

Teaching Staff Ballot - 16 questions

Q#	Action	Ballot text, and what it means in plain English	What this looks like	What this does NOT mean
1	Work stoppages	<p><i>An unlimited number of stoppages of all work for durations of between five (5) minutes and twenty-four (24) hours?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to stop all work for a defined period. This covers everything from a brief five-minute symbolic stoppage through to a full-day strike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A five- or ten-minute stoppage at a set time to hold a brief meeting, read a statement, or mark a moment of collective solidarity • A one- or two-hour stoppage to attend an AEU meeting or rally • A half-day or full-day strike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting yes doesn't mean a strike is imminent. Branch Council would make a decision on taking strike action, so sub-branches would be involved in decision-making. • It doesn't mean schools would close without warning. The employer must be given reasonable notice of any stoppage, and schools would have time to make arrangements - including notifying families. • It doesn't mean we'd jump straight to a full-day strike. We would start with shorter stoppages and escalate only if needed.
2	Speaking out	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic stoppages or interruptions of work to provide comments, statements or any other information concerning the AEU's campaign in connection with a new enterprise agreement including on personal social media, to members of the public, parents, and/or the media?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to take short breaks from work to share information about our bargaining campaign - whether that's talking to parents at the school gate, distributing AEU materials, or posting on personal social media.</p> <p>Public sector employees are ordinarily constrained by codes of conduct around making public comments. This action gives protected legal cover to speak publicly about our campaign during work time without risking disciplinary consequences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking to a parent at drop-off or pick-up about what we're seeking in bargaining • Sharing AEU campaign materials in the staffroom or at a school event • Posting on your personal Facebook, Instagram, or other social media about our bargaining campaign during a break or spare period • With the support of the AEU Branch office, speaking to a journalist about why our campaign matters to you. (Members should always coordinate with the Branch office before engaging with media.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean abandoning your class or your duties for long periods. The interruption should be brief and reasonable. • It doesn't oblige you to speak publicly. This action protects you if you choose to - it doesn't require you to. • It doesn't change your obligations to students while you're teaching or supporting them.
3	Wearing campaign material	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on performing work unless wearing or displaying a union t-shirt, badge, insignia, slogans and/or any other material concerning the AEU campaign in connection with a new enterprise agreement?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to wear AEU campaign t-shirts, badges, or other campaign material at work - and to refuse to work unless they're wearing campaign material. It's about visible, collective identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing an AEU campaign t-shirt to work instead of (or over) your usual work clothing • Wearing an AEU badge about bargaining • Displaying campaign stickers, posters, or slogans in your workspace • Everyone in the staffroom wearing the same campaign shirt on a coordinated day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't override genuine safety requirements (e.g. protective clothing in a workshop). Use your professional judgement. • It doesn't mean students or parents will be confused or alarmed - campaign clothing is commonplace during bargaining periods and our merch is positive and proud.
4	Email signature	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite bans or limitations on sending emails unless the email contains a statement in the signature block highlighting the AEU's campaign in connection with a new enterprise agreement?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to add a campaign message to the signature block of all their work emails - and to refuse to send emails without it. Every email you send, whether internal or external, would carry a short statement about our campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sentence or short paragraph at the bottom of every email you send, below your usual signature, explaining that AEU members are bargaining for better staffing, conditions, and support in schools • The AEU will provide the wording so that the message is consistent across the membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you stop sending emails. You keep doing your job - you just add a campaign line to your signature. • It doesn't mean the message will be inappropriate. The AEU will provide professional, factual wording that you can copy into your email settings.
5	Ban on professional learning	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on undertaking professional learning or engaging in professional learning communities?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to participate in professional learning activities - including, for teaching staff, professional learning communities. This means you would not attend PL sessions, PLC meetings, or Directorate-directed professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not attending scheduled professional learning sessions or PLC meetings • Declining to participate in Directorate-directed training or workshops • Not completing mandatory professional learning modules (other than any genuine safety-related training) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you stop learning or developing as a professional. You can still collaborate with colleagues and improve your practice on your own terms. This ban is about directed, formal professional learning activities. • It doesn't affect your ability to seek out professional development that you find valuable and want to do.

