

Committee for Public Education online public meeting

Vote No to AEU-Labor sellout! Build independent rank-and-file committees! Fund education not war!

Committee for Public Education

5 June 2026

The Committee for Public Education (CFPE), the educators' rank-and file network, urges all educators and workers to join its online public meeting next Sunday, June 14 at 11 a.m. to discuss how to develop and broaden the fight against the sellout deal between the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the Victorian state Labor government, and the underlying austerity and war agenda of the federal Labor government. [Click here to register.](#)

The AEU officials and Premier Jacinta Allan's government cooked up a four-year enterprise agreement in secret negotiations after a powerful and widely-supported 24-hour strike on March 24. The deal amounts to a further real pay cut, does nothing to address crushing workloads or class sizes, and strips teachers and education support staff of the right to strike until 2030. Fully aware of intense opposition, the AEU apparatus is attempting to push it through via a transparently anti-democratic process.

The CFPE public meeting will discuss why every educator should **vote NO** and the need to build rank-and-file committees, independent of the trade union apparatuses, to take a unified working-class struggle forward against this sellout and the real wage cuts and intolerable conditions facing not just teachers in Victoria, but workers everywhere.

The AEU and corporate media are trumpeting headline pay rise figures of 28.3 to 32.4 percent over four years. This is a fraud. The real compounded annual increase amounts to roughly 6.7 to 7 percent, while officially recorded inflation is projected to approach 6 percent by mid-year, rising further under the impact of

the criminal US-Israeli war on Iran on fuel and food prices. This deal would entrench the effective 10 percent real pay cut educators have already suffered since the last AEU sellout in 2022, and lock in further losses for nearly five more years, until May 2030.

On working conditions, the deal is equally regressive. There is no cap on class sizes or administrative burdens. Workload provisions are expressed in unenforceable language — promises to “consult” and “consider” that change nothing in classrooms already stretched beyond breaking point.

For Education Support (ES) workers, the attack is even more naked. The headline first-year figure includes a 7.4 percent one-off allowance rather than a permanent base increase, while ongoing increases remain below those of teachers. ES staff are already among the lowest-paid workers in schools. Many hold second jobs just to survive, while carrying out increasingly complex responsibilities to support students with disabilities, medical needs and behavioural challenges.

The AEU knows this deal is deeply unpopular. That is why it denying the right to a genuine vote. This is not a one-educator-one-vote ballot. Instead, a single delegate casts votes on behalf of every 20 AEU financial members after a sub-branch meeting. There are no rank-and-file scrutineers and no mechanism to verify results.

The same AEU apparatus has been deleting critical comments from its Facebook pages and blocking educators from moving opposition resolutions at stage-managed regional “briefings” and “information”

meetings.

This sellout cannot be understood in isolation. It is one aspect of a coordinated assault by federal and state Labor governments on the entire working class. The Albanese federal government's May budget contains \$63.8 billion in cuts to social spending over four years, including to public school programs.

Most devastating is Labor's gutting of the National Disability Insurance Scheme—the largest cut to a social program in Australian history, totalling \$35 billion. Tens of thousands of students with disabilities will be pushed onto already underfunded state school systems, and it will be teachers and ES workers who confront that burden with no additional resources.

While schools are stripped bare, the same Albanese government has committed an additional \$53 billion to AUKUS and other military spending, while continuing to defend the US-backed Israeli bombardment of Gaza and Lebanon. The message to educators could not be clearer: there is no money for your wages, your classrooms or your students' disabilities but billions are available for war.

Victorian educators are not alone in this battle. Many other sections of workers face the same battle, from ACT and Queensland teachers to pre-school educators, local council workers, and public health workers. Educators internationally are in similar struggles against a global offensive on public education spearheaded by the fascistic Trump administration in the United States.

In Australia, the same pattern of sellout, censorship and betrayal is being replicated by the AEU and other union bureaucracies in every state, while deliberately keeping separate all the strikes and protests of teachers and other workers.

The well-paid union bureaucrats are trying to prevent the emergence of a unified movement that could pose a real political challenge to the federal Labor government and the corporate elite whose interests it serves.

The problem is therefore not just this particular deal in Victoria. The question posed is: How do workers build genuine independent organisations, outside the union apparatuses, that can fight the offensive against working-class conditions and the preparations for war?

In the case of Victorian educators, a no vote alone is not enough. Defeating this deal requires building independent rank-and-file committees in every school,

democratically controlled by teachers and ES workers themselves, to take control of the struggle, out of the hands of the AEU-Labor apparatus.

Pseudo-left organisations like "Socialists in Schools" organised by Socialist Alternative are seeking to keep the opposition trapped within the union structure. They insist that the AEU bureaucracy can be pressured to change course and become more militant. This perspective has been tested and has failed—not once, but across decades of AEU sellouts.

Rank-and-file committees are needed to share information across schools, breaking through union censorship; insist on a genuine one-educator-one-vote ballot with full transparency; develop demands based on real needs, not what the governments and AEU decide is affordable; and build solidarity with council workers, health workers, early childhood educators and all sections of the working class under attack. These committees would connect with rank-and-file workers' committees nationally and internationally through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

The fight for decent wages and conditions in public schools is inseparable from the broader political struggle against the dictates of the capitalist profit system. Fund education, not war!

We urge educators and other workers, in Victoria and throughout Australia and globally, to join Sunday's online public meeting and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Click here to register.



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