More than a recruitment campaign needed to fix teacher shortages



The Australian Education Union has welcomed the recruitment campaign launched by the Prime Minister in late October, but said a far greater investment in the teaching profession and public schools was needed to end chronic shortages and ensure teachers have the time and support to meet the needs of every child.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said: “Teaching is the greatest profession of all and positive recruitment campaigns are an important part of making teaching more attractive to the high achieving young people we urgently need to become teachers.”

“But nobody should think this is the answer to a recruitment and retention crisis that has been decades in the making,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“Nine out of 10 public school principals across the nation reported teacher shortages this year, almost double the number in 2020. The Albanese Government’s own figures show demand for secondary teachers will exceed the supply of new graduates by 4,100 between 2021 and 2025.

“The number one issue driving teachers from the profession is unsustainable workloads. Only 13 per cent of public school teachers say their workload is manageable, and one in five leave within three years of entering the profession.

“Research released by the AEU...show teachers work ‘extraordinarily long hours’ compared to other professions and get paid far less.”

Ms Haythorpe said Australia also had an ageing workforce and a steep decline in the number of people completing teaching degrees.

“On top of this, only 1.3 per cent of public schools are resourced at 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which is the minimum level governments agreed a decade ago was necessary to meet the needs of all students. By

contrast, 98 per cent of private schools are funded at or above the SRS," she said.

"The Prime Minister needs to do much more than launch advertisements. He needs to honour the government's commitment to end the underfunding of public schools.

"Investing in teachers and public schools is the only way to ensure we can recruit and retain the teachers we need. Full funding will give teachers more time and support to meet the diverse and complex needs of their students. It will also give them the confidence they can make a real difference without burning out.

"Public school principals and teachers are doing an amazing job, but they are being asked to do too much with too little. The Albanese Government must sign funding agreements with state and territory governments within the next 12 months that put an end to the underfunding of public schools by 2028."

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