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6	Ban on exercising delegated powers	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on the performance of duties or exercise of powers delegated to school leaders by the Head of ACTPS or the Director-General of the Education Directorate under the Education Act, Public Sector Management Act, Public Sector Standards, Financial Management Act or the enterprise agreement, except where it poses a risk to student or staff safety?</i></p> <p>This authorises school leaders - particularly principals and deputies - to refuse to perform duties and exercise powers that have been delegated to them by the Head of the ACTPS or the Director-General. These are the administrative, financial, staffing, and compliance functions that principals carry out on behalf of the Directorate. The action has a safety carve-out: anything related to staff or student safety will still be attended to.</p> <p>School principals don't have their own independent authority over most of the functions they perform. They act as delegates of the Director-General - performing dozens of administrative tasks because the Director-General's authority has been formally delegated to them. This action says: we're handing that authority back.</p> <p>A note for principals and school leaders: This action may feel significant. You take your responsibilities seriously, and the idea of not performing delegated functions can feel uncomfortable. But these delegations are the Directorate's work, not yours. You perform them because the Directorate has chosen to push them down to school level rather than resource them centrally. When the Directorate won't bargain fairly, it's entirely appropriate to stop doing its work for it. The safety exception ensures you can always act to protect student and staff safety.</p> <p>A note for office-based school leaders: This action applies to all school leader members, including members in ESO. When you decline to exercise a delegated power, it will flow either to a non-member or upwards to someone else. The work may still be performed – just not by an AEU member.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not signing off on financial reports, budget acquittals, or expenditure approvals • Not performing compliance functions under the <i>Financial Management Act</i> or <i>Public Sector Management Act</i> • Continuing to do anything that directly relates to student or staff safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean principals stop running their schools. The day-to-day leadership of learning, the support of staff, the management of student wellbeing - these continue. What stops is the bureaucratic machinery that serves the Directorate's compliance needs. • The safety exception ensures that principals can still act when student or staff safety is at stake. • It doesn't affect classroom teachers. This action is most relevant to principals and school leaders who hold formal delegations.
7	Ban on student reporting	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on any or all aspects of student reporting, including but not limited to written reporting of any kind or meetings with parents to discuss student learning?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to complete some or all aspects of student reporting, including written reports and parent-teacher meetings. The ballot wording says "any or all" - this means that when this action is notified, we would define the specific scope (for example, banning written report comments but continuing parent-teacher meetings, or the other way around, or both).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not writing report comments • Declining to attend parent-teacher interviews or conferences • Not completing report comments in the school's reporting system • The specific scope would be defined in relation to each school sector, because reporting looks different for each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean cutting off communication with parents entirely. Day-to-day communication about student wellbeing, safety, or immediate needs continues. If a parent approaches you with a concern about their child's safety or wellbeing, you respond as you normally would. • It doesn't mean you stop tracking student progress for your own teaching purposes. You continue to assess, mark, and know your students. What stops is some of the formal reporting output.

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8	Ban on SCIF activities	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on the activities or work associated with the Student-Centred Improvement Framework (SCIF), including but not limited to school self-evaluation, Student-Centred Improvement Visits (SCIVs) and external review?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to participate in any activity associated with the Student-Centred Improvement Framework - the Directorate's school improvement and review system. This includes school self-evaluation, preparing for and participating in Student-Centred Improvement Visits (where Directorate staff visit and assess schools), and external review processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not completing self-evaluation documentation for the SCIF • Declining to participate in SCIV preparation meetings or the visits themselves • Not preparing evidence portfolios or documentation for external review • Not attending SCIF-related workshops or planning sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't affect your own professional reflection or your school's own conversations about how things are going. This is about the formal Directorate framework, not about the natural professional practice of reviewing and improving your work. • It doesn't mean anyone opposes school improvement. Many of our members - including principals, ESO staff and EELs - care deeply about improvement and find value in this work.
9	Stoppages during ALP MLA visits	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic stoppages of work to coincide with a visit to the workplace by an Australian Labor Party Member of the ACT Legislative Assembly?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to stop work when an ACT Labor MLA visits your school. The ACT Government is a Labor government. This action makes a political point: the people responsible for funding and resourcing our schools can't deny us what we need while using our workplaces as photo-ops.</p> <p>The AEU would coordinate this action so members know when it applies and would be on hand to help out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an ACT Labor MLA notifies a school that they will be visiting, the AEU Branch will let them know about our action and talk to them about what we're seeking in bargaining • If the MLA decides to go ahead with the visit, members would not perform any work in relation to the visit - no extra tidying, no hosting duties, no participation in photo opportunities or announcements • Teaching and learning continue as normal. What stops is the work of facilitating and hosting the MLA's visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean refusing to supervise students or leaving students unsupervised. Student safety always comes first. • It doesn't apply to visits by non-Labor MLAs or by anyone who is not an elected member of the ACT Legislative Assembly.
