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MEDIA RELEASE

ACT PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS DELIVER LANDMARK VOTE FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Overwhelming majorities back every proposed action as educators' patience runs out

ACT public school teachers, leaders, school psychologists and school assistants have voted overwhelmingly for protected industrial action, delivering an unmistakable message to the Education Directorate after months of failure to meaningfully engage in enterprise bargaining.

The result of the Protected Action Ballot sends an unmistakable message to the Government and the Education Directorate, with turnout surging across both teaching staff and school assistants producing overwhelming majorities backing every proposed action — most by margins exceeding 90%. Such consistently high support across every question attests to the deep dissatisfaction of a workforce united, mobilised, and no longer willing to wait.

More than 95% of both teaching staff and school assistants voted in favour of strike action.

The ballot comes after months of delay and inaction in enterprise bargaining. Despite the union providing its log of claims in July 2025, the Directorate did not deliver a substantive response for months — and only did so following intervention from the Education Minister. Even then, the response failed to address the core concerns raised by members, with the vast majority of claims left unresolved.

AEU ACT Branch President Angela Burroughs said the decisive vote across both teaching staff and school assistants highlights unprecedented unity across the workforce.

“This was not just a ballot. This was a vote of no confidence in the Directorate’s handling of this bargaining process and in its treatment of the people who keep public schools running every day,” Ms Burroughs said.

The endorsed actions enable a range of measures — from work stoppages to targeted bans and limitations, including prohibitions on splitting or combining classes and strict adherence to class size limits.

The ballot result is also particularly significant for AEU school assistant members who have never before taken industrial action in the ACT public education system.

“For school assistants to vote so decisively in favour of action is a historic moment but a shameful reflection of the employer’s disregard for our school assistant members who perform crucial roles, often supporting some of the most vulnerable students,” Ms Burroughs said.





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“School assistants are some of the lowest paid education workers. Teachers and parents understand the critical work our school assistants perform — it’s about time the ACT Government stops taking them for granted.”

Union members will now meet through their elected Branch Council to determine the first industrial actions and when they will begin. Branch Secretary Patrick Judge said the Government still has time to resolve the dispute before industrial action commences.

“The Directorate now has a choice. They can continue provoking the workforce that keeps this system afloat, or they can finally start treating educators with the respect they deserve,” Mr Judge said.

“This result is what happens when a workforce is pushed too far by an employer that refuses to listen. The first round of actions will be announced this Thursday — the Directorate should use the time between now and then to come to the table willing to meaningfully engage with the union,” Mr Judge said.

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