

A day 10 years in the making

December 14, 2021

Tuesday 7 December, 2021 has been etched into the history of the NSW Teachers Federation.

For the first time in more than a decade, the union directed members to stop work for 24 hours, a consequence of the deep concern held by the profession and the growing anger towards an out of touch government that refuses to listen.

Rather than negotiate a new salaries and conditions Award with the profession, the government chose another option. They launched legal proceedings against us.

The only action they are willing to take to address your workload and salaries is legal action aimed at intimidating and silencing the profession.

The courage of your actions cannot be underestimated.

Throughout term 4, post lockdown, wherever I travelled across the state, the issues were the same: unsustainable workloads and uncompetitive salaries are leading to a large and growing shortage of teachers.

Every day, from Broken Hill to the Northern Beaches of Sydney kids are missing out.

We have spent the past 18 months offering the Government a way forward.

The Gallop Inquiry, launched in 2020, was the first independent examination of teachers' and principals' work to take place in more than 15 years. The inquiry's report, published in February 2021, found that teacher pay had fallen relative to that of similar professions. It also found that workload now is significantly higher than ever before.

When secret government briefings warned that the state was facing "a large and growing shortage of teachers" and NSW "will run out of teachers in five years" the Premier and Education Minister refuse to listen.

They refuse to listen when told that release time has not been increased for decades. They refuse to listen when presented with the evidence that fewer people are entering into initial teacher education degrees and they refuse to listen when told that the answer to a teacher supply crisis needs to be more comprehensive than glossy documents and fads borrowed from other jurisdictions.

If they refuse to listen to the profession then the question must be asked: "Do they deserve to be in office?"

We will not back down in the face of threats; we will continue work every day to ensure that the voices of



teachers and principals in every school and every classroom across the state are heard, because it's too important not to.

See you very soon.