



7 May 2024

The federal budget must resource next phase of education reforms

Next Tuesday's federal budget can help restore education at the centre of our nation's policy focus.

Widespread staff shortages persist due to teacher burnout and record low teacher recruitment. Areas of generational educational disadvantage and high-needs students demand urgent action.

The federal government has initiated long-overdue repairs to schools and the early childhood education sector over the last 18 months. Now is the time to bed down these changes backed with the resources needed to deliver a world class education system.

The government's early budget announcement of [financial support for student teachers](#) undertaking their practicum placement is a crucial step towards improving teacher graduation rates and building a more secure pathway for new teachers preparing to enter the profession.

The IEU has [long called for such paid placements](#) for student teachers required to undertake lengthy workplace placements - the government is to be commended for listening to our concerns. Paid practicums, combined with changes to [lower HECS-HELP debts](#), will help ease cost-of-living pressures.

The government's extensive consultation with teachers, school leaders, support staff and their unions about the many challenges in education has been an essential phase of a larger reform program. The government is now well placed to deliver the long-term solutions needed by our students and school staff.

2024 Federal Budget – prioritised resources for education

Lifting up the ECEC workforce

The nation's first [multi-employer supported bargaining agreement](#) is close to finalisation between unions and 64 early childhood education employers. The federal government has been involved in this process, and must now confirm the funding support needed to [end decades of low wages and disrespect](#) of early childhood education professionals.

Resources to tackle teacher workload

Workload continues to be the key contributor to record high rates of teacher turnover in schools and early childhood education. Initiatives such as the [government's pilot project](#) designed to reduce workload should be extended to all states and all education sectors.

100% funding of all schools

All schools must be fully funded to 100% of the Schooling Resources Standard. The accounting trickery that sees [state schools denied billions of dollars](#) must end.

Affordable housing is a basic right of all essential workers

Like so many in the community, [teachers and school staff are often unable to live and work in their local area](#) due to soaring rent and property prices. The Housing Australia Future Fund is a good start, but more action is needed as affordability continues to worsen.