

Walgett teachers walk over staff crisis

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Teachers at a school in Walgett in northern NSW have taken industrial action and walked off the job on Wednesday over drastic staff shortages.

With over half of all positions at the Walgett Community College High School sitting empty, Federation members took the drastic step to tell the NSW Government "enough is enough". There are presently 11 unfilled positions out of 21 at the school.

Members held a meeting before school on Wednesday and resolved to "down tools" at the commencement of classes over the dire situation at the school. The members returned to work after 20 minutes.

Federation Deputy President Henry Rajendra said Walgett Community College was just one case, with Federation continuing to receive reports of understaffing from schools in the northern region and across the state.

"This is another example of the NSW Government and its Education Department failing to fully staff schools, in this case, a school which is one of the most complex and disadvantaged in the state," he said.



"The Education Department has known of the dire teacher shortages at Walgett for some time but failed to address the problem. This is unfair."

Staffing issues in regional settings were at the core of the far-reaching findings of the Gallop Inquiry. Its chair, former WA premier Geoff Gallop, and Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos were visiting the region on Wednesday to discuss with teachers, principals and community members the ramifications of the Inquiry's verdicts.

Mr Rajendra warned, on the eve of the new school year in January, that 1250 permanent positions remain unfilled across the state.

"This is on top of any unfilled temporary and casual teacher vacancies, he said. "While alarming, it is hardly surprising.

"For many of our schools, the NSW Government and Department have failed them. The NSW Auditor-General warned the Government two years ago that there was a critical shortage and yet little is being done to address the shortfall."

Mr Rajendra said the Education Department's staffing unit had been gutted, leaving principals with the job of filling vacancies.