



24 March 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

ACT TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ASSISTANTS PREPARE FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

ACT public school teachers and school assistants are preparing to take industrial action in Term 2 2026, after the Australian Education Union ACT Branch's elected council voted unanimously to express no confidence in the Education Directorate's handling of enterprise bargaining.

Branch Council has authorised Branch Secretary Patrick Judge to apply for a Protected Action Ballot Order, and he has written to Education Minister Yvette Berry and Director-General Jo Wood to advise them of that intention. The move covers members under both the ACTPS Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2023–2026 and the ACTPS Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2023–2026, and is designed to motivate the ACT Government to genuinely engage with the union's claims at the bargaining table.

AEU ACT Branch President Angela Burroughs said the Education Directorate's response to seven months of good-faith bargaining had left the union with no alternative.

"We lodged our logs of claims in July 2025. For more than seven months, the Education Directorate failed to respond substantively — we had to seek Ministerial intervention just to receive any reply at all."

"When that response finally came, the Directorate acknowledged that 37 claims across both bargaining streams require further discussion. Of the six claims said to have reached in-principle agreement, nearly all simply reflect matters already contemplated in existing policies. Seven months, and nothing of substance to show for it."

The AEU's claims go to the heart of public education in the ACT — adequate staffing, proper training, support for inclusive education, and planning for a sustainable workforce. They reflect the most basic community expectations about what resources students deserve.

"Our members give everything for their students every single day. They are not asking for the impossible. They are asking for the conditions that allow them to do the job they trained for," Ms Burroughs said.

Teachers at Branch Council described a profession running on goodwill and exhaustion. Hughes Primary School teacher Mel Charleston told councillors the problem runs deeper than workload.

"Teachers are not burning out. We are being burned out by a system that refuses to change. The system keeps asking more while giving less — and goodwill is not an education policy."

New educator Abbey Crampton from Mount Stromlo High School highlighted what is at stake for the next generation of teachers.





aeuact@aeuact.org.au
www.aeuact.org.au
ABN: 98 106 001 142

"If we are not passionate about retaining our experienced leaders, then new educators like me will leave. Respecting their time and effort is just as much a retention plan as any support program — they are the foundation for new educators."

Dickson College teacher Steph Burns reflected the mood of the council.

"For our employer to completely ignore these claims is a slap in the face. It denies us a voice when we are the ones who know best what is needed."

Branch Secretary Patrick Judge said the ball is now firmly in the Government's court.

"The AEU remains ready and willing to bargain in good faith — we always have been. We are seeking the Minister's urgent response to ensure that industrial action is not required. But the Education Directorate must come to the table with genuine engagement, not another table of deferred discussions."

A Protected Action Ballot is a formal legal process. No industrial action will occur unless members vote for it. The AEU will hold an online member meeting from 2:30–3:00pm on the first day of Term 2 to explain the ballot process and next steps.

Media contact: Angela Burroughs, ph. 0419 104 193, aeuact@aeuact.org.au

