



# e-bulletin

The Australian Education Union • [www.aeuact.asn.au](http://www.aeuact.asn.au)

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## 2011 ACT BUDGET – A FARCICAL OUTCOME FOR TEACHING STAFF EA NEGOTIATIONS

The 2011-12 ACT Budget represents another lost opportunity for Public Education. Funding provision for salary increases in DET is woefully inadequate – especially for teachers. Treasury funding for salary increases is only 2.5%p.a. Using the anticipated national CPI costs of 3.0%, as Treasury does, means this salary level is in fact a wage cut. However for the ACT, some commentators put CPI as high as 4%p.a. So, at a time when costs of living are increasing and ACT teachers' wages have fallen behind our nearest competitive market (NSW), the Stanhope Government is asking teachers to accept a wage increase less than the most generous estimate of nationwide cost-of-living increases, and significantly less than some calculations of ACT cost-of-living increases.

### What has been the AEU response to the 2.5% funding provision for wage increases?

The AEU has rejected the Government offer of 2.5% p.a. and a 2-year agreement as not even worth putting to the members. It is so far short of what is required to restore competitive salaries to the ACT public education workforce that it is simply not worth serious consideration. This message has been conveyed to the Chief Minister's Department at the whole-of-government bargaining meetings, as well as to DET negotiators at the DET EA bargaining meetings.

However, even if AEU members were prepared to accept such an unsatisfactory offer, a salary increase of 2.5% is still dependent on the successful negotiation of an Enterprise Agreement that includes that percentage salary increase.

In other words, there is no salary increase available for anyone unless it is enshrined in an Enterprise Agreement; the ACT Budget and the EA negotiations are inextricably linked.

### What has been provided in the ACT Budget for teachers EA issues?

A total allocation of \$11.8m over 4 years has been provided to fund "career paths for teachers and school leaders". This allocation is the only source of funding for:

- any teacher salary increases that are greater than the 2.5%p.a. Treasury allocation;
- closing the 16% (\$15,000p.a.) gap in ACT Deputy Principal salaries compared to the rates paid in NSW public schools;
- payment of Accomplished and Leading teacher classifications (assuming agreement can be reached on the "methods of appointment and the timetables for implementation" as per Clause 128.2 of current EA)
- implementation of accelerated progression for classroom teachers;
- any other initiative proposed in the AEU's Claim or put forward by DET during negotiations.

This is a totally inadequate provision; it will not even fund the Government's priorities for teachers!



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## **What did the Minister prioritise for teachers prior to the Budget?**

Minister Barr advised the AEU that he had supported budget submissions to Cabinet around (a) funding the Accomplished & Leading teacher classifications, (b) “fixing” the Deputy Principal salary issue (to what extent was not disclosed), (c) providing reduced teaching loads for beginning teachers, and (d) implementing a formal program of mentor support for new educators.

It appears that Cabinet supported only one matter: Accomplished & Leading Teacher, to be funded at \$11.8m over 4 years under the Budget Initiative “Career Paths for Teachers and School Leaders”.

## **What is the projected cost of introducing Accomplished/Leading Teacher?**

The only calculation of cost to date is based on a 2.5% salary increase. Assuming about 30% of teachers at the top of the classroom teacher scale achieved Accomplished Teacher recognition, the cost for the first year alone is \$20.5m! This is before the Leading Teacher category is even introduced, so it is safe to say that the total provision for both new classifications of \$11.8m over 4 years is a complete farce. Compare this first-year cost of \$20.5m to the 2011-12 ACT Budget Allocation of just over \$1.4m for the first year and yet again, the ACT Government is exposed as completely hypocritical in its rhetoric about genuine reward and recognition for teaching excellence.

## **How much would parity for Deputy Principals’ salaries cost?**

Even if addressing the DP salary gap was the only matter to which the \$11.8m was directed, this amount would not provide funding sufficient to lift ACT DP rates to NSW levels. The cost of DP salary parity is reckoned at just under \$14m over a 3-year period; the cost in year one would be about \$3.6m. Again, ACT Budget allocations for “enhanced career paths for teachers and school leaders” are wholly inadequate: \$1.4m in total for year one, and \$11.8m in total for a 4-year period.

## **What does this Budget mean for ACT teachers?**

The AEU condemns the ACT Government for delivering a Budget that demonstrates yet again that the ACT Government is unwilling to provide practical recognition of public education teachers or the high standard of their work; ACT Teachers should do the same. The Budget confirms for teachers that the Government has no intention of addressing workload pressures or salary inequities, and that the consequent likely difficulty in recruitment and retention of a high-quality teaching workforce is not a matter of concern for Government.

## **What do AEU members need to do now?**

AEU members need to be prepared for a long and difficult campaign for a just enterprise agreement outcome. As part of this campaign it is critical that the Labor Government, the Liberal Opposition and ACT Greens understand the strength of teachers’ feeling on this matter.



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AEU members need to deluge the offices of all ACT politicians so that every Member is aware that the 2011 Budget will not lead to settlement of a new teachers' EA. Send your message today! Keep it polite and to the point, and if you are using DET IT facilities remember your obligations under the Acceptable Use of IT policy.

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