10	Ban on implementing new system initiatives	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on the implementation of any Education Directorate system initiative at a school, except where it poses a risk to student safety?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to implement new programs, initiatives, or reforms that have been pushed out by the Education Directorate - unless not implementing them would pose a risk to student safety. This is about the constant flow of new systems, frameworks, and initiatives that schools are expected to absorb, often with inadequate resourcing and insufficient consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not participating in the rollout of a new Directorate system or process • Declining to attend training, workshops, or meetings related to a new initiative • Not implementing new administrative procedures or platforms introduced by the Directorate • Continuing to do your existing work using your existing systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean abandoning existing practices or systems that are already embedded in your school. • The safety exception ensures that if a Directorate initiative directly concerns student safety, it proceeds as normal. • It doesn't prevent your school from making its own local decisions about how to run programs and support students.
11	Ban on taking split/collapsed classes	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on supervising classes not usually assigned to the employee or taking students from classes that are being split, combined or collapsed due to the absence of their regular teacher?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to supervise a class that isn't theirs, or to take on additional students from a class that has been split or combined because the regular teacher is absent.</p> <p>When a teacher is absent and no relief teacher is available, schools typically deal with it by splitting the absent teacher's class - sending groups of students to other classes - or by asking another teacher to cover the class during their release time. This action says: we won't do that anymore.</p> <p><i>We know that our principals and school leaders are often the ones who manage class splitting day to day, and that most are AEU members too. This action would be challenging to implement because it would be disruptive. That's part of the point – everyone, including school leaders and principals, has been extending themselves for too long to patch over the gaps. It's AEU member dedication that is stopping the system from unravelling every day.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusing to take a group of students from a split class into your already-full classroom • Declining to cover another teacher's class during your scheduled release time • Not supervising a combined or collapsed class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean students will be left unsupervised. Schools will need to manage the situation using the resources available - this might include non-member staff covering the class or supervising students, or the Directorate being forced to actually employ a relief teacher. • If genuinely no one is available, some students may need to be sent home. That outcome would be significantly disruptive, but it reveals the extent to which members currently band-aid a chronically understaffed system. • If you have genuine concerns about an immediate safety risk to students, your professional judgement still applies. <p><i>The point is not to increase pressure on school leaders. This is directed at the employer, which should be funding schools to engage relief teachers whenever they're needed. When this ban is in place, the pressure should be directed where it belongs: on the system that created the staffing shortage, not on the school leaders trying to manage it.</i></p>

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12	Ban on exceeding class sizes	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on teaching classes where the number of students exceeds the express limits in the Education Directorate's Class Sizes Policy?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to teach a class where the number of students exceeds the limits set out in the Directorate's own Class Sizes Policy. The Directorate has a policy on class sizes - this action holds them to it.</p> <p><i>A note about school leaders: As with the class splitting ban, this action would be implemented with the intention to put pressure on the Directorate, not on school leaders. Principals and school leaders who are AEU members know better than anyone how class sizes affect learning. The responsibility for fixing class size breaches sits with the system, not with the principal trying to make it work.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your class has more students than the Class Sizes Policy allows, you would notify the school that you are exercising the ban and that the excess students need to be accommodated elsewhere • This would typically apply at the start of a lesson or the start of a day, based on your class roll • Where a school has an existing agreed local variation to the class size limits, the arrangements for those additional students that the variation provides for would continue to be honoured. There would be a ban on receiving any additional students above the existing arrangement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarly to Q11, this doesn't mean students will be left unsupervised. Schools will need to manage the situation using the resources available - this might include non-member staff covering the class or supervising students, or the Directorate being forced to actually employ a relief teacher. • If genuinely no one is available, some students may need to be sent home. That outcome would be significantly disruptive, but it reveals the extent to which members currently band-aid a chronically understaffed system. • It doesn't mean you stop caring about the students. On the contrary - this action exists because you care about being able to give every student the attention they deserve, which becomes much harder in oversized classes. • The class size limits referred to are the Directorate's own published policy limits. This isn't us inventing a standard - it's the Directorate being held to its own.
