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## **NSW Curriculum Review: Why the rush?**

The IEU believes the timeline the NSW Government has declared for implementing the NSW Curriculum Review, led by Professor Geoff Masters, is not achievable. The union is also concerned that the Berejiklian government's "back to basics" response to this complex and extensive report is too simplistic.

In the review's executive summary, Professor Masters says: "The development and introduction of these new syllabuses could take up to a decade." This is completely at odds with the government's timeline of 2024 – just three years.

The IEU was involved in the review consultation. We must now be involved in its implementation. "The most important stakeholders in the implementation stage are teachers," IEUA NSW/ACT Assistant Secretary Pam Smith says. "They must be fully engaged in the process. Teachers want the Masters Review to succeed. Their voice must be heard through the unions that represent them."

The history of education reform is littered with reports that stumble and fall at implementation, as renowned education expert, the late Dr Paul Brock said. Politicians have put this review in the fast lane. The profession wants to put it in place properly not quickly.

"What the government has asked NESA, schools and teachers to do with this review – the first in 30 years – is unrealistic," Smith says. "It is a decision with significant workload, staffing and organisational implications for schools."

The sweeping Masters Review overhauls both primary and secondary curriculums and there is plenty for teachers to support. "Our members will value the decluttering process and less emphasis on checklists," Smith says. "This will enable teachers' professional judgement to come to the fore – they can chart a course through the syllabus based on their students' needs." This is not the same as a simplistic "back to basics" approach.

The government says the reason for its "ambitious" timeline, is to enable students to realise the benefits as soon as possible. "But syllabus development needs to be done in a planned, structured and informed fashion, with extensive input from teachers," Smith says. "Teachers need to be supported to develop new syllabuses and implement changes."

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*The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 31,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.*

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