

It's time for more than thanks

September 16, 2021

Thousands of teachers and principals across the state joined a special broadcast to launch Federation's new salaries and conditions campaign, [More Than Thanks](#), this morning.

As state-wide teacher shortages continue to disrupt classrooms, Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos told members the campaign would address the crisis through a reset of salaries and conditions at Award negotiations with the Department that commence next term.

"We cannot fix the shortages problem until we fix the wages and workload problem," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"As we have seen so clearly demonstrated in the past 18 months, teachers in public schools are committed professionals determined to do whatever they can to ensure every child gets a high-quality education. But there aren't enough of them right now.

"Right now, we are in a crisis situation with worsening teacher shortages at a time when schools are preparing to reopen from lockdown and we need every child to be fully supported in the classroom.

"Teachers need more than thanks from the Berejiklian Government if we are to stop children missing out."

Senior Vice President Amber Flohm revealed, during the broadcast, the results of a new survey that underlines teachers' grave concerns for the profession and the effect of the shortages on our students.

A poll of 4190 members between 25 August and 4 September shows:

- 95 per cent of teachers and principals say shortages of teachers is a significant issue
- 93 per cent say their school has difficulty recruiting casual teachers
- 51 per cent say there are vacant permanent or temporary positions at their school
- 60 per cent say they have been required at some point to teach outside their area of subject expertise, while 22 per cent are currently teaching outside their area of expertise.

"One more finding from the poll," Ms Flohm told members, "58 per cent of members say they are reconsidering their position as a teacher due to the workload.

"That for me really underlines the seriousness of the situation we are in and the very real consequences of inaction. More than half of you are thinking about whether you can stay in the profession the way it is now.

And that's before the impact on your workload of a new curriculum the government wants to rush in over 4 years rather than the recommended decade along with more learning progressions, formative assessment and data collection planned by the government."



Deputy President Henry Rajendra said the survey exposed an "unsustainable situation", with the shortages having "a very real impact" on students.

He pointed to the NSW Government's own figures that recently itemised teacher shortages across the state.

Among the cases, Murrumbidgee Regional High School in Griffith had 475 instances of minimal supervision of classes this year, with classes merged more than 143 times. Concord High, just 12km from the Sydney CBD, had 169 occasions when classes were merged or under minimal supervision and has six permanent positions vacant.

"Unfortunately, this is what you get when governments don't take workforce planning seriously and impose wage caps and unsustainable workloads on teachers," Mr Rajendra said.

"We have been waiting 10 years for a 10-year plan from this Government about how they will fix the shortages and recruit the additional teachers we need.

"We can't wait any longer. The Gallop Report gives us a roadmap for change and we need to follow it."

In line with the recommendations of the Gallop Inquiry, released in February, teachers and principals are seeking a salary increase of between 5 to 7.5 per cent a year to recognise the increase in their skills and expertise and begin to reverse the decline in teachers' wages compared with other professions.

Federation's Award claim also prosecutes an increase in preparation time of two hours a week to allow teachers more time for lesson planning and collaboration with colleagues.

The Gallop Inquiry found the current preparation time entitlement had not changed since the 1950s for secondary teachers and the 1980s for primary teachers.

During the broadcast, Mr Gavrielatos also addressed the timing of the campaign.

"We all know, the pandemic has impacted us all, professionally and personally he said.

"But the fact is, we have no choice but to start this phase of the campaign today. No choice because our salaries and conditions award expires at the end of December.

"We also have no choice because the future of the profession is on the line right now.

"We cannot wait six months, or 12 months or two years to address the unsustainable workloads you face every day. How many of you will have said enough by then?

"We cannot wait months or years with uncompetitive salaries that do not reflect the value of your work.

"We cannot wait because the teacher shortages will only get worse as enrolments rise and the pressure on you will only increase.

"More than Thanks campaigns on the facts; you need a competitive salary that recognises the skills and expertise you demonstrate every day, the long hours you put in and your unwavering dedication to your students.

"More than Thanks means a reduction in your workload and an increase in release time to allow you to focus on your practise and preparation, certainly not filling out more forms and ticking boxes."

The campaign will include extensive statewide television, digital and print advertising, starting today. Members are urged to sign-on for the [More than Thanks campaign here](#).