Workforce Renewal Policy To Cut $257 Million From Education



Today's state budget papers confirm that the government's 'workforce renewal' policy will force the Education Department to cut more than $250 million from its budget over the next 4 years.

The policy dictates that for each 'frontline' staff member who retires or resigns, the salary budget will be cut by 10%, while the salary budget for other staff members in schools such as Education Assistants, cleaners and gardeners will be cut by 40%.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said this amounted to a $257 million cut to the money available to schools over 4 years.

Ms Byrne said about 1000 teachers left the education system every year.

"If the salary budget will only fund 90% of the cost of their wages, that means a loss of $10.5m or effectively a staff cut of 100 teachers per year," she said.

"The only alternative to staff losses is to cut funding for targeted initiatives such as indigenous education programs, VET in schools, disability programs, Remote school costs and the like. The Minister needs to tell WA parents and teachers where the money is coming from.

Ms Byrne accused the government of continuing its attack on public education.

"Schools are already struggling under the weight of the approximately $200 million in cuts the government made in 2013, and the additional $20 million in redundancies since November last year," she said.

"They simply cannot sustain more cuts to staffing, or programs, particularly of the size we are talking about with this policy."

Ms Byrne said the overall increase to the education budget would largely be spent on keeping up with the growth in student numbers and staff costs.

She said school maintenance had also not been made a big enough priority, with only $16 million extra in the budget for maintenance.

"Considering the current maintenance backlog is in the order of $115 million dollars, this money isn't going to go very far," she said.

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