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Gaps remain in the AI framework for schools: action needed on teacher workload, consultation and commercial encroachments

The [Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools](#) commences operation from the start of the school year across the nation this week. The IEU welcomes the Framework's focus on education outcomes, AI ethical practices, equity and inclusion and recognition of teacher subject expertise.

Our union is, however, concerned by three key areas neglected in Framework:

1. ongoing consultation with the teaching profession and their unions;
2. the need for comprehensive workload impact assessments; and
3. the commercial encroachment of private AI providers in education.

The IEU has highlighted these issues with government and policy makers, including in our submission to the [AI in schools taskforce](#) inquiry held last year.

The first annual review of the Framework, due later this year, must address the following:

Consultation with the profession: The voice of the teaching profession must be paramount to support the use of AI tools to serve students and the education workforce and help guard against inherent AI risks. Genuine consultation will be needed for employers and governments to fulfil their joint duty of care to students and staff. Union representation should be included in the National AI in Schools Taskforce to inform its ongoing development.

Teacher workload: New AI compliance tasks and strategies deployed by schools to police academic integrity must not fall on already over-burdened teachers. Decisions regarding the use of AI in schools should be subject to a [teacher workload impact assessment](#), similar to the requirement imposed on outcomes contained in the next National School Reform Agreement.

The Framework references the relevance of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) which requires teachers to engage in professional learning. However, the Framework should explicitly mandate that employees have adequate release time to attend AI-related professional training to ensure that such training is provided during standard work hours.

Commercial interest regulation: The Framework's principle of transparency should include in the Guiding Statements that commercial enterprises selling generative AI programs to schools are required to consult with classroom teachers and their unions. Businesses should be required to demonstrate that their products do not pose risks to academic integrity or undermine education outcomes through, for example, increased student exposure to misinformation or algorithmic bias.

The IEU will be urging the government to integrate measures to address these issues as part of the 2024 review. The Framework is a good start, but it can be improved to better support equity and inclusion, student learning outcomes and the rights of school employees and their students.