



6 March 2026

## International Women's Day, Sunday 8 March 2026 Rights. Justice. Action. For all women & girls.

**International Women's Day (IWD) was born from union, labour and social movements of the early twentieth century, when women organised for the vote, safe workplaces and economic justice. In a time of escalating attacks on international human rights, unions can use IWD to demand UN-aligned actions that deliver measurable progress for women.**

Women make up 75% of the education workforce, and more than 50,000 women are IEU members. IWD is an occasion to reflect on how the IEU, and the broader union movement, can mobilise members to influence governments, policy makers and employers.

Union members are encouraged to attend one of the inspirational [IWD events](#) in their area.

### **Collective bargaining and education reforms**

Unions continue to prioritise collective bargaining and progress has been made on [multi-employer bargaining](#) in feminised industries. Improved pay and conditions in professions like teaching are directly linked to [feminised union growth](#) and the future of the union movement.

Log overdue [pay rises for ECEC workers](#) have been a major union win. It is now critical that the federal government extends the [worker retention program](#) beyond 2026 to secure permanent and sustainable wages in the ECEC sector and high-quality early years education.

Free TAFE is making a difference - with 60% of enrolments in [fee-free TAFE](#) courses being women.

### **Narrowing the Gender Pay Gap (GPG)**

Recent small but important [improvements in the gender pay gap](#) (GPG) are largely the result of union-won workplace rights and federal government workplace reforms. Education and training ranks fourth best nationally, but men still dominate [managerial roles](#) in a highly feminised sector.

### **Reproductive health in the workplace**

Unions are leading the charge for reproductive health leave at the school level through collective bargaining, as well as advocating for a [universal right](#) for all workers. While reproductive health conditions can impact all workers, women are [disproportionately affected](#).

### **Religious discrimination exemptions**

On IWD, IEU members renew their call to reform outdated and harmful [religious discrimination exemptions](#) that allow faith-based employers to discriminate against staff. There is no justification for employers to treat workers unfairly because of their marital or relationship status, pregnancy, or their use of lawful medical or fertility treatments.