

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 13 September 2007

Mt Isa teachers face workplace challenges

Hundreds of teachers from state and independent schools in the Mt Isa region will gather at the Buffs Club from 4pm today (13 September 2007) to find out about the threats to their working rights and conditions stemming from the federal government's changes to workplace laws and education policies.

Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) President Steve Ryan and Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) Assistant General Secretary Ros McLennan will address the forum of teachers on key issues including the destructive impact the federal government's push for performance based pay will have on schools in the region and the prospects for teachers under an alternative Labor government.

The impact of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs), which already being faced by education professionals in some independent schools, will also be discussed.

Mr Ryan said it was vital for all teachers to know the truth behind the current federal government's agenda.

"The Prime Minister and his Education Minister are trying to dupe the public into believing that their education agenda is about education – in fact, it is about industrial relations," Mr Ryan said.

"The federal government's obsession with forcing through workplace arrangements such as performance based pay and local hiring and firing – to the extent they are threatening to withhold funding from schools which don't comply - demonstrates the government's commitment to enforcing WorkChoices by stealth onto state government employees," he said.

Ms McLennan said the flawed nature of the federal government's performance based pay proposal put in question its commitment to investing in a world class education system.

"Instead the government seems intent on forcing teachers onto an ill-conceived and unfair system which has been proven to fail in other countries," Ms McLennan said.

"These industrial and professional attacks on teachers only serve to show the federal government's total disregard for the work of education professionals and the quality of education in our schools," she said.

The forum will be held from 4pm TODAY (13 September 2007) at the Buffs Club (Billabong Room) Cnr Grace Camooweal Streets, Mt Isa.

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