



## **Australian Education Union - Federal Office**

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### **Global Action Week – Chance to Focus on Teacher Shortages**

The Australian Education Union today called for a greater international commitment to addressing teacher shortages as a way of improving educational opportunities for children.

AEU Federal President, Ms Pat Byrne said Global Action Week, which began on Monday, was an important opportunity to focus on the fact that there are millions of children around the world who are denied the opportunity to attend school.

“Global Action Week is organised annually by the Global Campaign for Education with the aim of persuading governments to commit to the provision of free, quality education for all children,” she said.

“Governments everywhere continually emphasise the crucial role of education in enabling children to reach their potential and take up meaningful and important roles in society, yet consistently fail to commit the necessary resources to ensure that this goal is realised.

“The prioritisation of education in international development must be matched by priority of funding.

“For example, one of the reasons children are denied education, is the lack of properly qualified teachers. At least 15 million teachers are needed between now and 2015, especially in developing countries.

“However, while the needs of children in developing countries are critical, it would be a mistake to assume that this issue has no relevance in western countries.

“Teacher shortages are predicted in most western economies in the next few years as many of the current teaching workforce prepare for retirement and are not being replaced in sufficient numbers.

“At a time when education is being recognised as crucial to individual and societal prosperity and well-being, we are also facing acute shortages in Australia. It is predicted that there will be a shortage of up to 30,000 teachers by the end of this decade unless proper measures are put in place.

“We have heard calls to allow people to teach in schools without teaching qualifications,” said Ms Byrne.

“This is a knee-jerk reaction which does nothing to address long-term needs. Governments must make a greater commitment to resourcing additional teacher education places as well as ensuring that new teachers remain in the profession.”

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