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Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan welcomed but more to do

The federal government's Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan to tackle widespread teacher shortages has been generally welcomed by the union representing over 17,000 teachers and staff across Northern Territory and Queensland non-government schools.

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said while the plan was a significant step in the right direction, the final plan must provide meaningful intervention to the issue of teacher workload.

"The long-term success of any plan must include consideration and action on unsustainable workloads, teacher burnout, stagnating pay and insecure short-term contracts," Mr Burke said.

"Our union believes the six draft priority areas warrant inclusion but our federal union has also reiterated to the Working Group that the final plan must be about more than simply trying to attract new teachers.

"More work will be needed to deliver a final plan that tackles the underlying causes of staff shortages.

"The federal government does not employ any teachers and the draft Action Plan is not an industrial instrument that regulates wages or conditions.

"However, the plan should provide a framework and a stronger commitment by employers to increase their investment in wages and workload relief," he said.

Mr Burke said the Action Plan was developed as a result of the Teacher Workforce Working Group discussions of which the IEU has been an active participant.

"Our federal union has engaged in collaborative discussions as part of the Working Group which was established as part of the federal government's commitment to work with teaching practitioners on these long-standing problems," Mr Burke said.

"With the Action Plan now released for public consultation, it is critical our members assess the proposals against the reality they live every day in their classrooms, and the meaningful changes needed across our schools.

"This is a once in a decade opportunity for government and employers to drive the widespread reforms needed in our schools and early childhood education centres – staff and students have waited long enough," he said.

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