



Dear School Council President,

I write to you in relation to recent media that you may have seen, outlining proposed protected industrial action that AEU teacher, education support, assistant principal, and principal class members will be commencing in March 2026.

Pending the outcome of a Fair Work Commission authorised ballot for union members to endorse the action, which is currently underway, members will be able to participate in a range of actions, including bans and limitations on certain work and stopping work for various times, including for full days. To this end, the AEU Council has resolved that in the absence of any offer from the Allan government, a statewide 24-hour stopwork will be held on 24 March 2026.

AEU members are not considering this action lightly. They would much prefer to be doing their job, attending school, and providing a high-quality education and wellbeing support for their students. They understand keenly that stopping work presents difficulties for some parents and carers, and sincerely regret the inconvenience caused.

But as you may know, Victorian public schools are the lowest funded in Australia, with a [Productivity Commission report](#) published on 10 February 2026 showing that in 2023–2024 each Victorian student was funded \$2,325 less than the national average, and \$3,983 less than a student in New South Wales. Since that time, the funding gap and, consequently, the significant lack of resources for students, have grown.

This is despite [Premier Jacinta Allan promising](#), in January 2025, to fully fund Victorian public schools to 100% of the national Schooling Resource Standard, alongside increases by the federal government. As part of this broken promise, the Victorian government has decided to delay any additional funding until 2031, meaning our schools will miss out on more than \$2.4 billion in much-needed resourcing, which would enable every student to receive more individual support. AEU members consider this denial of resources to Victorian public schools to be unacceptable to them and their students. Like members of school councils and the broader parent community in public schools, AEU members are proud advocates for proper investment in public education and expect governments to deliver.

Full and fair school funding, which was originally [meant to be provided to schools by 2019](#), is critical to ensuring that every child and young person can equitably access a high-quality education in their local public school. It is also fundamental to fixing the chronic shortage of school staff. At the heart of high-quality learning is a fully qualified permanent teacher in every classroom, and well supported education support staff and school principals. But right now, this is not the case across our schools. As I write, there are currently just under 900 vacancies advertised across public schools, with 1,378 vacancies advertised each day on average throughout 2025.

It is not possible to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of children and young people unless we can attract and retain school staff. Central to the shortage issue is sub-standard pay and excessive workloads. There has been an exodus of staff from our schools with the most recent [Department of Education report](#) identifying significant ongoing shortages and that teacher attrition rates are almost double those prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This will only get worse unless Premier Allan and her government act. By October 2026, the undervaluing of Victorian school staff will only grow. An experienced teacher in NSW will be 13% – or \$15,359 – better off a year than a comparable Victorian teacher. A Victorian ES employee starting out in a classroom supporting students would be paid \$56,580 – 10.5% behind the same employee in NSW. Similarly, a Victorian school principal new to the role would start on \$156,335 – 18% behind their NSW colleague. At the same time, on average, school staff are working 12 hours per week unpaid overtime during each school term.

The Allan government has had AEU members' pay and conditions claims since July 2025; however, after eight months, negotiations have failed to make progress on key areas, including fair pay and measures to address excessive workloads. In fact, there has not been any offer from the state government at all.

It is in these circumstances that union members consider there to be no alternative but to take industrial action. Teachers, education support staff, assistant principals, and principals would very much appreciate your understanding and support in this campaign.

Supportive actions that your school council and school community can take include:

- [writing to your state Labor member of the Victorian Parliament](#) to tell them that you expect your school to be fully funded and that school staff receive decent pay and conditions to retain the existing workforce and attract the next generation to the profession
- adding an item to your school newsletter outlining the school council's support and explaining to the school community the issues that have led to school staff taking action – please [find a sample newsletter item here](#)
- [sending an email](#), as a school council, to Premier Jacinta Allan and Treasurer Jaclyn Symes, calling for full and fair funding, and encouraging parents and carers in your school community to do the same.

Please provide this correspondence to members of your school council as soon as possible. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,



Justin Mullaly
President

26/02/2026

cc: Minister for Education