

## Teachers ‘must ID radical students’



The community iftar dinner at Punchbowl High last night. The dinner had been scrapped by former principal Chris Griffiths but was reinstated by his successor Robert Patruno.

[Stefanie Balogh](#), The Australian, 12:00AM June 9, 2017

A former teacher who blew the whistle on the radicalised behaviour of primary school students, including threats to behead her, is calling on the NSW government to hold a sweeping inquiry into the “broken” education system.

The former teacher at Punchbowl Public School in Sydney’s western suburbs, who is known as Ms A, feared for her life in 2014 after primary students as young as 10 flew what appeared to be the Islamic State flag and made throat-slitting gestures to her.

Students demanded that she remove the cross around her neck, and left notes threatening her family.

The mother of two met with NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes yesterday to raise her concerns after they were ignored three years ago. “The radicalisation is just one symptom of a system that appears to be broken,” Ms A said. “We have to be more proactive instead of expecting our police to be reactive, and teachers really need to come forward instead of waiting until something happens.”

Ms A said she also showed Mr Stokes lessons she read to primary students at Sydney’s Bellfield Islamic College, where she also worked, which included the words “peace, stability and justice can only be achieved through the establishment of Islam and the rule of divinely appointed imams and nothing else”. Ms A said she told Mr Stokes a wide-ranging inquiry was needed into the state’s education system that examined the content distributed in

classrooms, what was being taught, behaviour management, reporting procedures, and safety in classrooms. “The reason I feel we need an inquiry is because we can’t fix any of the problems until we actually know how bad it is,” she said.

“How widespread is it? People don’t realise how abusive primary school children are today.” Ms A said there needed to be “zero tolerance on behaviour”, adding, “the further we’ve moved away from traditional behaviour strategies, the worse it seems to have got”.

Punchbowl primary school is the feeder school to Punchbowl Boys High, which has been at the epicentre of a political storm of fears students are at risk of being radicalised at school.

Former principal Chris Griffiths and his deputy Joumana Dennaoui were ousted from the high school amid accusations that they refused to implement the state government’s deradicalisation program. They are fighting an unfair dismissal case. The school hosted a large community Iftar dinner last night. The traditional event, which was scrapped under Mr Griffiths, was attended by NSW education department boss Mark Scott, his recently promoted deputy Murat Dizdar and local Lakemba MP Jihad Dib, a celebrated former principal of the school. And in a sign that relations with local police have improved under new principal Robert Patruno, several NSW police members were there.

A spokesman for the minister confirmed that he had met with Ms A yesterday and listened to her concerns. “Mr Stokes wants to ensure that all teachers feel safe and valued doing their important jobs in NSW classrooms,” the spokesman said. He said that, at the minister’s invitation, Ms A had “passed on to the NSW Department of Education documents concerning matters in 2014 to be re-examined by the department”.