Independent Education Union of Australia

Speaks on...

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Education deserved a higher standard of debate and mature policy discussion this election

The future of our nation's schools and early childhood education services should be at the centre of the election campaign. Unfortunately, the limited references to education in policy debates rarely rose above teacher bashing and empty culture war sloganeering.

Dedicated education professionals striving to deliver a high-quality education for their students condemned the divisive and ill-informed comments made by the leader of the opposition Peter Dutton earlier in the election campaign. Rather than learn from his mistake, Mr Dutton instead chose to double down on his attacks on teachers and school leaders.

IEU members and their school communities deserved much better this election.

The federal LNP opposition failed to engage with the core issues impacting the education system and teaching and learning in the classroom. The coalition instead resorted to glib media soundbites and Trump-like hyperbole to attack teacher autonomy and professional judgement.

Thankfully not all political candidates succumbed to such cheap politics.

The federal Labor government is to be commended for delivering 100% funding for all public schools while also ensuring long-term funding certainty for the non-government school sector.

Historic improvements to early childhood education will also provide higher wages, more accessible education and a renewed focus on the not-for-profit community sector. The federal opposition has either rejected or refused to confirm support for these vital ECEC reforms.

While teacher recruitment and retention remains a major challenge, the federal Labor government's cuts to HECS debts combined with the introduction of paid teacher practicums are important steps to building a sustainable teacher workforce for future generations.

IEU members have been major beneficiaries of three years of reforms to restore fairness to workplace laws and collective bargaining rights. The significance of new right to disconnect laws cannot be overstated in terms of the positive impact on quality education as teachers can better safeguard their professional and personal time and reduce the risk of career burnout.

Teachers, school leaders and education professionals should not be political punching bags.

All political candidates should be engaging with the profession to jointly develop a plan on how to attract, support and retain our next generation of teachers. Anything less is failing our students and failing our nation's future.

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IEU - represents 75,000 teachers, principals and support staff in faith based, community & independent schools, pre-schools, kindergartens and early childhood education centres and post-secondary centres across Australia.