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NSRA report rightly targets inequality & student disadvantage Teacher workload & staff retention must be part of the solution

The IEU commends the strong emphasis on tackling education inequality and improving learning opportunities for all students as recommended in the [National School Reform Agreement \(NSRA\) Expert Panel's](#) report to the Federal Government.

Unfortunately, a failure to deploy a complementary strategy to address excessive teacher workloads may doom many of the proposed reforms to fail.

The Panel's report was developed after extensive consultation across the education sector including practising teachers and their unions including the IEU. The report will inform funding negotiations as a new NSRA is developed between the federal, state and territory governments this year.

While the report acknowledges teacher workload and work intensification in schools, it fails to recommend any specific or enforceable workload interventions at a school or system level.

Unsustainable workloads and work intensification are universally accepted as the most pressing workplace issue facing education employees across the country. It's the key reason that teachers are leaving the profession in record numbers.

While school reforms and federal policies will not in themselves solve the workload crisis in schools, policies like the NSRA can play a crucial role as part of a broader response to excessive workloads.

Our union [advocated for practical workload solutions](#) to the Expert Panel and Ministerial Reference Group that would require school employers to make meaningful changes to school practices and reduce excessive work demands being imposed on school staff.

[You can read full details of the proposals here](#) as we continue to pursue these issues with the Federal Education Minister.

Over the past two years, the IEU has worked collaboratively with federal and state education and regulatory authorities to clarify the boundaries of compliance tasks being imposed on staff. We continue to highlight the many cases where school level compliance practices exceed requirements leading to unnecessary task overlays and duplication. This work continues in 2024.

As detailed to the [Education Minister](#), many of the worthy objectives in a new NSRA will remain unfulfilled due to staffing shortages and the reality that schools are unable to fully commit to new student programs or initiatives due to already overburdened teachers and school leaders.

All schools and all teachers want their students to succeed so that no one is left behind. To achieve this we need to ensure that school staff have the time, resources and support to make it a reality.