



Education Ministers Meeting

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON TEACHER SHORTAGE

Australia's Education Ministers met with teachers, school leaders, and other education experts at Parliament House today to prioritise actions to address the issue of teacher demand, supply and retention.

Ministers paid tribute to teachers for their hard work and acknowledged the critical role they play in the lives of children and young people. They particularly commended the extraordinary commitment, dedication and professional resilience teachers have shown through the pandemic.

Teacher shortage is a key issue for all States, Territories and sectors. It is a challenge that faces school communities across Australia, and is particularly acute in rural, regional and remote areas, and in particular subject areas (such as science, mathematics, special/inclusive education, languages and technology and applied studies including agriculture, industrial technologies and engineering studies).

States and Territories are currently implementing a range of initiatives to improve teacher supply and retention, and to improve the status of the teaching profession. This includes: communications and marketing campaigns to promote the teaching profession; investing in accelerated pathways into teaching; funding scholarships for priority cohorts of teaching students; enhancing supports available for early career teachers; providing financial incentives and other supports for teachers to relocate and remain in the geographical locations and subject specialisations where they are needed most; providing government owned and/ or subsidised housing in regional, rural and remote areas; supporting teachers to retrain in specialist subjects experiencing shortages; and seeking to attract more international teachers.

Ministers committed to developing a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan to increase the number of people entering and remaining in the profession.

The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan will include actions in the following priority areas:

1. Elevating the profession
2. Improving teacher supply
3. Strengthening initial teacher education
4. Maximising the time to teach
5. Better understanding future teacher workforce needs

Work to develop the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan will be led by the Secretary of the Australian Government Department of Education who will chair a working group of officials and peak education bodies.

The working group will deliver a report in December 2022, outlining priorities for immediate action.

Our work will complement and be coordinated with the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy to ensure teachers and educators across both early childhood and schooling settings are valued and supported as education professionals.

Ministers requested that the Action Plan include the following priorities:

- 1. Elevating the teaching profession.** To recognise the value that teachers bring to students, communities and the economy, Ministers agreed the following actions:
 - States and Territories will work with the Australian Government to drive a national focus on the status of the teaching profession, including considering how awards and honours might be used to reward and recognise the teaching profession.
 - States and Territories will work to increase the number of teachers with Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher certification, and other forms of recognition from State and Territory bodies.
 - State, Territory and non-government systems will provide information on actions they are taking to reward high performing teachers and identify areas to expand on current efforts.

- 2. Improving teacher supply.** To boost teacher supply, Ministers agreed the following actions, which build on the wide range of initiatives and incentives already put in place by State and Territory Governments and non-government school systems:
 - The Australian Government will deliver its commitments to increase the supply of new teachers, including to schools in disadvantaged communities by delivering 5000 bursaries and expanding the High Achieving Teachers program by up to 1500 teachers in collaboration with states and territories.
 - Jurisdictions will work collaboratively on a series of national attraction and recruitment initiatives.
 - States and Territories will work with the Australian Government to further the internship model to increase the number of final year students working in schools based on work underway and investigate options for new commissioning and procurement models.
 - The Australian Government Minister for Education will work with the Minister for Home Affairs and States and Territories to prioritise visa processing times for qualified teachers.
 - The Australian Government will work with States and Territories to explore new international teacher supply markets and ensure that regulatory processes do not present unnecessary barriers to swift employment of suitable candidates.
 - Develop national guidelines for support for early career teachers including mentoring, induction and classroom behaviour management.
 - Develop diverse career paths for teachers with more opportunities to become recognised and rewarded as experts, and to pass on their skills to other teachers without having to leave classroom teaching.
 - Explore incentives like scholarships for teaching degrees to complement existing programs with a particular focus on under-represented cohorts in teaching including rural and regional students, mature age students, culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations students.

- 3. Strengthening Initial Teacher Education.** To ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and quality, Ministers agreed to the following actions:
 - States and Territories will work with the Australian Government on a plan to ensure all first year students have an opportunity to undertake high quality placements in schools, undergo initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills in their first year, and ensure they can receive targeted support if they need it.

- Jurisdictions will consider regulatory and accreditation structures to ensure they are fit for purpose and support teacher supply and retention.
 - The Teacher Education Expert Panel, led by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Professor Mark Scott, will focus on strengthening the link between performance and funding of ITE. This will include but not be limited to advising on how Commonwealth supported places for teaching should be allocated based on quality and other relevant factors.
- 4. Maximising time to teach.** To improve retention and free teachers up to focus on teaching, Ministers agreed that jurisdictions and non-government systems would provide information on actions they are taking to maximise the time to plan, collaborate and teach.
- 5. Better understanding future teacher workforce needs** including the number of teachers required, Ministers agreed to the following actions:
- Development and publication of teacher workforce projections, disaggregated at a regional level and subject specialisation, and use nationally consistent data sets to enable a national understanding of teacher demand.
 - Publication of projections of the supply of ITE graduates, including disaggregated by subject specialisation and participation in ITE at the regional level.

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12 AUGUST 2022