

Thousands of permanent jobs secured

GARY ZADKOVICH DEPUTY PRESIDENT

On 6 October 2017, the NSW Industrial Relations Commission endorsed a settlement of the dispute lodged by the NSW Teachers Federation over unfilled permanent teaching positions.

The Terms of Settlement will provide 2630 new job opportunities over the next six months for casual and temporary teachers seeking permanent employment.

While filling these 2630 positions is a specific requirement under point 2 in the Terms of Settlement, many more positions will be subject to recruitment action, as the NSW Department of Education fulfils its commitment under the Terms of Settlement to progress the filling of all permanent vacancies in all schools, in accord with Clauses 2 and 20 of the Staffing Agreement and Clause 22.3 of the Salaries and Conditions Award.

In this dispute, Federation asserted that it is unfair and unacceptable for the Department to keep teachers in temporary employment in thousands of permanent vacancies across the state, and that this practice

breaches the above industrial agreements.

Important breakthrough for casual and temporary teachers

In contrast to the broader industrial context, where precarious, insecure employment is rife, Federation has achieved a significant gain for casual and temporary teacher members.

Whilst casual and temporary engagements are necessary to replace permanent colleagues on short- and long-term leave, the permanent appointment of teachers to permanently established positions is fundamental to the provision of a high quality public education system.

As stated in the Staffing Procedure for the Teaching Service in NSW Public Schools: "The Department recognises that permanency is a key recruitment and retention incentive for teaching in NSW public schools."

For teachers, permanency provides secure employment and augments the likelihood of a long-term professional career in NSW

public schools. For students and schools, permanency provides stability and continuity in educational delivery.

Federation emailed all casual and temporary teacher members on 11 October with a Current Issues Update (you can read the update in the Members' area at bit.ly/NSWTFupdateOct) to further explain the implications of this outcome from the Industrial Relations Commission.

Current temporary teacher appointments will not be affected

Temporary teachers will not be displaced from their current appointment as a result of the IRC outcome.

The Department's failure in the past to ensure that permanent positions are filled permanently in all schools may have led some temporary teachers to have an expectation of a further temporary appointment in 2018.

However, the filling of permanent vacancies by permanent appointments will mean that casual and temporary teachers now have significantly increased opportunities for permanent

appointment. These appointments will occur in the usual way, resulting in at least half being filled by advertisement/interview by a selection panel.

It is important for members to note that temporary employment, by definition, is precarious employment that cannot legally be guaranteed for a subsequent year.

Opportunities will continue to arise for permanent employment as vacancies occur and new positions are established through a predicted 23 per cent growth in student enrolments over the next 15 years.

In an economy where more and more people are being precariously employed as casual, temporary and short-term contract workers, the security of permanent teacher employment is a most significant achievement.

For further information, please contact your school's Federation Organiser or telephone 1300 654 367 (Professional Support section) or email professionalsupport@nswtf.org.au.