



## **IEU welcomes Education Minister's first priority: addressing teacher shortages**

**The reasons behind the current teacher and school staff shortages are many and complex – but Education Minister Jason Clare's planned [Teacher Workforce Roundtable](#) is a good start towards the changes needed to tackle the current staffing crisis.**

Teachers, school support staff, early childhood employees and our education unions have been warning of this looming problem for decades. The pandemic has just accelerated a slow burn crisis to the point we now see playing out across our schools and early childhood education (ECE).

The warning signs have been ignored by successive governments and employers alike.

While the IEU welcomes the federal government's plan to begin tackling the issue, the government does not employ school or ECE staff. The employers in our sector must also take immediate action.

The IEU looks forward to participating in the roundtable to highlight the solutions our members have been raising for years – solutions that require wide ranging and significant reform.

- The current crisis is clearly linked to retention and recruitment. **Improved pay rates, working conditions and enhanced career paths** must head the list for immediate employer investment.
- Any teacher will tell you that **unsustainable workloads are the key reason behind teacher burnout and why so many are leaving the profession**. Employer demands and government policy contribute to a problem driving teachers away from the job they love.
- **Ensure teacher practitioners have a voice** on professional bodies and government authorities. For too long, teachers have been excluded from critical debates and decisions dominated by actors external to the reality of schools, often to the detriment of our schools and students.
- **Early career teachers need more support** to stay in the profession with improved release time, professional development and mentor programs. Offering graduate teachers permanent jobs instead of insecure short-term contracts must become the new standard in all schools.
- Let teachers get back to the classroom. **Respect our professional autonomy and judgement**. Paperwork, more red tape and an obsession with data is sucking the life out of our profession.
- **Avoid quick fix responses like sending unqualified teachers into classrooms** without adequate preparation. Teaching is a highly complex and evolving profession, rushing student teachers into classrooms before they are ready will only exacerbate early career burnout.
- Our community must strive to **fully value and respect the teaching profession**. Teacher bashing remains an ugly undercurrent of many 'quality of education' debates.

Staffing shortages have again shone a light on these longstanding issues – the voice of teachers can now guide the way forward to repair a broken system.