UNIONS ADVICE TO TEACHERS PROVES UNWISE AND PUTS STUDENT SAFETY AT RISK

02 December 2013

The Australian Fair Work Commission has today ruled that the Teachers Union must withdraw instructions they provided to teachers to ignore their duty of care to students, proving that the Union’s advice has been reckless and irresponsible.

The ruling comes after the Teachers Union sent information to all members instructing them to abandon the electronic roll call program Student Administration Management System (SAMS) as well as withhold manual rolls from management.

Minister for Public Employment John Elferink said this irresponsible action taken by the Teachers Union is asking teachers to commit a negligent act and fail in their duty to ensure the safety of their students.

“The Teachers Unions instructions to teachers meant that Principals were unable to guarantee the safety and whereabouts of their students, posing a great concern to both parents and the Government,” Mr Elferink said.

“Student safety should be the number one priority in schools, yet the Teachers Union has abandoned this important issue and instead chose to lead teachers astray.

“In the event of an emergency or accident, there was no way to accurately identify if a child is present either in the classroom or at school – posing a very real safety risk.

“Not only did the Union instruct teachers to withhold the roll (which is property of the Northern Territory Government), but also advised teachers not to allow administrative staff to enter into class rooms to collect the roll. This was another attempt to disrupt the jobs of their education colleagues.

“The Union’s tactics over the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) is dangerous and directly affects children's safety. It is disappointing to see them stoop this low.”

As a result of today’s decision by the Australian Fair Work Commission, the Teachers Union has been banned from taking industrial action until 03 March 2014.

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