacks on unions and the inspiring solidarity of Education International, to National TAFE Day where our students captivated politicians in Canberra, we have been reminded that our fight is part of something bigger.

Conclusion

The year ahead holds another state election and the real negotiations for a new wages agreement. The morale of our staff and members is tested, but our resolve is not. We have proven that when we stand together, we can shift the political narrative, protect our public institutions, and win tangible improvements for our members. The fight for fully funded schools and a respected profession continues, and the AEU will be at the forefront, every step of the way.

3. Finance Report

Prepared by Leesa Walker

AEU Senior Accounts Manager

The Auditors

The Australian Education Union's auditors, Wise Lord and Ferguson, have completed and signed off on the audited accounts for the 2024/2025 financial year.

During this reporting period, we had forecasted a deficit of $139,217. This outcome was primarily driven by a decrease in membership subscriptions, reflecting a decline in overall member numbers.

On a more positive note, investment income has shown continued growth over the past 12 months. The share portfolio remained stable, contributing to a steady increase in interest and investment returns.

More information is available in:

- Appendix 5.1 – Statement of Comprehensive Income
- Appendix 5.2 – Statement of Financial Position

Balance Sheet

The financial position of the Australian Education Union remains strong, with key highlights as follows:

- Total equity stands at just over $7.65 million due to the revaluation of Hobart and Devonport Offices.
- General cash at bank reserves total $822,128.
- Share portfolio investment (with Main Street Financial) is valued at $1,327,399.
- Mortgage fund investments (across Butler McIntyre & Murdoch Clarke) exceed $2.22 million.

Overall, the balance sheet reflects a stable and healthy financial standing for the AEU.

Staffing

The AEU operated with a staffing profile as outlined below across the financial year, with a host of new faces joining the organisation during 2024/2025, following the departure of some staff members. This transition has brought renewed energy and fresh perspectives to the team, while maintaining continuity in our core operations.

Staffing

Harriet Binet	Acting DMC Team Lead	0.8
Leeanne Clifford	Organiser	0.8 / 0.7
Ashlee-anne Elleray (Commenced 08/04/2024)	Admin Assistant/Membership Assistant	1.0
Dana Endelmanis	Digital Organiser	1.0
Gerard Enniss	Organiser	0.6
Ness Finn	Communications Officer	0.8
David Genford	President	1.0
Emma Gill	Lead Organiser	1.0
Michael Hayen (Resigned 30/01/2025)	Principal Organiser	0.4
Rejani Johnson	Membership Officer	1.0
Paul Kimbell (Resigned 13/01/2025)	Digital Officer	1.0
Bharti Kour	Member Advisory Officer	1.0
Gaylee Kuchel	Organiser	1.0
Kathryn Lee (LWOP January-June 2025)	Organiser	0.9 / 0.8
Rosalia Miller (Resigned 25/09/2024)	Membership Assistant	0.6
Michelle Rippon	Organiser and Women's Officer	1.0
Liam Sheridan (Resigned 04/09/2024)	Support Officer	1.0
Jon Stanger (Resigned 26/11/2024)	Campaigns & Communications Team Leader	1.0
Steven Smith	Senior Industrial Officer	1.0
Damian von Samorzewski (Commenced 10/04/2025)	Organiser	1.0
Amanda Walker	Executive Officer	1.0
Leesa Walker	Senior Accounts Manager	1.0
Brian Wightman	State Manager	1.0
Mitch Wilkinson	Member Advisory Officer	1.0

