Rural teaching crisis, as State Government increases housing rents



The State Government is set to cause a rural teaching crisis, as it increases rents on government housing in towns across Western Australia.

Regional teachers and TAFE lecturers have been notified of rent increases of up to 15 per cent, or $60 per fortnight.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne called on Education Minister Peter Collier and Housing Minister Brendon Grylls to intervene.

“These rent increases are a real threat to the quality of education in regional WA,” said Ms Byrne.

“Teachers will be getting a pay rise of 2.5 per cent this year, so how does the State Government justify an increase in the rents it charges that is six times this amount?

“What effect do Mr Collier and Mr Grylls think a massive and immediate increase in the cost of living for teachers in regional WA will have on the ability to retain and attract teachers to regional schools?

Ms Byrne said the rent increase represented a blatant money grab.

“We understand that the State Government has created financial problems for itself, but how does it justify such a massive increase in rent, at a time when property prices and private rents are falling across the State?

“What makes this rent increase even more offensive to regional teachers and TAFE lecturers is the fact that many of the houses provided by the State Government are in a state of disrepair and in significant need of maintenance.

“Teacher attraction and retention in country areas has already been hit by changes to the transfer system for teachers who take country posts and the difficulties in returning to metropolitan schools caused by the selection processes in the Independent Public Schools system.

“If Mr Collier and Mr Grylls care about the quality of education in regional WA, they will intervene and ensure these rent increases are reversed.

“All children deserve a quality education, no matter where in Western Australia they live.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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