# Birmingham must take action to lift entry standard for teaching courses

Birmingham must listen to expert John Hattie and take action to lift entry standard for teaching courses.

New Education Minister Simon Birmingham must take action to fix declining entry standards for teaching courses, the AEU said today.

The government-appointed head of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Professor John Hattie has today expressed his support for the NSW Government's policy of requiring new teachers to have at least three "Band 5" HSC results (ATAR scores of 80 or more) – and called for other States to emulate the rigorous entry standards.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that Professor Hattie had shown up the Government's inaction on this crucial issue.

"The Federal Government needs to change its policies which have seen declines in entry standards for teaching courses and a surplus of graduates who can't find teaching jobs," Ms Haythorpe said.

"They need to listen to Professor Hattie, because proper workforce planning and higher entry standards for entry to courses are crucial for the future health of our schools.

"Despite a promise of tougher criteria at last month's Education Ministers' meeting, the fine print from the agreement shows that universities will still effectively be allowed to set their own entry standards for courses.

"Recent years have seen a consistent decline in entry standards. In 2015, less than 50% of Australian Year 12 students receiving offers for places in undergraduate teacher education courses had ATAR scores above 70, and the number with ATARs below 50 has doubled in the past three years.

"We have too many graduates being produced with many unable to find teaching jobs, yet we have shortages of qualified maths, science and language teachers.

"Former Education Minister Christopher Pyne failed to tackle this issue – and it was completely ignored in his TEMAG Review of teacher training. The TEMAG Review ignored evidence from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) which clearly showed high-achieving school systems focused on minimum entry standards to teaching courses.

"ACER's research stated that:

"Australia's teacher education policies are currently falling well short of high-achieving countries in terms of ensuring that future teachers are recruited from the top 30% of the age cohort".

"There is more to teaching than academic performance, but all the evidence shows that a clear link exists between academic achievement and performance in the classroom.

"Minister Birmingham needs to take action to lift entry standards, and in the long- term we need to make all teaching courses two year post-graduate degrees."

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