4. Membership Report

Prepared by Rejani Johnson

AEU Membership Officer

Membership Trends

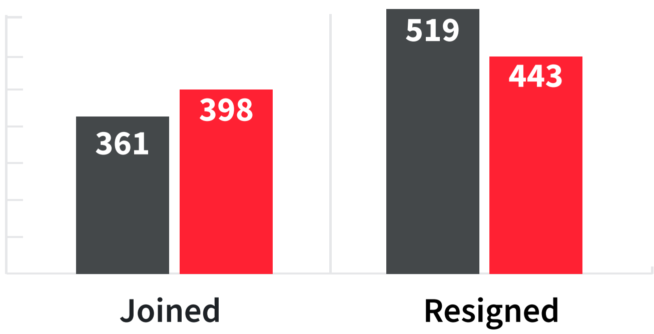
- The graph below compares the numbers of members who joined and resigned in the years 2023-24 and 2024-25. In summary, both new joins and resignations decreased from 2023-24 to 2024-25, comparing the number of members who joined and those who resigned. Overall, there has been a positive shift in membership stability. The number of new members joining the union has increased from the previous financial year, while resignations have decreased, indicating improved retention and stronger engagement with members.
- **Joined:** 361 members joined In 2023-24. In 2024-25, this number rose to 398, indicating representing a notable increase and continued growth in membership.
- **Resigned:** 519 members resigned in 2023-24. In 2024-25, this number decreased to 443, marking an encouraging reduction in membership losses.

