



Your Ref:

Our Ref: PB: LAC 14-00303 (EX/100028)

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General Secretary: Tony Mullen

17 January 2014

Hon Robyn McSweeney MLC

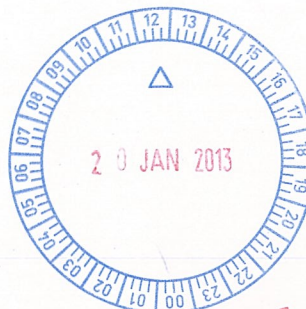
Chair

Standing Committee on Legislation Committee

Legislative Council

Parliament House

PERTH WA 6000



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22/1/14

Dear Ms McSweeney

RE: SSTUWA SUBMISSION ON WORKFORCE REFORM BILL 2013

The SSTUWA represents teachers and lecturers in the school and TAFE sectors in Western Australia. There are more than 27,500 employees covered by the two General Agreements between the relevant government departments and this union. These government employees provide a quality education and a duty of care to the students of Western Australia, both of which are vital public services for the state of Western Australia.

At the outset, the SSTUWA adopts the submission made by UnionsWA to the Standing Committee. In addition to the comments made in that submission, there are concerns specific to public school teachers and lecturers which we would like to raise.

There is a long history of co-operative industrial relations between this union and government departments, a relationship which has enabled Western Australia to boast a world class education system and which is based on a level of mutual respect between the state's education stakeholders. This is a relationship which, we believe, is threatened by the Workforce Reform Bill in its present form.

Our specific concerns go to the change to the definition of redundancy which now allows for EITHER a position OR a person to be declared surplus, whereas the previous requirement was for both these factors to be present before a redundancy could be offered; as well as those clauses which will amend sections of the Industrial Relations Act relating to the capacity for employees to appeal against a decision relating to redeployment and redundancy.

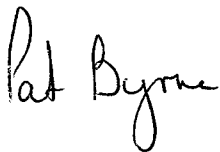
Until now, teachers who were surplus to requirements in a particular school had the ability to be transferred to another government school. As well as providing job security for the

individual teacher, this ensured the department was usually able to staff schools across the state. The recent dismantling of the teacher transfer system, coupled with the proposed changes to redundancy provisions will mean that teachers who are deemed surplus to requirements will have their employment terminated after 52 weeks, rather than be transferred to another place of work. This is further exacerbated by Department of Education policy which allows a large number of schools within the system (IPS) to refuse to accept redeployees. This will have a significant impact on teachers generally and especially in country locations, where the options for redeployment are limited to begin with. Indeed, for secondary subject teachers, the options are even more restricted. The consequence of this will be a reduction in the numbers of people willing to go to country locations, particularly once it is realised that teachers finding themselves in such a situation will have no recourse to the WAIRC to challenge a decision in relation to the termination of employment.

The Department has invested significantly, over many years, in initiatives to ensure attraction and retention of staff in hard to staff locations. The amendments proposed in this Bill will have a directly counterproductive effect to the gains which have been made so far.

Our members and the community are very concerned for the continuing strength of the public good provided by the state's education system and its employees. As such the SSTUWA requests the opportunity to speak to and give evidence about the content of the Workforce Reform Bill directly to the Standing Committee. I can be contacted at the SSTUWA on 9210 6000 or alternatively you can email my assistant Louise Craig on lcraig@sstuwa.org.au to arrange an appearance before the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Pat Byrne
President