# National education and union news



**Survey: more time spent on data collection than student support**

Teachers are spending far too much time on data collection and compliance paperwork while being starved of time for activities that directly benefit students, according to a report by the NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF).

The latest analysis of a survey of 13,000 teachers by the NSWTF reveals educators are spending the majority of their non-teaching time on administrative tasks such as data collection and entry and programming compliance.

Meanwhile, work that teachers identify as having the greatest impact on students, such as professional learning, engaging with parents and carers, and collaborating with colleagues on curriculum development – is relegated to minimal time allocations.

NSWTF Deputy President Amber Flohm said the findings show teachers are doing “the wrong work” at the expense of student outcomes.

“It’s now taking longer to document a lesson than to teach it,” Ms Flohm said. “Teachers are spending their evenings and weekends completing paperwork that serves no educational purpose while having no time for professional development that would genuinely improve their practice.”

The survey results align with national data showing 75 per cent of teachers cite workload as the primary reason they intend to leave the profession, according to the Australian Teacher Workforce Data released in June 2025.

However, “not enjoying teaching” continues to decline as a factor, representing less than one in five teachers considering departure – suggesting educators still love teaching but are frustrated by administrative burdens.

Ms Flohm said many compliance requirements imposed by the Department of Education and schools exceed what the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) actually mandates.

NESA guidelines state there is no requirement for detailed teacher evaluation and reflection in compliance evidence, no

requirement about how evaluation is completed, and no expectation that teachers write comments regarding each aspect of each lesson.

“Yet schools continue to impose these burdensome requirements, often going far beyond what’s legally necessary,” Ms Flohm said.

The NSWTF argues the administrative overload is contributing to teacher shortages, particularly in regional areas where schools struggle to replace departing educators.

The union is calling for schools to strip back compliance requirements to statutory minimums and eliminate what it describes as “layers of unnecessary bureaucracy” imposed beyond NESA requirements.

Ms Flohm said the findings challenge recent policy directions toward standardised teaching approaches and pre-made curriculum materials.

“Teachers don’t want to be delivery agents for someone else’s materials,” she said. “They want time to do the creative, intellectual work of adapting learning to their students in front of them and their specific needs.”

**Greater public provision of childcare will put children first**

The Australian Education Union Victorian Branch is calling for greater public provision of early childhood education and care to ensure program quality and help safeguard children.

“The AEU is deeply distressed by the recent allegations of abuse in Victorian early childhood education and care,” said AEU Vic Early Childhood Vice President, Cara Nightingale.

“One child harmed is one child too many. The fact that the community is continuing to hear of more instances of sexual abuse highlights the failure of the system that should be ensuring the safety of all children.

“There are urgent reforms required to help keep children safe when they are attending early education, including ensuring that workers in early childhood education are supported to be able to speak up when they have concerns about child safety without fear of employer retribution which is too often the case right now.

“We welcome the actions of the Victorian government to strengthen Working with Children Checks and to establish a register of early childhood educators, in addition to that which already exists for kindergarten teachers.

“We also welcome the proposed changes to federal legislation that will enable funding to be ceased to any early childhood provider that is not meeting safety standards. The assessment to determine safety standard breaches needs to be robust and comprehensive, and for this, regulatory authorities need to have a high profile, be well funded, and have strengthened powers to ensure compliance and child safety standards are being met.

“However, the state and federal government also need to consider the drivers of safety in services.

“Early childhood educators and teachers need to be supported to speak up without fear of retribution by their employer. This requires governments and employers to ensure workplace cultures that enable everyone to confidently speak up and speak out and report any concerning or unsafe behaviour or practices.

“And when early childhood teachers and educators speak out and report their concerns they need to be taken seriously, properly considered and investigated.

“We need significant reforms which put the educational needs, care and safety of all children above profit, increased investment in the workforce including in pay and conditions and expanded public provision of early childhood learning.

“In Victoria, the roll out of 50 new government-owned early learning and childcare centres, offering long day care and integrated kinder programs, is a good first step. As is the co-location of early childhood centres in all new primary schools, something the AEU has advocated for over many years.

“Children, families and early childhood teachers and educators deserve better than dealing with a system that too often focuses on financial gains over children’s welfare and education.”

**Pay boost for millions of workers**

Higher wages and improved workplace rights came into effect on 1 July – but the ACTU has warned that one in 10 workers may miss out unless they check their
pay slips.

Around three million Australian workers received a 3.5 per cent pay rise from their first full pay period after 1 July, following the Fair Work Commission's decision in June to lift minimum and award wages by 3.5 per cent.

The pay rise represents a real wage increase for workers employed in sectors including accommodation and food services, community and disability support, aged and childcare, retail, arts, administration, recreation and health care. For full-time workers, this wage rise will deliver thousands more to their annual income.

Analysis of ABS data reveals that 9.7 per cent of employees on adult rates were paid at or below the legal minimum wage in 2024. While employee misreporting – such as quoting after-tax pay – may contribute to this figure, the ACTU urges all workers to check their pay slips to ensure they receive the pay and entitlements they are legally owed.

From 1 July as well, the Superannuation Guarantee rate rose from 11.5 to 12 per cent. Paid Parental Leave has also increased from 22 to 24 weeks, and for the first time, superannuation will be paid on Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave.

Eligible students undertaking mandatory placements in teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work can also now access the new Commonwealth Prac Payment. The $331.65 weekly payment is designed to financially support students to complete their studies and enter the workforce.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus said: "Higher wages, paid placements, more parental leave and a boost to super – from today, this will be a reality for millions of working people."

"A real wage increase for 3 million workers will make an important difference to working people's lives. Pay increases were fought for by unions, as was the payment of super on parental leave and the extra two weeks. We have also finally reached 12 per cent superannuation, which was bought about because of the partnership between the ACTU and Labor Governments."



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