Joined vs Resigned

2023-2024 / 2024-2025 Comparison

2023-2024

2024-2025

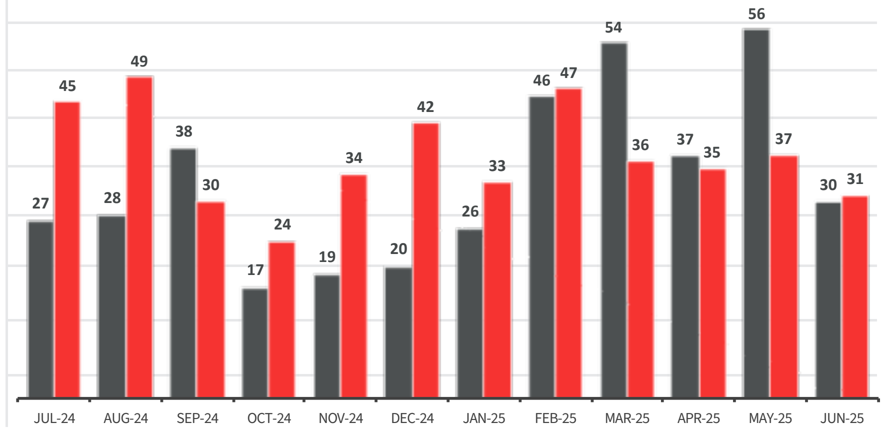


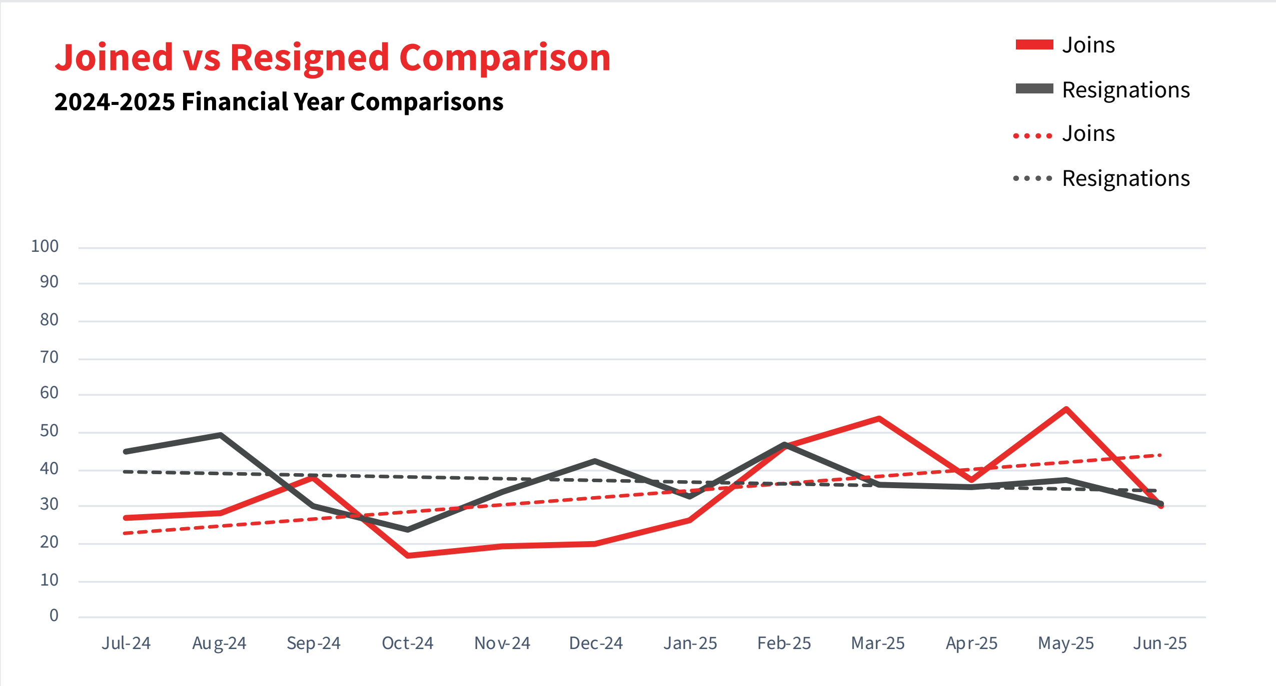
Joined vs Resigned Comparison

2024-2025

Joined 2024-2025

Resigned 2024-2025

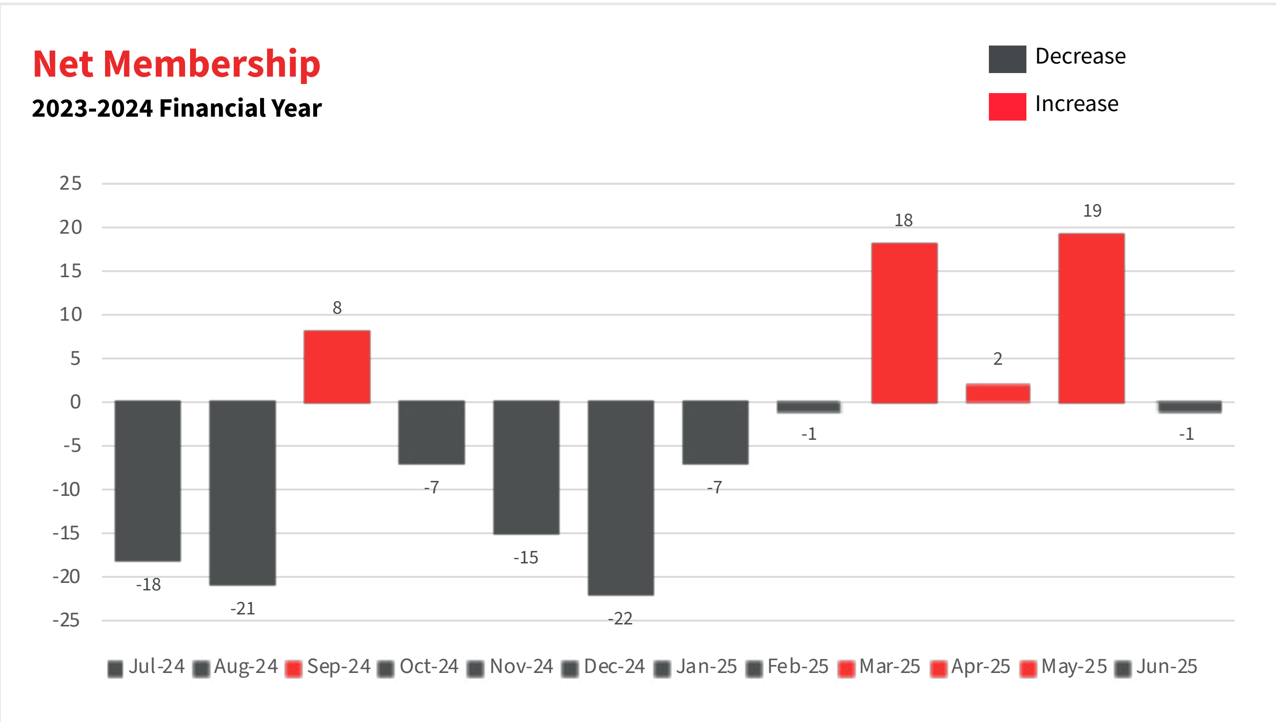




The trend lines reflect a steady improvement in joining rates and a modest decline in resignations over the financial year.

