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An ambitious climate transition is essential for high-quality learning and our students' future

Schools are becoming increasingly dangerous workplaces, with two-thirds of Australian schools now classified as [high climate risk](#).

Staff and students are already feeling the impacts, from heat stress and 'eco-distress' to sheltering communities during disasters and, in some cases, [relocating entire schools](#).

The [UN Environment Programme](#) warns that within a decade, global temperatures are likely to exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This is a critical threshold to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Australia's first [Climate Risk Assessment](#) reinforces this urgency, confirming that extreme weather events and climate-related deaths will become far more frequent.

Following the government's revised [climate targets](#), the IEU joins other unions in urging stronger emissions reduction commitments. The ACTU's [climate action plan](#) outlines a comprehensive program of regulatory reforms, including critical updates to work health and safety laws.

IEU members have been at the forefront of strengthening climate protections at work. Many member bargaining campaigns have secured paid natural disaster leave to help staff manage extreme weather events. These workplace rights should be extended across all education sectors.

Governments and employers must play their part by implementing policies and programs that deliver a just transition, including:

- **Paid time for training** on the transition to electrification, decarbonisation and new climate-focused curriculum.
- **Increased funding for mental health professionals** to support [students and young people](#).
- **Low-emission transport options** for school and student transport needs.
- **Expanded cycling infrastructure and education** to promote active travel.
- **Government-led reviews of thermal efficiency targets** and compliance in school heating, cooling, lighting and digital infrastructure.
- **More green spaces and nature access** in schools and early childhood settings, including pilots for dedicated nature pedagogy leaders.
- **Updated policies and procedures** for extreme weather responses.

Unions, governments and employers must work together to deliver a just and urgent climate transition that protects every worker, student and community. The clock's ticking. Let's get it right.