SSTUWA welcomes spending, renews calls for additional teaching staff



The State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia has welcomed the McGowan Government's $355 million investment in infrastructure at WA schools, but highlighted that the need for additional teaching staff still remains.

SSTUWA president Pat Byrne said new and refurbished facilities in schools would be welcome, but did not address the problems which would be caused by looming teacher shortages, particularly in maths, science and technologies.

"This investment in infrastructure can only do so much to improve the education of school students without additional teachers to fill those classrooms and provide more individualised attention to our children," she said.

"The McGowan Government has said this investment would create 1,600 WA jobs, which is great for the state, but it needs to be accompanied by creating ongoing teaching jobs.

"The 2020 Report on Government Services highlights WA public schools in 2018 as having the highest ratio of students to teachers in Australia. This means that class sizes in WA are larger than anywhere else in the country.

With large class sizes, the lack of specialist teachers across the system is even more acutely felt across the state. It means an inability to provide vital support to teachers and school communities. Even in those schools lucky enough to have a degree of specialist support, without sufficient additional teaching time allocated, the potential gains from such specialised help are not realised.

Over a number of years there has been a steady undermining of specialised support to schools; this has been directly through the removal of resourcing such as the Level 3 Classroom Teacher time component, and the removal of directly funded, specialist literacy and numeracy teachers. This has been compounded by the failure to ensure school budgets are sufficiently increased to keep up with basic costs.

"WA public school enrolments across the state continue to see significant growth. Over a decade, the WA public school sector has seen 59,253 more students enrolled in WA public schools, a growth of 23 per cent in student numbers.

Despite this growth in enrolments, the numbers of teachers, heads of department (HODs)/heads of learning areas

(HOLAs)/program coordinators (PCs) and deputy principals employed between 2011 and 2020 have fallen well behind. And by 2023, another 18 public schools are scheduled to open.

“We are once again calling on the major parties to commit to creating 500 new full-time positions over four years to cater for growing enrolments, address mental health needs of students and allow for additional resources to respond to any COVID outbreaks.”

The SSTUWA’s five key asks ahead of the election can be found here: KEY ASKS

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