This pattern suggests stronger membership engagement and retention initiatives taking effect, particularly in the second half of the year (March-May).

Monthly Net Membership:



Member Support – Reducing Cancellations

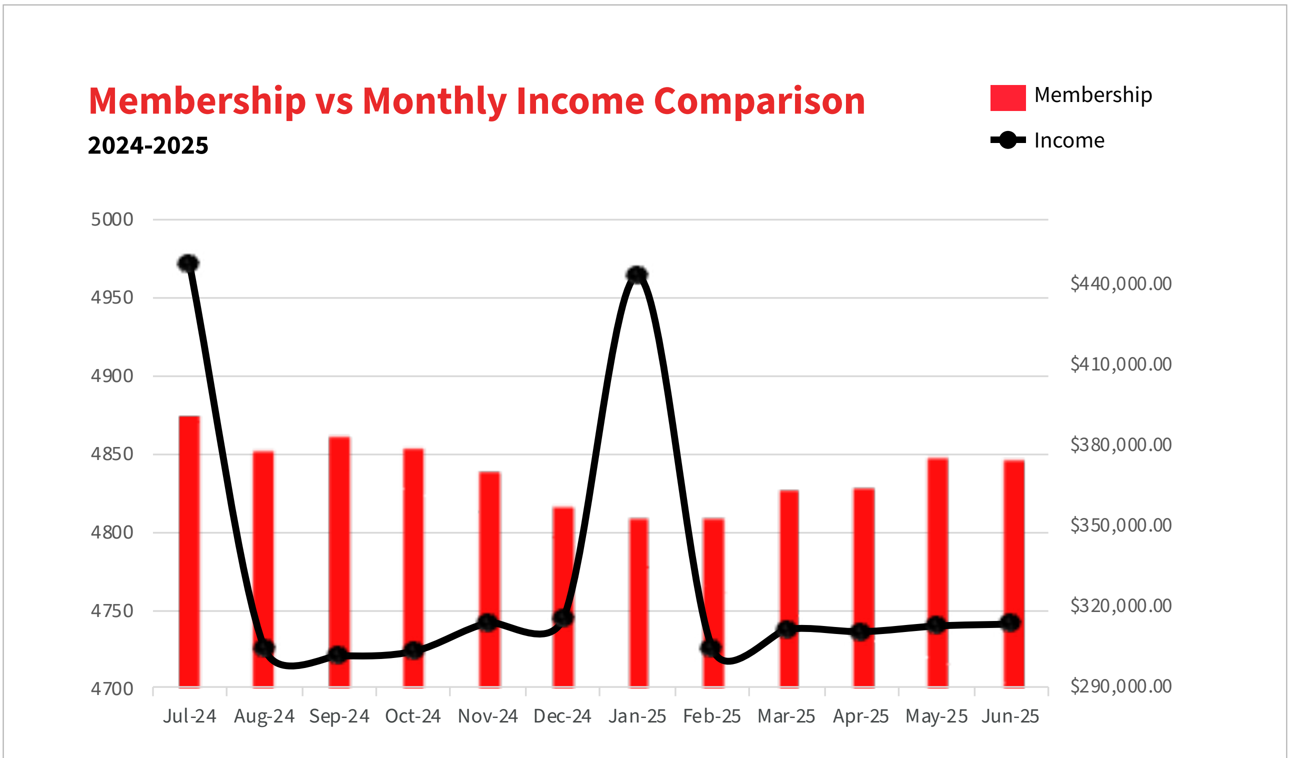
To address membership cancellations and support members facing financial challenges, a three-month contribution suspension option continues to be available. In addition, maternity leave suspensions and leave-without-pay suspensions are offered to members, enabling them to maintain AEU membership and access support during extended leave periods. These flexible suspension options have played a vital role in reducing membership cancellations, supporting members through periods of instability, and ensuring continued engagement with the union.

