

22 August 2025

Mr Brad Battin
Leader of the Opposition
Member for Berwick

By Email Only: brad.battin@parliament.vic.gov.au

RE: Letter to the Treasurer on the Urgent Need for Education Reform

Dear Mr Battin,

I write to you on a matter of utmost importance ahead of the bargaining period for the upcoming Victorian Government Schools Agreement.

Please find below for you to review, the letter that the Teachers Professional Association of Australia (TPAA) has sent to the Victorian Government to remove the current wage cap policy in order to encourage widespread reform of our failing education system.

I'd appreciate your response to this, **outlining the Opposition's view on education reform, the wage cap policy, and competitive unionism. We seek the Opposition's support for legislative change which enables equality before the law for industrial associations like ours to compete with unions that support the Labor Party.**

As you and I spoke about at an event earlier this year, the current system of unionism is letting workers down - with teachers some of the worst off because of the union monopoly held by ALP-supporting organisations such as the Australian Education Union (AEU).

Teachers, parents & students **shouldn't be forced to suffer because there is enormous waste** due to departments and unions. Victorian Taxpayers shouldn't have to suffer.

Respectfully, we request the response come from your office, not any Shadow Minister. I look forward to your response and would welcome the opportunity to speak again shortly.

Sincerely,



Edward Schuller
Secretary, Teachers Professional Association of Australia

14 August 2025

Ms Jaclyn Symes
Minister for Industrial Relations
Treasurer of Victoria

By Email Only: jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au

RE: Urgent Action Required to Address Education Crisis — Remove the Wage Cap

Dear Ms Symes,

The Teachers Professional Association of Australia (**TPAA**) urges the Victorian Government to remove the current wage cap policy in order for the issues within our education system, including the teacher shortage crisis, to be addressed in any meaningful way.

Across the state, classrooms are being left without qualified teachers, VCE subjects are being cut, and student outcomes are in decline. The Government's own figures predict a shortfall of 3,600 secondary teachers by 2029, with more than 1,000 vacancies already today. In some cases, student teachers — still completing their studies — are running senior classes. Attrition has reached nearly 9% annually.

Under the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2022, teachers received around 2% per year plus a one-off 1% payment, while inflation was 7.8% in 2022, 4.1% in 2023, and over 2% in 2024 and 2025. This has stripped thousands from real earnings.

The reality is, your current policy of capping wage growth below inflation has enforced real wage regression for Victorian teachers, driving many from the profession. Teachers are fed up, and the state's bottom line is still grim.

We know the state's budgetary pressures. The State Government has to make savings on a large scale, and that's why we write to you about systemic reform.

The way we see it, there are two options: keep this current wasteful and ineffective education system where everyone loses, or we boldly reform the system.

Teachers, parents & students **shouldn't be forced to suffer because there is enormous waste** within the Department of Education. Victorian Taxpayers shouldn't have to suffer.

Our Go Local reform offers a practical solution: decentralising school governance, cutting bureaucratic waste, and redirecting savings to the frontline. This model will enable schools to offer competitive wages, retain quality teachers and improve student results without increasing the overall education budget. It will enable principals the autonomy required to proactively deal with the spiraling student behaviour crisis.

If the last few decades have taught our state anything, it's that problems don't get solved by blindly throwing more money at them. You'll be glad to know that the issue within education is not headline funding – it's the awful scale of which it's being wasted!

Our Go Local plan is the only way for you to pay teachers properly, and keep the state's budget from blowing out.

Under the current system, there are 4.47 administrators for every 10 teachers. By changing to the **Go Local system with just 1 administrator per 10 teachers**, Victoria would have a reduction of 30,281 administrative positions, potentially **saving \$3,059,610,396**.

This could result in an average pay increase of **\$35,101 per teacher per year**.

The Victorian education system does not need more bureaucrats; it needs more teachers. The ratio of 10:1 falls in line with many advance European nations, whose education standards far exceed that of ours in Australia and Victoria more specifically.

We call on the Government to:

1. Abolish the wage cap immediately;
2. Adopt TPAA's Go Local reform to restore competitive pay and reverse the decline in staffing and student outcomes.

We request a meeting at your earliest convenience to present the Go Local reform in full and discuss practical measures that work for both teachers and the State Budget.

Sincerely,



Edward Schuller
Secretary, Teachers Professional Association of Australia