

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

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Education workers unite to condemn IR changes

More than 8,500 education sector workers yesterday rallied together for the first time across Queensland to protest against the federal government's attack on the working rights of all Australians.

Members from the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) and the Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) held afternoon meetings at over 35 locations as part of yesterday's national day of community protest against the federal government's changes to Australian workplace laws.

At standing-room only meetings, members from both unions overwhelmingly passed resolutions to resist the proposed changes, including urging the Queensland Government to take up a High Court challenge against the new legislation.

QTU president Steve Ryan said the massive turnout showed that education workers were ready to unite in order to resist anti-worker legislation in schools, colleges, early childhood centres and other education facilities.

"At our meetings, members clearly condemned the federal government's actions," Mr Ryan said.

"This is just the beginning of a long fight against laws which will attack the very people whose working lives are dedicated to future generations – a fight that will be taken to the ballot boxes at the next federal election.

"Although the Queensland Government has rejected the proposed IR legislation, government school teachers should think again if they believe they are safe from these attacks.

"Already the federal government has shown it is prepared to act like the worst schoolyard bully in linking education funding to its IR laws - education workers have now united to show we will resist this kind of bullying towards our education system and its workers," Mr Ryan said.

QIEU General Secretary Terry Burke said that high attendance at yesterday's meetings showed the strong opposition within both sectors to legislation which attacks the fundamental values of Australian society as well as the collegial nature of workplaces.

"Through these meetings members have shown that they are opposed to legislation that will pit worker against worker and legislation that reduces financial and job security for the majority of workers," Mr Burke said.

"Not only do education workers from both sectors see that the quality of education in this country will be put at risk by these laws, but that their students will be the first generation to really suffer the effects of this radical legislation."

"Education workers will not sit back and watch this happen - yesterday's meetings are just the first step in protecting the rights and conditions of current workers and of those to come."

Education workers from the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) and Queensland Public Sector Union (QPSU) also attended the joint protest meetings held from Thursday Island in the north to the Gold Coast in the south, and as far west as Mt Isa.

For more information including regional attendance figures, please contact:

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