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MEDIA RELEASE

ACT PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS TO TAKE FULL DAY STRIKE ON 11 JUNE

For the first time in 15 years, ACT public school teachers will take strike action, with educators escalating their campaign to a full day strike on 11 June. In a historic first for the union, AEU ACT school assistant members will also join the industrial action.

The announcement was made today at a stop work meeting attended by hundreds of teachers, school assistants, school psychologists and school leaders from across the ACT.

AEU ACT Branch President Angela Burroughs said educators had given the government time to respond, but had instead seen a government more interested in managing headlines than fixing schools.

“This first phase of action was designed to give them time to respond. Time to listen. Time to come back to the table with a serious offer,” Ms Burroughs said.

“The Barr Government’s response to today’s action says it all. It shows a government that is out of touch and doesn’t care.”

“When we announced our action, the Government showed it can act swiftly when it wants to. It rushed to close schools. How about rushing to fix them?”

Ms Burroughs said educators were being forced to hold together a system in crisis through “sheer professionalism and goodwill”, while the government ignored worsening conditions in schools.

“Our professionalism has allowed them to pretend the system is functioning. Our goodwill has become the contingency plan,” she said.

AEU ACT Branch Secretary Patrick Judge said educators could not continue waiting while schools struggled with chronic understaffing, escalating workload pressures and inadequate support for students.

“What we are asking the government to deliver isn't aspirational. We're asking for them to commit to the minimum staffing for our schools. We're asking for recognition of the extra resources that some students require to succeed. We're asking to be safe at work. We're not asking the government to be generous. We're just asking the government to be honest,” Mr Judge said.

Mr Judge said the government had failed to demonstrate concern about the impact current conditions were having on educators and students.





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“The Barr Government has closed our schools, and acknowledged our right to take industrial action, and some members of the government have joined us in wearing red on Fridays. But they haven’t demonstrated one bit of concern about the impact that this action has on our students, or on us,” he said.

“On the 11th of June, unless the government meets us at the table and delivers meaningful progress, we will shut our schools once again for a full-day strike.”

Educators at the meeting spoke about increasing workloads, occupational violence, staffing shortages and growing concerns about retention across the profession.

Early career teacher Abbey Crampton said retaining experienced educators must be a priority, warning that a lack of recognition and support was pushing teachers away from the profession.

“My mentors are currently not being recognised or compensated for their pivotal guidance and support,” Ms Crampton said.

“Recognising their time and effort through compensation is a retention plan, not just for New Educators but for all teachers.”

Experienced teacher and principal Peter Kent said educators had reached a point where they could no longer absorb the failures of the system.

“That is why we must be the red line that says: no more. No more pretending that overwork is professionalism. No more expecting Principals and educators to endlessly absorb the inadequacies of a system under strain,” Mr Kent said.

“System problems require system solutions. That is why enterprise bargaining matters. That is why our union matters. That is why today matters. Because this is how change happens.”

The union says the full day strike on 11 June will proceed unless the ACT Government returns to the bargaining table with meaningful progress on key claims relating to workload, staffing, safety, inclusion and pay.

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