

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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AEU ordered to lift bans on student teacher supervision

The University of Tasmania has obtained orders from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission directing the Australian Education Union (AEU) to lift its ban and to stop organising bans on the supervision of UTAS student teachers undertaking school experience placements in government schools.

UTAS Dean of Education, Professor Rigmor George, said she was delighted with the decision, with the order to remain in force for three months.

“This ban was to formally take effect from tomorrow, and would have had a terrible impact on our student teachers. Because of the AEU announcement of the ban we have had many student teachers who we have in recent weeks been unable to place. Now we will be able to place them, and they will be very relieved to hear that the ban has been lifted,” Prof George said.

“The quality of our teachers is a key issue for the future prosperity of Tasmania and these school experience placements are an essential component of that learning experience. Successful completion of these teaching assignments is an essential requirement of the UTAS teaching degree program,” she said.

The orders against the AEU were issued by AIRC Vice President Watson after a hearing yesterday, in which he found that the AEU ban constituted unauthorised industrial action in contravention of federal industrial legislation. In doing so, he rejected the AEU assertion that the supervision of student teachers was something that fell outside the employment responsibilities of teachers.

The AEU has now sent an email to all principals of government schools and to union representatives in all workplaces advising of the AIRC order to lift the ban.

The ban had been imposed by the AEU after the breakdown of negotiations on a claim by the AEU and the Independent Education Union for increased supervision payments from UTAS.

“We will look to hold further discussions with the unions in relation to those claims to see what can be done,” Prof George said.

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