TRB and WWVPC Reimbursements

The Teacher Registration Board (TRB) and Working with Vulnerable People Card (WWVPC) reimbursement process has been significantly improved to make it faster and more inclusive for members. Under the updated system, members now receive their reimbursement in a single payment with no waiting period, streamlining the process and improving access to benefits. Previously, members were required to wait six months after joining to become eligible and the reimbursement was limited to new educators. The revised policy extends eligibility to all members who join the AEU and have never previously claimed the reimbursement, regardless of their employment category. This change was widely communicated across the membership and received positive response.

Income – Membership Contributions

Throughout the 2024–25 financial year membership income remained steady, reflecting consistent membership numbers and ongoing engagement. A brief dip in income occurred during the stand-down period but recovery was quick in subsequent months. In late May 2025, the Salary/Award rate in SugarCRM was updated to align with the Award rate, which slightly increased membership income.



*Note: In the months of July and January there are three payroll runs as opposed to two.

5. Appendices

5.1 Statement of Comprehensive Income

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025 $	2024 $
REVENUE	3		
Membership subscriptions		3,627,711	3,474,085
Board sitting fees		-	-
Investment income and interest		319,521	268,144
Rental revenue		34,772	38,749
Other revenue		21,591	26,448
Capitation fees and other revenue from another reporting unit		-	-
Merchandise sales		291	161
Revenue from recovery of wages activity		-	-
Levies		-	-
TOTAL REVENUE		**4,003,886**	**3,807,587**
OTHER INCOME			
Grants and/or donations		-	-
Net gain from sale of assets		19,140	21,858
Net movement in managed investments		-	
TOTAL OTHER INCOME		**19,140**	**21,858**
TOTAL INCOME		**4,023,026**	**3,829,445**
EXPENSES			
Employee expenses	4(a)	2,849,510	2,873,449
Capitation fees and other expense to another reporting unit	4(b)	206,555	205,610
Affiliation fees	4(c)	75,874	90,452
Administration expenses	4(d)	647,233	645,175
Grants or donations	4(e)	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation	4(f)	201,344	216,034
Interest expense		1,458	2,571
Legal costs	4(g)	1,591	40,448
Net losses from sale of assets		-	-
Other expenses	4(h)	51,819	26,042
TOTAL EXPENSES		**4,035,384**	**4,099,781**
SURPLUS/(LOSS) FOR THE YEAR		**(12,358)**	**(270,336)**
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		-	-
Revaluation of Land and buildings		1,684,140	
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR		**1,684,140**	
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR		**1,671,782**	**(270,336)**

5.2 Statement of Financial Position

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025 $	2024 $
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5(a)	822,131	1,111,945
Trade and other receivables	5(b)	290,898	178,388
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		**1,113,029**	**1,290,333**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Land and buildings	6(a)	3,447,006	1,826,168
Plant and equipment	6(b)	42,965	59,131
Motor vehicles	6(c)	169,849	150,649
Intangibles	6(d)	42,406	54,522
Right-of-use assets	6(e)	15,724	81,931
Other non-current assets	6(f)	3,547,518	3,314,456
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		**7,265,468**	**5,486,857**
TOTAL ASSETS		**8,378,497**	**6,777,190**
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade payables	7(a)	123,394	139,273
Other payables	7(b)	92,683	154,709
Employee provisions	8	239,430	195,297
Lease liabilities	6(e)	6,848	36,390
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		**462,355**	**525,669**
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee provisions	8	240,111	209,024
Other non-current liabilities	9	14,766	14,766
Lease liabilities	6(e)	9,401	47,649
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		**264,278**	**271,439**
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**726,633**	**797,108**
NET ASSETS		**7,651,864**	**5,980,082**
EQUITY			
Retained profits	10(a)	4,512,652	4,782,988
Reserves	10(b)	1,467,430	1,467,430
TOTAL EQUITY		**5,980,082**	**6,250,418**

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