Teacher training review a missed opportunity to lift standards

The Abbott Government's review into teacher training has failed to go far enough in lifting standards in the teaching profession, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the priorities for the review should have been increasing entry standards for teaching courses, including minimum ATARs for undergraduate degrees, and turning teaching into a two-year post-graduate degree.

"This report and the Government's response is a missed opportunity. It does not go far enough in changing initial teacher education so we can get the best people into the teaching profession," Ms Haythorpe said.

"If we want the best teachers in the classroom, we need to get the best people and give them the best training possible to ensure they are properly equipped for the job."

"We support the recommendation of a national regulator to lift the standard of teaching courses at universities, but Minister Pyne has specifically ruled this out in his response.

There is no clear plan to ensure that teaching courses are producing teachers ready for the classroom."

"There is nothing which will address the lack of workforce planning which has delivered an oversupply of teaching graduates, at the same time as shortages in key subjects like maths and science."

"The report has no discussion of ATAR scores and no plans to lift the ATAR scores of teaching students, which have dropped significantly in recent years."

"An ATAR score is not the only thing that makes a good teacher, but we need to recognise that a teacher's academic ability is important, and that we need some minimum requirements.

"NSW has adopted a system that requires three "Band 5" HSC results one of which must be English, and this is a model other States could follow."

"When this review was announced we had concerns that its chair, Professor Greg Craven was too compromised by his role as vice-chancellor of the Australian Catholic University – which offers teaching courses with low ATARs – to tackle this issue.

"Sadly, these concerns have proven well-founded, with no real examination of the issue in the report.

"We support the recommendations for better support for early career teachers, but this must be accompanied by resources.

"The report correctly identifies that too many graduates are not ready for teaching but fails to consider that an increased course length – preferably a two-year post-graduate degree - is critical to address that.

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