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Education union welcomes new flexible policy for teacher professional development

The IEU applauds today's announcement by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) giving teachers much broader scope in meeting their professional development (PD) requirements. The changes provide much greater flexibility than the narrowly mandated priority areas put in place by the previous Liberal-National government in NSW.

Under the new policy, teachers will be able to include a wider range of professional learning opportunities and other compliance training as part of their maintenance-of-accreditation PD requirements. Teachers will still need to complete 100 hours of professional development over a five-year cycle.

The Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch represents more than 32,000 teachers and support, professional and operational staff in non-government schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.

"This new policy will reduce some of the heavy workload pressures on our members," said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

"Teachers are the professionals and they are best placed to know what professional development suits them in terms of their career stage and teaching context.

"The IEU has been calling for these changes for several years, and we appreciate NSW Education Minister Prue Car's vote of confidence in the teaching profession."

The outgoing professional development system was unnecessarily prescriptive and the process for accrediting PD sessions was excessively complex, resulting in fewer NESA-accredited courses being available to teachers, further contributing to teacher shortages.

"Where courses were available from private providers, they were often prohibitively expensive, especially for accredited teachers in early childhood centres who are still campaigning for pay rates comparable to their school-based colleagues," Matthews said.

"This new process puts teachers back at the centre of the profession and the government is to be congratulated for listening to the voice of the profession."

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The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.

Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary