

# NATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM AGREEMENT REPORT

## **SUMMARY OF THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM AGREEMENT (NSRA)**

*In September 2022 the Productivity Commission published an Interim Report for its review of the NSRA, with the full report due to be published in December 2022. The interim report makes several draft findings and recommendations.*

### **Draft findings include:**

- Student achievement has stagnated – while attainment has improved, engagement has declined, and persistent gaps in outcomes for some student cohorts indicate systemic problems
- The NSRA has weaknesses that undermine its effectiveness in facilitating collective, national efforts to lift student outcomes and its NPIs have little impact on outcomes
- Many students have additional needs that do not directly relate to culture, disability or remoteness, not captured by the priority equity cohorts in the existing NSRA
- Governments have failed to adequately demonstrate how reforms under the NSRA address the educational needs of priority student cohorts and are yet to achieve outcomes
- Many students experience poor wellbeing, but some do not receive effective support
- Improving teacher effectiveness is associated with large lifetime economic benefits for students
- There are shortages of teachers, particularly in key subjects, and more planning is needed to ensure a sustainable supply of school leaders
- Teachers work long hours, their workload is increasing and increasingly spent on “low value” tasks
- Improving school leadership can have large impacts on students’ learning
- The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia is not appropriate for measuring progress.

### **Draft recommendations include:**

- Governments should fulfil their commitments to deliver key NPIs including developing the Online Formative Assessment Initiative in a way that can be adapted to state or territory needs
- Developing a national model of the teacher workforce to support workforce planning
- Bilateral agreements must directly address the barriers for students from priority equity cohorts
- Governments should add improved student wellbeing as an outcome in the next NSRA
- Governments should improve teacher workforce demand and supply data in the Australian Teaching Workforce Data
- Reducing teacher workload should be a focus of the next agreement and all jurisdictions should commit to undertaking an assessment of teacher and principal time
- That the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher process is streamlined, including recognising prior competencies and ensuring HALTs are trained, and deployed as intended to lift the quality of teaching
- Committing to public reporting on each outcome by jurisdiction for students from priority cohorts and add new measures for learning gain, post-school outcomes and student wellbeing
- Update the NAPLAN sub-outcome measure to use proficiency standards rather than learning bands.

## ***AEU RESPONSE TO THE INTERIM REPORT'S DRAFT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

School funding is outside the scope of the review. However, the report refers to concerns that “despite the large increase in public funding since 2018, student outcomes have stagnated” without giving consideration to the sector split of increased funding to schools that has seen private schools receive up to \$1 billion above the SRS while public schools are under funded by \$6.7 billion or \$2,500 per student every year.

The AEU welcomes the interim report’s focus on addressing teacher workforce shortages and the unsustainable workloads that drive them, as well as the Productivity Commission’s focus on ensuring that the next NSRA is focused on equity and student wellbeing. However, these outcomes can only be achieved if teachers are given the resources, time and space they need to do the job.

The next NSRA and bilateral funding agreements must address the chronic underfunding of public schools.



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