

# DRAFT NATIONAL TEACHER WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN

## PRIORITY AREA 1 ELEVATING THE PROFESSION

This action aims to recognise the value teachers bring to students, communities and the economy.

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Elevating the profession'?

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Strongly agree

300-word feedback

**Elevating the profession** is a critical element of a teacher workforce strategy.

A national campaign showcasing the professional work of teachers across the education continuum (prior to school early childhood education and care, primary and secondary school) and their contribution to children, families and society is supported. This should promote 'one teaching profession' and show the diversity of settings and career opportunities within education broadly (i.e., within the classroom, leadership opportunities, education policy). Authenticity here is crucial.

While targeting the public and aspiring teachers, this campaign also needs to speak directly to those within the profession, many of whom feel undervalued.

While this initiative is inclusive of teachers working in prior to school early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings (e.g., kindergarten/preschool; long day care), we note the majority of initiatives in the Plan focus only on teachers in school settings. We see strength in a united focus on one teaching profession that provides multiple career pathways. **All** of the priority areas are relevant to ECEC and there is an opportunity to leverage the *National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy*.

Cultural change will require ongoing effort and investment (well beyond a one-off campaign). Elevating the profession will require sustained work and funding to bring about real change.

Retention of quality teachers is a crucial part of elevating the profession. This includes visible career pathways and enhanced opportunities for all registered teachers (including those working in prior to school ECEC settings) to gain recognition and career progression through the HALT accreditation process.

QUT academics (Willis et al.) have produced a White Paper on streamlining HALT processes – access via following link - <http://bit.ly/3O2ZXkx> This more streamlined process builds reflexive professionalism and aims to eliminate barriers such as time demand of application, cost of applying and clarity on HALT role.

## **PRIORITY AREA 2 IMPROVING TEACHER SUPPLY**

This action aims to increase the number of students entering Initial Teacher Education (ITE), number of students completing ITE and the number of teachers staying in and/or returning to the profession.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☒ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

300-word feedback

The Plan identifies a range of appropriate strategies to address the current shortage of teachers, building on current thinking and initiatives. Additional education places, financial incentives, enhanced qualification pathways and strengthening skilled migration will assist improving teacher supply in the short term.

However, these are presented as isolated initiatives mostly led by government. There is a need for a **holistic and integrated systems level framework**, supported by sector wide collaboration, reform and investment to attract and retain teachers within the profession over the longer-term. The co-design process led by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to develop the *ECEC Workforce Strategy* offers a model to develop the supporting strategic framework for longer-term and sustained workforce development.

While addressing the immediate teacher shortage, it is vital to maintain a broad perspective of ensuring that: (1) we are preparing knowledgeable, skilled and resilient teachers who remain in the profession (beyond 5 years); and (2) teachers remain motivated and are supported to be the best they can be.

We advise caution when allocating additional places to particular subject specialisations, as future demand estimates are prone to distortion towards present needs and contemporary trends, which correlate poorly to actual future needs.

Current models of articulation between Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education in ECEC (e.g., Diploma in ECEC to Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood) provide an exemplar for similar pathways into teaching. The proposed ACDE project is welcome in this context. This will need to be a fair, transparent and streamlined process with consideration given to the time and cost of RPL, for applicants and HEPs.

Increasing supply requires some fundamental changes to employer practices, including providing increased job security and permanency for graduates, alongside greater openness to flexible and changing work options (e.g., permanent part-time) to support work/family needs.

### **PRIORITY AREA 3 STRENGTHENING INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE)**

This action aims to ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and quality.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☒ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

300-word feedback

QUT is committed to high quality evidence-informed teacher education and engages with sector partners to inform continuous quality improvement.

TEMAG was the impetus for significant reform in ITE, with some early indicators of positive change. However, there has not been sufficient time to embed key changes and evaluate their impact prior to further change (e.g., TPAs).

The focus on supporting quality professional experience is an important and welcome opportunity to leverage existing successful partnership models across the education continuum. Key to this will be identifying and addressing the real cost of providing quality professional experience, to individual students, ECEC and school settings and HEPs.

It is important to acknowledge the focus here is initial teacher education. Guided by AITSL and ACECQA, and established long-term sector partnerships, we design our programs to build teacher professional identity, capability, confidence and resilience. However, recognising the complex and changing nature of teachers' work in diverse settings, ITE is only the starting point: there is a need for shared responsibility and accountability for orientation, induction, mentoring and ongoing access to high quality professional learning to enable highly skilled and engaged teachers.

Responding to current teacher shortages in Queensland, QUT is looking to offer more flexible and accelerated pathways, including working with the Department of Education to offer the *Turn to Teaching (Internship) program*. There is opportunity to leverage this work and to expand these offerings.

