Desperate measures not the answer to teacher shortages



The State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia has rejected the state government's desperate plans to fix the state's teacher shortage, saying they will not address the underlying issues in the public education system.

The union said the government's plan to send under qualified teachers into short-staffed schools was a short-sighted move which had the potential to cause more harm than good.

SSTUWA president-elect Matt Jarman said the union had been warning the government for years about the looming teacher shortage, but its concerns were ignored.

"Now we're in a desperate situation where the government is offering random cash payments to teachers instead of taking a strategic approach to address the issues that led to the shortage in the first place," said Mr Jarman.

"If the government was genuine about fixing the public education system, it would do something to address the workload issues teachers are facing which have forced many of them to leave.

"More also needs to be done to address violence and other abuse in schools which has made teaching a very difficult job.

"The government also needs to increase salaries across the board to retain current staff and make teaching a more attractive career option for those going into university."

Mr Jarman said a number of other factors had also contributed to the teacher shortage, including the failure to provide the minimum funding for schools recommended by the Gonski report, constant changes to curriculum and testing regimes and false expectations created by the Independent Public School model.

The union said rural and regional public education had been undermined during the implementation of the IPS model, and cash payments to lure teachers to the regions would not work in the long term.

"We need full and properly considered consultation about public education in WA with those who understand the system best – teachers," he said.

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