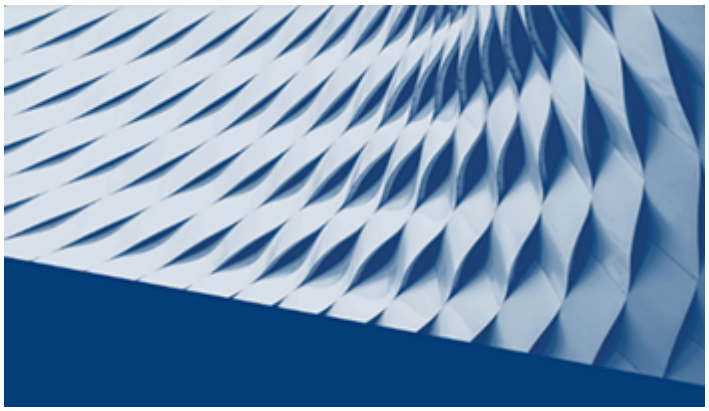
# AEU: Chaos and confusion must not continue for preschools, schools and TAFE



Monday, 23 March 2020

Last night's statement by Prime Minister Scott Morrison has caused major confusion for principals, teachers, education support staff and parents.

Australian Education Union (AEU) Federal President Correna Haythorpe called on all governments to have consistency with the decisions that are being made for schools, preschools and TAFE.

"The issues for COVID-19 are real and are urgent. With requirements being imposed on many sectors in Australia it is time for the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to enable schools to prepare for next term and the challenges ahead. We need a smooth transition process clearly outlined which protects staff and students" Ms Haythorpe said.

"We are very concerned about our members and their ongoing health and safety. These are unprecedented times and we must all work together constructively to resolve the situation. However this requires leadership from government," Ms Haythorpe said.

"We have an urgent meeting tomorrow with Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan and Chief Medical Officer Professor Brendan Murphy."

"Our members are entitled to a safe workplace," Ms Haythorpe said.

"In particular, employees who are more vulnerable because of their own health or their family circumstances should be working from home now. This must urgently be facilitated by all governments" Ms Haythorpe said.

"There is widespread concern about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on preschools, schools and TAFEs if they are to remain open. While schools are the focus of public attention at the moment, governments must not forget preschools and TAFEs."

"State and Territory governments must step up and show leadership on this issue. They must end the uncertainty for our members, parents and the community," Ms Haythorpe said.

"In the United Kingdom, schools have remained open for children of essential workers and students who are in vulnerable circumstances. If this model is being considered for Australia we need urgent information about how this will roll out."

"It is of vital importance that school staff and parents maintain confidence about the procedure taken to manage the ramifications of COVID-19 at a national level," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This is a huge concern for the teaching profession and the community. All governments must urgently provide clarity on this

issue and ensure that community and teacher concerns are addressed.”

“There simply is no other choice,” Ms Haythorpe said.

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