An update for you from AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe



27 March 2020

Dear members,

The AEU has won significant commitments that enhance our members' safety and working conditions across the country following intensive lobbying and negotiations with federal, state and territory governments.

The AEU has met with Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan, Prime Minister Scott Morrison, as well as education ministers around the country, to raise the critical issues that we know are impacting on our members during COVID-19.

We acknowledge that Prime Minister Scott Morrison's statement today on behalf of the National Cabinet, recognises several of the issues confronting the teaching profession due to the impact of COVID-19.

The statement declares:

- We are now in a transition phase until the end of term as schools prepare for a new mode of operation following the school holidays.

- Principals, teachers and support staff need time to engage in the professional preparation and planning that is required to ensure that every child has access to education during this difficult time in a sustainable and effective manner for the rest of the 2020 school year.
- Each state and territory will come to their own transition arrangements with their workforce for the rest of this term.
- Only children of workers for whom no suitable care arrangements are available at home to support their learning, physically attend school.
- The AHPPC will develop guidelines about how staff in schools can protect themselves, manage social distance requirements and cater for those students who are at school. This will include guidelines for staff who work with vulnerable children, particularly those who have additional needs.
- Education staff who identify as high risk, vulnerable or are caring for vulnerable family members, will be supported to work from home.

Minister Tehan has given a commitment to continue meeting with the AEU as we work to resolve the many issues for early childhood settings, schools and TAFE.

Outstanding matters include:

- Urgent attention for Early Childhood Education and TAFE and in particular the health and safety protections needed for education employees
- maintenance of income including leave entitlements and leave arrangements, guaranteed for all permanent, temporary and casual public education employees
- implications from the health advice from the AHCPP so that members in preschools, schools and TAFE understand how to keep themselves safe from COVID-19
- Discussions needed about preparing for an emergency mode of operation following the school vacation period in each state and territory.

We realise that these are very difficult times for everyone. Not only are we changing the way that we work, teach and learn but we are also deeply concerned about COVID-19 and its impact on our colleagues, family, friends and students.

Thank you for your commitment to public education during these difficult times

Together we are stronger.

Kind regards,

Correna Haythorpe and Susan Hopgood

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
ABN 54 478 094 635 © 2026