13	Work-to-rule	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic limitations on the performance of work, whereby employees perform no more than the minimum required by the rules of their workplace (work-to-rule)?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to do exactly - and only - what we are formally required to do. No more. The employer relies heavily on staff goodwill. Teachers stay late, arrive early, work through breaks, take on tasks that aren't their responsibility, and absorb duties that should be done by someone else. School assistants cover for absent colleagues, do work outside their position description, and stay beyond their paid hours. Work-to-rule means withdrawing that goodwill and performing only what's required by your contract, position description, and enterprise agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not doing work during evenings or weekends • Working normal school operating hours, then going home. The EA specifies that standard working hours for the purposes of calculating pay and leave balances are from 8:30am-4:51pm each day but this does not determine your required hours of attendance. The custom and practice of the ACT system is that once students have left for the day, unless you have set meetings, you can leave work for the day. The span of time used to determine your pay and leave balance is in recognition that you use your professional judgement of when you complete your work outside of face to face time with students. • Performing only the duties set out in your role or timetable • Not volunteering for extra duties, committees, or programs beyond your formal obligations • Not covering for colleagues informally • Following timetabled and rostered duties only, and taking your full unpaid lunch break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean doing your job badly. It means doing your job - and only your job - properly and within your paid hours. • It doesn't mean abandoning students. Your core duties - teaching, learning support, supervision as rostered - continue as normal. • It doesn't mean being unhelpful to colleagues. It means not absorbing work that should be resourced separately.
14	Ban on Directorate promotional work	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on participating in public promotion of the Education Directorate or responding to requests from the Education Directorate for promotional material (including contributing to the Education Directorate's social media or providing content for Directorate publications)?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to do the Directorate's public relations work. If the Directorate asks you to participate in a promotional video, provide a quote for a media release, contribute content for the Directorate's social media accounts, write or appear in a Directorate publication, or otherwise help the Directorate look good in public - you can say no.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining a request to be featured in a Directorate social media post about a school program • Refusing to participate in a promotional video or media event organised by the Directorate • Not contributing content to the Directorate's website or social media channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't affect your normal communication with families. Contributing to the school newsletter, updating Seesaw or Google Classroom, emailing parents about student learning - all of this continues. This ban is about the Directorate's public promotion, not your communication with your school community.

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15	Ban on EDU directed meetings	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on attending or participating in meetings convened by or on behalf of the Education Directorate or Education Support Office (ESO), other than meetings directly related to the immediate educational needs of students or safety?</i></p> <p>This authorises teaching staff to refuse to attend meetings called by the Directorate or ESO - unless the meeting is directly about the immediate educational needs of students or about safety.</p> <p>Note: AEU members work in ESO. If this action is notified, ESO-based members would receive specific guidance on how it applies to their roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining to attend a meeting about a system initiative • Not attending professional learning network meetings convened by ESO • Not attending Directorate briefings or information sessions • Still attending meetings that directly concern your students' learning or a safety issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you can never attend any meeting. The exception for student educational needs and safety ensures that the meetings that directly matter for students continue. • It doesn't mean being rude or confrontational. You simply let the convenor know that you are exercising the ban and won't be attending.
16	Ban on data, surveys, audits	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on completing or responding to requests for data, surveys, data collection exercises or audits initiated by or on behalf of the Education Directorate?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to complete any data collection, survey, audit, or reporting task that comes from the Education Directorate or ESO. This means we continue to do the work that matters for students and families, but we stop cooperating with constant requests for data.</p> <p>Note: AEU members work in ESO. If this action is notified, ESO-based members would receive specific guidance on how it applies to their roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not completing Directorate-initiated surveys about school operations, programs, or staffing • Declining to participate in data collection exercises sent from the Directorate • Not completing compliance reporting that is directed by the centre rather than required for student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't affect student-facing record-keeping. Keeping attendance rolls, maintaining student records for your own use, recording student progress - these are part of your professional work and continue as normal. • It doesn't mean refusing to do things that are directly required for student safety (e.g. incident reporting through the Safety Portal).