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## **Teacher shortages: NSW Education Minister misses the mark**

NSW Education Minister Sarah Mitchell's announcement this morning of "higher paid roles for outstanding teachers" does nothing to address the fundamental teacher shortage that is impacting education, from the early childhood sector right through to Year 12, said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam.

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents 32,000 teachers and support staff in non-government schools, as well as degree-qualified teachers in the early childhood sector.

"We need a suite of solutions, ranging from attracting Year 12 graduates into initial teacher education, supporting them in their early careers; increasing teacher planning time, and better remuneration for all teachers and support staff, not just a select few," Northam said.

"This proposal is the debunked idea of performance pay. It will simply pit teachers against one another for a small pool of higher paid roles while doing nothing to address the inadequate teacher salaries that lie at the heart of the matter."

The NSW Government has engaged University of Melbourne education expert Professor John Hattie to provide advice on reforms. "Professor Hattie's scope should be expanded to examine teacher shortages and the obvious link between salary, workload and retention," Northam said.

Representatives of the IEU will attend Friday's Teacher Workforce Roundtable hosted by Federal Education Minister Jason Clare. The meeting will include teachers, principals and education experts.

"This is significant in that the Minister is listening to the profession," Northam said. "New directions must be forged to ensure staffing shortages come to an end."

Schools are complex places that thrive on certainty and routine. "Yet the teacher shortage means these elements are in total disarray at the moment and the IEU is looking for clear signals from both Macquarie Street and Canberra that solutions are on the way," Northam said.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch President Christine Wilkinson said: "Teachers are already 'outstanding performers'. This proposal just creates a narrow tier of higher paid teachers, but salaries need increasing across the board to retain all teachers in the profession and attract new ones. It doesn't entice young students, who see corporate salaries far outstripping those of teachers.

"How do you measure who is an 'outstanding teacher' and align this with pay?" Wilkinson asked. "Some teachers love teaching students with special needs; these students' skills will increase dramatically but not be reflected in traditional measures. We're calling for salary justice for the entire profession."

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*The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.*

**Authorised by Mark Northam, Secretary, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch**