



## Education Ministers Meeting

5 October 2023

# Communiqué

## Safety in Early Childhood Education and Care settings

Ministers were briefed by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) CEO, Gabrielle Sinclair on the progress of the Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework.

The review is considering a range of issues including Working with Children Checks, mandatory reporting and teacher and educator registration.

An interim report will be provided to Ministers by the end of October and a final report will be provided for consideration in December 2023.

Ministers were also briefed by Australian Federal Police Commander Helen Schneider about recent work of the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation.

The safety and wellbeing of children is a priority for all governments and a fundamental objective of the National Quality Framework.

## Artificial Intelligence in Schools

Following national consultation, Ministers agreed to the Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools.

The National AI Taskforce revised the draft Framework to take into account stakeholder feedback, including feedback from teachers, principals, parents and academic experts.

Ministers have agreed to release the Framework in the coming weeks. States and territories, and non-government schooling sectors will work with their own education systems to implement the Framework.

The Framework will be implemented from Term 1 next year, noting that some jurisdictions have already commenced trial activities consistent with the Framework.

Protecting the privacy of student information is a paramount consideration in the use of generative AI in schools. As part of the implementation of the Framework, Ministers have agreed to provide \$1 million to Education Services Australia to establish product expectations of generative AI technology.

## Australian Universities Accord

As part of the priority actions of the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, Ministers were briefed by the Chair of the Inter-jurisdictional Working Group, Ben Rimmer on their work to strengthen university governance.

Ministers agreed the Working Group will provide advice to Ministers on concrete actions to strengthen university governance before the end of 2023 in relation to:

- ensuring student and staff safety through the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual harm, including on university campuses and in student residential settings;
- ensuring universities are exemplary employers; and
- ensuring contemporary and responsive governance arrangements on university councils.

Ministers agreed to hold a special-purpose EMM in November to consider the Working Group’s advice.

Ministers also raised concerns about the impact of early university offers and agreed to consider advice from the Universities Accord Panel on early university offers after the Final Report of the Accord is handed down.

## **National Teacher Workforce Action Plan**

Ministers reviewed and agreed to release the Elevating the Teaching Profession communication campaign, which will be launched shortly.

Ministers agreed the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP) will be updated to explicitly reference school leaders and early childhood teachers and, where feasible and appropriate, NTWAP initiatives will explicitly address these cohorts.

This will allow school leaders to be considered in initiatives such as the Workload Reduction Fund, providing scope for states and territories to pilot initiatives to reduce workload pressures on school leaders, as well as teachers.

## **Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System**

Dr Lisa O’Brien AM, Chair of the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System, provided an update to Ministers on the progress of the Expert Panel’s activities ahead of its 31 October 2023 reporting date. The Review will then be considered by Ministers at the November and December EMMs.

Dr O’Brien noted the Panel has conducted extensive consultations across Australia including more than 100 stakeholder meetings and visiting 86 schools, including in regional and remote areas. The Panel’s consultation paper received 268 submissions.

On 6 October 2023, several Education Ministers and the Expert Panel will meet with the Ministerial Reference Group for its second meeting, to discuss key themes that have emerged during the consultation process to inform the development of the Panel’s final report.

## **NAPLAN data on the *My School* website**

Ministers agreed to changes to the presentation of NAPLAN 2023 data on the *My School* website. Due to resetting the NAPLAN scale, results for 2023 are not comparable to previous results and will be presented separately on *My School*.

Ministers acknowledged the continued importance of NAPLAN in assisting parents, teachers and school communities in supporting student literacy and numeracy education and, where necessary, providing additional support to students who need it.

Ministers sought advice from ACARA regarding communication of NAPLAN results.

## **Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) – 2026 Participation**

Ministers agreed to Australia’s participation in PIRLS 2026. The Australian Government will prepare a detailed budget for the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee to endorse and will begin the process of engaging a national provider to administer PIRLS 2026.

PIRLS is the only international assessment Australia participates in which measures primary school student literacy at the international level. Australia's participation will support the collection of valuable data about Australia's performance in the international community and support the teaching of reading literacy in schools.

## **Schools Upgrade Fund – Round 2**

Ministers discussed the proposed implementation approach for Round 2 of the Schools Upgrade Fund. Round 2 of the fund will provide \$215.8 million for major capital projects in government schools.

Ministers indicated their support for the Commonwealth-led expression of interest process. Public schools will be able to submit funding applications shortly.

Round 2 funding will be needs-based, prioritising those schools experiencing the greatest disadvantage.

## **Preschool Reform Agreement**

Ministers agreed that a new Preschool Outcomes Measure will be developed throughout 2024 and trialled nationally in 2025. Ministers agreed that the Preschool Outcomes Measure will be designed to support high-quality practice by equipping teachers and educators with access to a new national teaching tool to inform children's learning.

Ministers also agreed that the trial will focus on two age-appropriate domains; executive function, and oral language and literacy. The trial in 2025 will be voluntary, with jurisdictions that have existing tools able to align their programs, rather than having to adopt the new national teaching tool. Ministers will examine the success of the trial in late 2025 when considering options for future implementation.

## **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**

Ministers discussed the recently released final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. All Ministers are committed to continuing to listen to, and collaborate with, people with disability and their families as this important work progresses.

## **Voice to Parliament**

Ministers expressed their unanimous support for the Voice to Parliament. Ministers agreed that a Voice to Parliament can help to improve education outcomes for First Nations people.

Ministers also thanked Rodney Dillon for welcoming Ministers, on behalf of his ancestors, to the land and waters of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

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