



File Ref: D22

Dr Jim Watterston
Director-General
Education & Training Directorate
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BY EMAIL: Jim.Watterston@act.gov.au

Dear Dr Watterston *Jim*

Re: Release to the AEU for Term 4 2011 of a Principal Project Officer to work on the Principal Salary Structure for the EA negotiations

I write in regard to your email of 30/09/2011 to Acting Branch Secretary Glenn Fowler declining to release a Principal to undertake work on the Principal Salary Structure for the next EA.

The refusal to release a Principal to undertake the project work appears to be a deliberate decision to obstruct potential progress of one part of the EA negotiations, and your comments in regard to the AEU's selection process for that project position are unwarranted and insulting.

The AEU makes no apology for continuing to hold the Directorate to account in regard to transparency of selection procedures and the requirement to adhere to agreed processes. The AEU's process was transparent and impartial, and the selection was made jointly by representatives of the AEU Executive and the ACT Principals Association following a call for *expressions of interest* in the project officer role. There is no role for the employer in the selection of this temporary union position.

On the more significant issue of release for a Principal to work as the project officer I was disappointed to learn of your refusal to support this work, particularly when it would benefit ETD as well as the AEU and ETD has to date put no resources at all into this important work. The reasoning that there is (or has been) disruption to schools and that declining to release any Principal is necessary to preclude disruption is not supported by the facts: there are currently a number of Principals out of their nominal positions – off-line in their own schools, acting in other capacities, on transfer of duty etc. There is not now, nor has there ever been, evidence to suggest that such situations create problematic instability or have an adverse effect on the system. Indeed, the availability of a range of opportunities is beneficial for the maintenance of broad capacity in the system. Your prediction of further disruption to schools in Term 4 suggests that ETD is not anticipating a timely or quick resolution to the EA dispute, a situation which would be regrettable.

I ask that you review the current decision and support the release of a Principal to undertake the project work on the Principal Salary and Structure. To date there has been no dedicated resource provided to this work by ETD, despite it being a significant outstanding matter in the negotiations. It is not acceptable to expect that Principals should be prepared to sign on to a new EA that has no detail of the broad framework and principles that would underpin any new structure agreed for development over the life of the Agreement.

The AEU remains committed to funding the project for Term 4 2011, and would like to commence work with project position as soon as possible.

The Principal selected through the EOI process is a long-serving and respected employee of ETD, a long-standing AEU member, and indeed authored a proposal about principal structure which has formed the basis of preliminary discussions among principals to date. The AEU believes that this individual is ideally placed to pursue this task for the benefit of both ETD and the AEU given that they have already considered many of the issues and expressed them in their draft proposal, and they are clearly committed to the long-term future of the Directorate.

If your issue is with the release of the particular Principal selected to undertake the task, then I suggest that you raise any concerns you may have about that individual's absence from their school with that person using the appropriate processes. The AEU will of course be available to support our member through any such process if they so wish.

In the interests of settling this issue and having the work commence, I request your response by COB Tuesday 25 October 2011.

Yours sincerely



Penny Gilmour
Branch Secretary

20 October 2011