Undertaking LANTITE in the first year of study is a current requirement at QUT. Recognising our students come to QUT having travelled diverse education pathways, the university offers a range of supports to build confidence and favour success. Open access to the test prior to enrolment, without information and support, is likely to result in the loss of some applicants who may have been successful with preparation and support.

#### **PRIORITY AREA 4 MAXIMISING THE TIME TO TEACH**

This action aims to improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☒ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

300-word feedback

This is a key action area, and arguably the most important in terms of supporting teacher health, wellbeing, engagement and retention.

We note that in some current conversations, areas of work that may be distributed include marking and assessment. While supporting the review of workload, and maximising the value of teaching time, we see formative and summative assessment as a key part of teachers' professional work. Assessment *for, as* and *of* learning provides opportunity for teachers to get to know learners, build relationships, provide feedback on learning and, importantly, to inform and tailor the selection of pedagogical choices to support diverse learners. Notwithstanding this, the volume of assessment is considered burdensome, for teachers and students, and could be reduced to maximise time for learning and teaching.

We note the proposals to develop *optional* curriculum resources to assist teachers to manage their workload. There is a need for significant care in how such resources are presented and used across jurisdictions, and within ECEC and school systems and settings, to guard against technicisation of the professional work of teachers and a drift towards ineffectual universalised and decontextualised approaches to curriculum and pedagogy. In priority area 1, the focus is elevating the profession. Professional autonomy and the ability to exercise professional judgment and discretion is the hallmark of any profession. This is also key to teacher enjoyment of their work and ultimately job satisfaction and retention.

We are concerned about the consideration of ITE students as a potential resource to reduce teacher workload. The role of ITE students, during professional experience and other voluntary work integrated learning activities, is to learn and build their professional knowledge and capabilities, mentored and supported by skilled and experienced teachers. Let us not compromise the medium- to long-term prospects of the profession in search of short-term remedies.

#### **PRIORITY AREA 5 BETTER UNDERSTANDING FUTURE TEACHER WORKFORCE NEEDS**

This action aims to better understand future teacher workforce needs, including the number of teachers required.

How effective are the proposed actions in better understanding future teacher workforce needs, including the number of teachers required?

- ☐ Strongly disagree

- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Strongly agree

300-word feedback

Better data is definitely needed to understand and plan for teacher workforce needs. To maximise value, we need to consider the education work ecosystem (across the education continuum), and collect quantitative and qualitative data relating to supply, demand, engagement and retention.

There is benefit in making this data open access, enabling analysis by employers and researchers, to identify and understand emerging themes and patterns to inform workforce planning and development (e.g., using a tool similar to the National Quality Standard snapshot offered on the ACECQA platform).

We are unconvinced of the need for a National Quality Framework to guide Teacher Regulatory Authorities in teacher accreditation and to ensure nationally consistent standards for teacher education. At best this replicates the current work of AITSL in this space, and at worst it may be construed as an attempt to mandate a national curriculum for ITE; an initiative that has not proven beneficial elsewhere. If this is not the intention, it is nevertheless certainly a risk, and should be avoided.

While recognising the current use of provisional and conditional teaching approvals, we see these as a pragmatic approach to address the current shortfall of qualified teachers, and not a strategic priority in a best-practice longer-term workforce development strategy.

#### **PRIORITY AREA 6 BETTER CAREER PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION**

This action aims to improve career pathways, including through streamlining the process for Highly Accomplished and lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation, and providing better professional support for teachers to retain them in the profession.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Strongly agree

300-word feedback

We strongly support this very important priority area, recognising the need to strengthen and make visible the wide range of career pathways in teaching and education.

These include career and leadership pathways that enable continued teaching in ECEC and classrooms (e.g., through recognition and reward via HALT accreditation), as well as pathways into formal leadership positions spanning pedagogical and service/school leadership. It also includes making visible the high level and transferable knowledge and skills curated by teachers enabling movement into different work contexts (recognising that students will have multiple careers – and teaching can be one).

We strongly support work to strengthen access to timely evidence-informed professional learning for early career teachers and new leaders in ECEC and school settings, including coaching and mentoring. This is particularly effective when offered in the local community context, providing opportunity for teachers and leaders to build their own professional networks. The Queensland Centres for Learning and Wellbeing (CLaWs) and Lead Mentor program within some regions in ECEC provide good working models.

Teachers are far more likely to be influenced by the presence of meaningful early career teacher support programs (induction and quality mentoring). They are most likely to be influenced by their satisfaction with their job as an early career teacher (more than 6 times more likely to plan on leaving the profession if they are unsatisfied as an ECT), crediting dissatisfaction to “Amount of clerical/administrative work” (Kelly et al. 2019).

Building cultural responsiveness, and capacity to meaningfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in curriculum and pedagogy, begins in ITE but needs to be nurtured and supported in partnership with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. ECEC services and schools need access to information and resources to assist them to build reciprocal partnerships with their local Elders and communities.