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## **Union condemns “claim farmers” for sexual abuse scam against innocent teachers**

The union representing teachers and support staff in non-government schools welcomes the crackdown on fraudulent compensation claims for historical sexual abuse.

Several people have been charged over an alleged scheme to make fraudulent compensation claims against the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for historical child sexual abuse.

The individuals arrested by detectives from Strike Force Veritas allegedly targeted adults who were former young offenders, inmates and school students. They were then encouraged to file fraudulent compensation claims for historical abuse while in care.

Prospective claimants were coached on how to make fraudulent claims through law firms, with “claim farmers” allegedly receiving a benefit for each referral.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said “claim farming” was a substantial problem in non-government schools. “There has been an unprecedented increase in claims of historical sexual abuse in the past few years,” Matthews said.

“A false claim of sexual abuse can have a catastrophic impact on an innocent teacher, their family, their colleagues and the school community.

“Fake sexual abuse claims devastate innocent teachers,” she said. “No one should have their lives ruined by criminals seeking to make money with lies.”

Matthews said claim farming was a predatory practice that sought to profit from the suffering of others. “Encouraging vulnerable people to make false claims about historical sexual abuse is abhorrent and exploits genuine survivors of child sexual abuse,” she said.

“Survivors deserve redress for crimes committed against them.

“But submitting fraudulent applications exploits those survivors and undermines the integrity of schemes set up to compensate them.”

“False compensation claims also divert resources away from supporting survivors of historical child sexual abuse.”

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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**