Productivity Commission misses the mark

The Productivity Commission has recommended the wrong solution with its suggestion in a newly released report that off-the-shelf lesson plans should be developed for teachers to help them save time and teach outside their area of expertise, according to the Australian Education Union (AEU).

The AEU said the Commission had correctly identified unsustainable workloads and teacher shortages as major issues in school education.

But AEU Deputy President Meredith Peace said teachers wanted a significant cut in their administration workloads so they could spend more time on lesson planning and working with their colleagues to meet the individual needs of their students.

They also wanted real action to end the teacher shortages impacting on all schools and particularly so that teachers didn't have to teach outside their area
of expertise.

Research conducted as part of the national inquiry into school education found off-the-shelf lesson plans were the last thing teachers said would help them to lift results.
The top priorities of teachers were additional classroom support, more teachers and intensive tutoring support to help children at risk of falling behind.

"Governments need to listen to the profession and respect their experienced and informed views about what is needed to lift results," Ms Peace said.

"The needs of students have never been more complex and diverse and over one quarter in public schools have a disability. Teachers know that off-the-shelf lesson plans aren't what they need to meet the individual needs of students.

"They need better support inside and outside the classroom and a dramatic cut in the excessive administration and compliance workloads that are dragging their focus away from their students.

"Teachers want what students need and that is why we have been campaigning to end the underfunding of public schools.

"The new investment secured in agreements between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments must be invested in ways that make a real difference to every child and every teacher in public schools."

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