

11/12/20

To: The Honourable **Sarah Mitchell** MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning
Prue Car MP, Shadow Minister for Education

Cc: **Mark Northam**, Secretary IEUA NSW/ACT
Angelo Gavrielatos, President NSW Teachers Federation

I am writing to you today as an educator who is concerned with the changes being implemented within education in New South Wales, namely that of the decision to cancel the registration of professional development providers, and to record my disappointment in this development.

The decision to cancel the registration of providers has undoubtedly come about after a handful of individual courses were spotlighted in Parliament earlier this year, and this heavy-handed decision, which is political in nature, will only serve to disempower teachers and deprofessionalise teaching.

Much has been said in the media by politicians and other commentators about the essential role that teachers play in society, and in 2020, this took on a far more crucial role as the world was thrown into uncertainty due to COVID-19. Teachers were quick to shift to remote learning and ensure that no child was left behind, once again showing how hard we work, and how professional we are. The Christmas break is approaching, and it is a well-deserved break, one that is needed even more so after this year. Thus, the poor timing of these changes after the year that was 2020 is most concerning.

Now, teachers across NSW will have to spend this break not only doing their regular schoolwork but will also have to rush through any professional learning that they may have planned to undertake at their own pace, in order to meet the deadline to have their hours count. This takes professional development away from a 'learning' experience to be done with an open and reflective mind, towards a 'tick a box' experience to be done to ensure they meet the requirements. This is offensive to teachers who are not seen as professionals but rather drones, and to the professional development providers who worked hard to prepare quality professional learning experiences.

Whilst highlighting mandatory areas of future professional development seems promising, this may lead to a reduction in professional learning experiences being offered, which stymies teacher learning, and reduces the level of professional trust that is held in teachers to be able to determine what they see as in the best interest of themselves and their students.

Overall, I urge you to reconsider this position, and in future, engage in discussions with teachers, professional associations, unions, and other stakeholders before making decisions that affect the professional lives of thousands of educators in NSW. After all, if we are considered essential workers, then we deserve to be treated as such.

Regards,



Marco Cimino.