



# National School Reform Agreement

**Our opportunity to build greater funding transparency and targeted support for staff and students**

## Priority Reform 1: Reducing teacher workload & burnout

The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP) requires that all NSRA outcomes are subject to a Teacher Workload Impact Assessment (Action 20). This is a critical requirement, NSRA initiatives must help reduce teacher workload and not exacerbate the problem.

The NSRA review's Terms of Reference rightly includes consideration of how the next agreement can support schools to attract and retain teachers.

In considering the NSRA review in conjunction with the NTWAP, more practical and enforceable outcomes are needed to provide a systematic response to teacher workload.

### **1.1 Nationally Endorsed Curriculum or Assessment Resources**

The IEU supports the development of nationally endorsed curriculum or assessment resources under the National Policy Initiatives (NPI), provided that they continue to operate on an 'opt-in' basis.

School employers must be encouraged to endorse such resources, or alternatively, supply their own resources while avoiding unnecessary duplication or overlay of tasks.

### **1.2 Employers should not exceed standardised & streamlined compliance requirements**

High-value compliance tasks for teachers are often duplicative or excessive. Since workload is usually process-driven, they could be addressed quickly and at low cost.

The Department of Education should, in consultation with education unions, initiate a review of school compliance regulations to identify and eliminate duplication and/or excessive work tasks.

Funding to school employers should be dependent on adherence to such new streamlined compliance requirements, with schools required to demonstrate that they had not overlaid additional or excessive requirements (e.g. NCCD reporting, Teacher Performance and Development Framework etc).

### **1.3 Employer resourcing of additional support staff**

The NTWAP considers increasing school support staff responsibilities (Action 21) to ease the workload burden on teachers. However, for such a plan to succeed at the school level, additional employer resourcing is needed to increase support staff hours to take on such duties. The majority of support staff are employed part-time and would welcome the option of additional paid hours if they were made available.

Further, the IEU notes that many collective agreements in our sector already contain provisions that enable additional support staff duties to assist teachers; however, in practice they fail to provide any material benefit unless the employer allocates additional resources to fund increased support staff hours.

#### **1.4 Guaranteed support of early career teachers**

The IEU notes the appropriate focus on early career teachers in the NTWAP and the development of national guidelines to support early career teachers (Action 14).

Funding to school employers should be contingent on the demonstrated delivery of best-practice early career teacher support strategies including mandatory induction programs, reduced teaching loads in the initial years of teaching and resourced mentoring programs that provide paid release time for the teacher and their mentor.

## **Priority Reform 2: Student support & educational disadvantage**

The IEU strongly supports the intention for the new agreement to target educational disadvantage in remote and regional Australia and within our First Nations communities. The agreement must explore all options to better support students who have been left behind, or been left out of, our schooling system.

#### **2.1 A fully funded public education system**

The IEU strongly supports the AEU's call for the full funding of the public sector by the provision of 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard for every public school in the country.

#### **2.2 Transparent delivery of funding to areas of need**

Funding transparency and accountability for students with a disability or identified learning needs must be improved. School staff and families must have full confidence that targeted funding actually makes it to the student or specific area of need.

#### **2.3 Commitment to student wellbeing must be prioritised**

Student wellbeing is of paramount importance. The review appears to assume the presence of dedicated wellbeing staff in schools; however, this is often not the case. In reality, such specialist responsibilities are often added to already overloaded classroom teachers or leadership positions who are not necessarily equipped or able to provide such support. Targeted funding to improve access to allied health and wellbeing support is needed, otherwise the responsibility will continue to fall on teachers.

#### **2.4 Data as a tool to identify and address education disadvantage**

The IEU supports the use of data to better inform educational decision making and target resources to boost student outcomes. However, as previously noted, care needs to be taken that the collection of data does not place an extra burden on teachers or school leaders. The application of the Teacher Workload Impact Assessment will be an important aspect of these potential agreement outcomes.