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MEDIA RELEASE

AEU ACT LAUNCHES PROTECTED ACTION BALLOT AS BARGAINING STALLS

ACT public school teachers and school assistants are now voting on whether to take industrial action in Term 2 2026, as the Australian Education Union (AEU ACT) opens its protected action ballot.

The ballot follows 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 protected action ballot is a necessary escalation to ensure members have a democratic say in how the dispute proceeds.

“This ballot is about giving educators a voice after months of being ignored,” Ms Burroughs said.

“Our members have engaged in this process in good faith. They’ve put forward practical, evidence-based solutions to the challenges facing our schools. What they’ve received in return is delay, deflection, and a failure to engage with the substance of those claims.”

The move covers members under both the ACTPS Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2023–2026 and school assistant members who work under the ACTPS Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2023–2026. The ballot is designed to give educators a direct say in the next steps of the campaign — while providing a clear pathway to industrial action if the ACT Government fails to resolve the dispute.

Branch Secretary Patrick Judge said the Government still has an opportunity to resolve the dispute without disruption, but time is running out.

“No one takes the decision to pursue industrial action lightly,” Mr Judge said.

“But after months without progress, members are increasingly frustrated and increasingly united in their determination to see real change.”

The ballot will determine whether the union can proceed with protected industrial action in Term 2 2026.

If endorsed by members, the proposed actions would allow a range of measures — from short stoppages of work through to targeted work bans and limitations including bans on splitting and collapsing classes, and strict compliance with the class sizes policy. The actions are designed to highlight the pressures facing schools and secure meaningful progress in bargaining.

No industrial action will occur unless members vote in favour of it.

The ballot is open from now until 5:00pm Friday 1 May.

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