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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **INDEPENDENT REVIEW EXPOSES GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT RHETORIC AND SCHOOL REALITY**

An independent review of ACT public school resourcing has confirmed what AEU ACT members have been saying for years: public schools are being held together by the goodwill of educators while systemic failures continue to go unaddressed.

The findings stand in stark contrast to comments made this week by Chief Minister Andrew Barr, who described the ACT public education system as “one of the best in the country to work in”, and claims made by Education Minister Yvette Berry last year that “all our schools have resources to provide additional support.”

The review identifies “very real funding pressures facing public schools and the public school system” and acknowledges these “can be addressed in part through improvements to how current financial and human resources are allocated and committed across the system.”

AEU ACT Branch President Angela Burroughs said the report exposed just how out of touch the ACT Government had become with the reality facing educators and students every day.

“This review confirms what educators, students and families already know: the system is under immense strain, inequity is rife, workforce planning has failed, and schools are being expected to do more with less,” Ms Burroughs said.

“While the Chief Minister is congratulating himself, educators are holding the system together through unpaid overtime, covering staff shortages, and supporting students with increasingly complex needs without adequate resourcing. We’re constantly being asked to do more with less.”

“The Government has spent months dismissing the concerns raised by educators during bargaining and industrial action. This review validates everything our members have been saying.”

Ms Burroughs said the union’s bargaining claims were developed specifically to address the systemic issues identified in the review.

“The claims we put forward in July 2025 directly address the failures identified in this review — including chronic understaffing, poor workforce planning, inadequate relief staffing, escalating workload pressures, and the lack of transparency around school resourcing.”

The union said its claims seek to ensure splitting, collapsing and cancelling classes becomes the exception rather than a daily reality in ACT public schools.





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

“We are seeking formal recognition of the additional resources students with disability and complex needs require to succeed, alongside a proactive approach to safety in schools — so that supports are put in place before somebody is hurt, not after,” Ms Burroughs said.

The AEU notes the ACT Government’s response is to focus initially on building the underlying system infrastructure, particularly in HR and finance.

“We understand the scale of this reform is unprecedented, and our members have lived through too many poorly managed change processes. We welcome the Government’s commitment to genuine engagement and to taking the time to get it right.”

However, the union is clear that members cannot wait years for answers to their current bargaining claims.

“The ACT Government cannot shelter behind the promise of long-term reform while refusing to engage with claims that address the immediate conditions in our schools.”

“Our members have been patient. They have done the hard work of developing solutions. They need action — not another delay.”

**Media contact:** Angela Burroughs, ph. 0419 104 193, [aeuact@aeuact.org.au](mailto:aeuact@aeuact.org.au)

