



Government must scrap principal pay freeze, say key stakeholders

MEDIA RELEASE - under embargo until 6am Thursday 1 August

The three key peak stakeholder organisations in NT public education have called on the NT Government to scrap a pay freeze being imposed on principals.

All 86 public school principals employed on executive contracts have been given until **Thursday 1 August** (TODAY) to agree to a three-year pay freeze, or face a four-year pay freeze on their next contract when their current contract ends.

The NT Principals Association, NT Council of Government School Organisations and the Australian Education Union have agreed to issue this joint statement in response to unprecedented levels of concern from principals, parents and school communities about the impact of this decision.

All three organisations are concerned about the ramifications if this pay freeze goes ahead for principal recruitment, retention and morale, and the knock on effect this will have on schools and students.

The NTPA, COGSO and AEU have called on the Government to exempt principals from the pay freeze being imposed on public service executives, on the grounds that principals are front line teaching staff who the Government said would be exempt from budget repair measures.

Our organisations believe that imposing the pay freeze will make it far more difficult to recruit and retain principals, as well as create inequities in salaries between principals and assistant principals.

Quotes attributable to NTPA President Britany Roestenburg

“The NTPA has been inundated with calls from our members over this issue. They feel distressed, demoralised and devalued.

“When the NT Budget Repair Plan was announced in April, the Treasurer pledged to protect frontline staff such as ‘teachers, nurses and police’ from cuts.

“School principals are both teachers and front line workers and are being erroneously targeted by this pay freeze. It is difficult to think of a more frontline position than being the public face of education in our communities.

“We believe that the pay freeze fails to recognize the importance of the work of school principals and undervalues our contribution to the wider NT community.

It’s already very difficult to recruit quality principals to work in Territory schools. The NTPA fears that this pay freeze will negatively impact our ability to retain existing principals, let alone recruit to vacancies.”

Quotes attributable to NT COGSO President Tabby Fudge

“Principals are the educational leaders in our children’s schools. They are as frontline as you can get, ensuring our children’s educational progress and wellbeing.

“Families call on the NT Government to honour their commitment to putting children front and centre of every decision and policy they make. We join the call for the Government to abandon the pay freeze for principals, and to honour existing employment contracts.”

Quotes attributable to AEU NT President Jarvis Ryan

“It’s bad enough that principals in our system don’t have job security like in other states and territories. Under this pay freeze proposal, we face the ludicrous situation where some principals could be paid less than their deputies.

“Modelling shows that by 2021, a typical primary school principal who is subject to the pay freeze could be worse off financially than their assistant principal. In the most extreme case, a principal may be earning at least \$10,000 less per annum than the assistant principal in their school while working seven weeks per year longer.”

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About the organisations

- The Northern Territory Principals’ Association (NTPA) is the voice of school leadership in the NT and represents the interests of school principals and assistant principals from all schools across the NT.
- Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations (NT COGSO) represents every NT government school with over 19,000 families, their 34,000 children and the school communities that support them.
- The Australian Education Union NT (AEU NT) is the professional and industrial voice of teachers, principals and support staff in NT public education, with 2000 members across the NT.