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Federal budget begins long-term repair of a broken education system High quality education and restoring a strong teacher and support staff workforce must remain our national priority

Today's federal budget rightly restores education at the centre of our nation's policy focus.

The previous coalition government's neglect of schools and disregard of education workers will take time to repair - but the Labor government has taken important steps to [restore early childhood education and schools as a national priority](#).

Our 75,000 union members often hear about the importance of their work in schools. It's universally accepted there are major problems in education including widespread staff shortages. Yet those with the power to act – employers and governments – fail to follow their platitudes with tangible change.

IEU members will therefore welcome the commitments of a federal government prepared to not just listen to the problems, but one that will also act on their concerns.

- We desperately need more teachers. **5000 new government teacher scholarships** is a good start in conjunction with additional budget funding to support the [Teacher Workforce Action Plan](#). Further government and employer action will be needed to tackle teacher burnout as part of a long-term plan to stem the exodus of experienced teachers leaving the profession.
- [\\$72 million to support the skills and training of early childhood education professionals](#) recognises the critical importance of this sector. Limited professional development and mentor support is a common complaint of IEU members working in small and often remote ECE centres. The government's additional focus on regional and First Nations ECE services is also long-overdue.
- Targeted funding to **close the gap in First Nations student attendance rates and educational outcomes** in Central Australia, combined with more support for distance learning and boarding options for Australia's remote Indigenous students has the potential to make a real difference.
- **1300 schools will access \$32 million to upgrade school infrastructure and equipment.** Thousands of students across state and non-government schools will benefit from new air conditioning, safer outdoor learning areas, new technology and ventilation for cleaner air.

The government is to be commended for these early efforts; work must now continue on the next phase of priority reforms including review of the National School Reform Agreement later this year.

Greater certainty and transparency in funding, reducing teacher workloads and targeted support for students suffering disadvantage are essential to securing an equitable and high-quality education system for our future.

Many challenges remain, but our students and school staff deserve our nation's complete support.