

NTEU Fightback – RMIT University NTEU elections

NTEU Fightback activists **Liam Ward**, **Alex McAulay** and **Robin Laycock** are running for “ordinary” positions on the RMIT Branch Committee. Liam and Alex are also running for National Council.

Branch Committee

11 candidates for 10 positions – every voter must number 10 boxes to cast a valid vote

Vote 1 Liam Ward

Vote 2 Alex McAulay

Vote 3 Robin Laycock

National Council

5 candidates for 4 positions – every voter must number 4 boxes to cast a valid vote

Vote 1 Liam Ward

Vote 2 Alex McAulay

Candidate Statements

Liam Ward

Candidate statement – Ordinary Branch Committee member and National Councillor, RMIT



I've been a delegate in the school of Media and Communication since 2004, and on the RMIT Branch Committee and National Council since 2010. In these elections I'm nominating for re-election to the Branch Committee and National Council as part of the 'NTEU Fightback' team.

Through 2020, I was at the forefront of the national rank-and-file 'NTEU Fightback' push to resist our national union leadership's disastrous "Jobs Protection Framework" (the JPF). As a scheme for responding to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the sector, the JPF was an appalling and unnecessary capitulation. It came with no genuine guarantee that any jobs would be saved, and signalled to the employers and the government that our union was ready to roll over and concede pay cuts of up to 15% and significant losses to our existing conditions. We were right to oppose it so staunchly, and I'm proud of the role I played in leading the RMIT branch to publicly oppose the failed scheme and to instead run a vibrant campaign of mass resistance to job cuts. We need to keep building this combative spirit in our union, particularly as the crisis continues.

University executives across the sector are openly promising further attacks through 2021 and beyond. Here at RMIT we know those coming attacks include the postponed DSC restructure which will impact a huge section of the RMIT workforce. We don't know what shape this and other restructures here will take, but we should assume they will involve plans for significant job cuts.

Enterprise bargaining will also commence later this year, and all indications are that senior management will be on the warpath. Unfortunately, it also seems our union's national leadership remain wedded to their defeatist course. If we're to defend our pay and conditions, let alone actually improve things, we need to put our union on a fighting footing. This means prioritising all

efforts to strengthen our rank-and-file and delegate structures, and to begin laying the basis for serious industrial action.

A vote for me means:

- Resisting all attempts to erode pay and conditions
- A staunch focus on rank-and-file organising to increase union strength on-the-ground
- An ongoing active resistance to all job cuts
- A determination to fight for serious improvements in the coming bargaining round, through clauses worth fighting for
- A commitment to preparing for and taking serious industrial action to win improvements in the next EBA

If you agree with this approach, you can get involved with the NTEU Fightback election campaign: fill in the form at <http://tinyurl.com/electfightback>. Visit our [website](#) and [facebook page](#) for updates and resources such as 'Clauses Worth Fighting For' in the next enterprise bargaining round.

Alex McAulay

Candidate Statement – Ordinary Branch Committee member and National Councillor, RMIT



I am an experienced NTEU representative and workplace activist committed to building a fighting union in the face Government neglect of higher ed and VC attacks on our pay and conditions. I believe that these elections are an opportunity to engage members in turning our union around: rejecting concessions, supporting ambitious claims in bargaining (to address workload, job security and casualisation among other issues) and preparing for the serious for strike action that will be necessary to win these claims and defeat management attacks.

I have been active in the Melbourne Uni and RMIT NTEU branches for a total of 15 years. Beyond the union, I've been a member of Socialist Alternative for even longer, as a broader commitment to political activism against oppression and inequality. During my time at University of Melbourne I held positions as Ordinary Committee member, Vice President (General Staff) and National Councillor. I led the Uni Melb branch's campaign of protest action against mass sackings under the notorious "Business Improvement Plan" in 2014.

Since joining the RMIT branch in 2016 I have been active as a Branch Committee member and a delegate for the Research & Innovation portfolio, advocating for R&I members through two restructures in 2019-2020. I also played a key role in initiating and organising the campus wide Stop the Cuts campaign which brought together hundreds of RMIT NTEU members for lively online rallies during the depths of COVID lockdown.

When the NTEU National Executive proposed the “Jobs Protection Framework” (JPF) in April 2020, which would have allowed Vice Chancellors to cut the pay and conditions of university workers, I worked alongside Liam Ward and others other opponents of the JPF to build the NTEU Fightback campaign. The JPF collapsed nationally thanks to this vocal opposition among NTEU members and has subsequently proven incapable of protecting jobs on campuses where it was implemented.

I am one of a number of members nationally running in elections as part of NTEU Fightback because I believe that we need voices at branch and national level which firmly oppose sacrificing members’ conditions for a seat at the bargaining table and are committed to mobilising uni workers in collective action to fight for secure jobs and improved conditions.

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Robin Laycock

Candidate statement – Ordinary Branch Committee Member, RMIT



Our sector is experiencing a crisis caused by the lack of adequate funding from the federal government and the neo-liberalisation of university management. VCs are targeting staff by cutting jobs, increasing workloads, decreasing continuing positions, underpaying casuals and so on. Local managers are under pressure, and often disregard our legally enforceable rights set out in the Enterprise Agreement.

The only way to successfully resist this many-layered assault on our conditions is to build a large, member-led, strike-ready union. I would like to contribute to this project by continuing to be a delegate in my area and as a Branch Committee member.

As an academic I have worked at in the sector for 14 years at La Trobe and then RMIT, having served on the La Trobe Branch Committee for a number of years. Beyond the union, I've also been a member of Socialist Alternative, as a broader commitment to political activism against oppression and inequality.

Last year, with other activists at this branch, I helped to establish NTEU Fightback, a national group of rank-and-file activists who organised against the union national leadership's disastrous "Jobs Protection Framework", which would have seen wage cuts of up to 15%. The debacle of the JPF showed many in our union that debates around strategy matter.

Since then, NTEU Fightback has continued to advocate for a fighting union. I have been helping to organise members to resist job cuts and concessions including the No Job Cuts rallies held earlier this year. This year I have been leading a union dispute in my school over workloads and in particular over the attack on research allocations. The dispute is ongoing at the time of writing and could be an important test case for other schools throughout the university.

The Branch Committee's most important role is to encourage and support such organising efforts by members in order to strengthen the branch as a whole. That means continuing to develop an active and engaged delegates network, fighting around local issues like workload issues or team restructures, building membership and giving all members the knowledge and confidence to collectively defend their own rights.

Our senior management have shown that they will attack our job security and conditions to protect their hoard of assets. When our existing Enterprise Agreement expires this year, bargaining for a new Agreement is likely to be even tougher than usual. But the reality is that EA bargaining is our best chance to improve our working conditions, by fighting for better clauses on, for example, job security, consultation, casualisation, workload, OHS and flexible working arrangements.

The only way to really improve our working conditions and rights at work is to organise towards serious strike action. And only by having ambitious demands will we inspire staff to join that fight.

If you agree with Fightback's approach, get involved with our election campaign: fill in the form at tinyurl.com/electfightback, search for "NTEU Fightback" on Facebook page, and see our 'Clauses Worth Fighting For' in the next enterprise bargaining round at www.nteufightback.site.