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MEDIA RELEASE

STRIKE ACTION FORCES MOVEMENT FROM GOVERNMENT, BUT EDUCATORS WARN DISRUPTION COULD ESCALATE IN TERM 3

The Australian Education Union ACT Branch says last Thursday's historic full-day strike has already delivered movement on several key bargaining claims, but warned that industrial action will continue until the ACT Government resolves the outstanding issues in the dispute.

On Friday, the day after thousands of ACT public school educators walked off the job and rallied in Canberra, Education Minister Yvette Berry wrote to the union advising that she had instructed the Education Directorate to finalise proposals in relation to AEU claims as a matter of urgency. This includes claims relating to guaranteed minimum staffing structures for schools, and class sizes that support fair workloads.

AEU ACT Branch President Angela Burroughs said the developments were welcome, but should not have required a full-day strike to achieve.

"The fact that we saw movement within 24 hours of thousands of educators taking industrial action shows our campaign is working," Ms Burroughs said.

"But our members did not give up a day's pay for promises. They expect outcomes."

The Minister's letter congratulated educators for their "powerful industrial action", but Ms Burroughs said members would have preferred not to have taken action at all.

"Teachers and school assistants gave up a full day's pay because the Government left them with no other choice," she said.

While the union has paused any immediate escalation, existing industrial actions remain in place, including the ban on written report comments and targeted work stoppages during visits by ACT Labor MLAs.

Ms Burroughs said the full range of actions endorsed by members in the protected action ballot remains available.

"That includes actions that would have a much greater impact on the day-to-day operation of schools, including bans on absorbing students from classes that have had to be split."

When a teacher is absent and no relief teacher is available, schools typically deal with the situation by sending groups of students to other classes or combining classes.





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“Our members report that this is happening so frequently that it has become normalised. Parents need to be aware of the extent to which our system is understaffed and how disruptive this is to student learning and to the workload of educators,” Ms Burroughs said.

“Our members have given the union a strong mandate to take whatever action is necessary to secure a fair outcome,” Ms Burroughs said.

“Whether there are further stop-work or other actions in Term 3 is entirely up to the Government.”

“Educators do not want to give up another day’s pay, just as they did not want to give up a day’s pay last Thursday. For many people, that is a significant sacrifice.”

“But our members have also made it clear that they are prepared to take further action if the Government fails to resolve this dispute.”

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