



Education Ministers Meeting

11 December 2023

Communiqué

Better and Fairer Education System Review

Education Ministers discussed the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System and noted the release of the Independent Panel's Report and the Australian Government Summary Report.

Education Ministers expressed their thanks to the Independent Panel for their work and extensive consultation over the last 6 months. Ministers expressed their gratitude to all the educators, schools, students, parents and education stakeholders who shared their experience and knowledge with the Review panel.

Teacher Education Expert Panel

Ministers noted the Australian Government's investment of \$7.1 million to implement a new Strong Beginnings Fund in response to the Teacher Education Expert Panel Report. \$4.5 million of this will go towards a Transition Fund to support higher education providers to implement the core content, and the remainder will create an Excellence Fund to promote good practice and a culture of continuous improvement in the sector.

Ministers agreed that Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) will publish an addendum to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures document, setting out the core content that higher education providers will now need to embed in their ITE degrees. Providers will have until the end of 2025 to make these changes to their programs.

Ministers have agreed to establish a new, independent ITE Quality Assurance Oversight Board, which will work to improve the national consistency and quality of ITE.

AITSL will consult on draft national practical experience guidelines in early 2024.

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 and considered the Report into the Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework (the Report). The NQF is an internationally recognised framework that provides a robust regulatory scheme for ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children. Education Ministers have requested Senior Officials commence consultation with the sector on the Report's recommendations and report to the first EMM of 2024 with implementation advice.

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

Ministers discussed progress of initiatives under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP). There have been significant achievements over the twelve months since the plan was agreed, including the ongoing work by States and Territories to support teachers, the roll out of Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships, a significant increase in skilled migration places for

teachers, and the launch of a new national campaign to raise the status of teaching and attract new people to the profession.

Ministers approved new national guidelines to support early career teachers and new school leaders, and amendments to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures.

The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan will continue to be a delivery priority for Ministers in 2024.

Australian Universities Accord

As part of the priority actions of the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, Ministers were briefed by the Chair of the Cross-jurisdictional Working Group on work underway to address workplace relations compliance, strengthening university governance and current approaches to supporting student and staff safety in university contexts.

Ministers agreed to task the Working Group to provide Ministers with a Draft Action Plan on workplace compliance and university governance in early 2024 for consideration.

Strengthening inclusion of children and young people with disability in education

Ministers committed to working together to meet the needs of students with disability in education, and agreed an initial priority was to identify opportunities for national collaborative action.

Ministers also discussed the recently released NDIS Review final report. Ministers will work together to consider the recommendations that have impacts for children and students with disability.

NATSIEC Engagement with Education Ministers

Ms Geraldine Atkinson, co-chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation and President of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc briefed Ministers on the role NATSIEC intends to play in advising Ministers on improving outcomes for First Nation's students. Ministers noted that NATSIEC had been incorporated in August 2023 and joined the Coalition of Peaks in November 2023. The relationship between NATSIEC and the EMM will be developed through a formal partnership Agreement that Ministers anticipate being finalised at the first EMM meeting in 2024.

National Student Voice Council

The National Student Voice Council (NSV Council) met for the first time with Education Ministers, and offered invaluable insights to guide national-scale education initiatives.

The NSV Council consists of 32 students, four from each state and territory, and is cross-sectoral to provide a broader view on national issues.

At the meeting, the students provided an update on their ways of working and ideas for new approaches to schooling to benefit students. The NSV Council also highlighted the areas they are passionate about including empowering student-led education, championing continuous improvement, promoting equal opportunity, and emphasised the need for student access to mental health programs. This was also represented in the NSV Council's response to the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System, which was discussed at the meeting.

The NSV Council will be meeting with Education Ministers on a twice-yearly basis from 2024 onwards and will continue to raise issues relevant to Australian students.

Supporting student wellbeing and learning outcomes through access to multidisciplinary services

Ministers discussed the important role that schools play in meeting the wellbeing and learning needs of students, including through providing access to multidisciplinary services. Ministers discussed the importance of ensuring holistic supports do not add to the workload of teachers. Ministers acknowledged the National collaborative effort, led by the ACT. This included mapping of good practice examples across Australia and a rapid literature review undertaken by the Australian Education Research Organisation. Ministers agreed this work will be an input in the context of upcoming negotiations on the next National School Reform Agreement.

Education Services Australia Board Chair

Education Ministers acknowledged and thanked Ms Diane Joseph for her commitment, dedication and leadership in the role of Chair of the ESA Board over the past 7 years. Ms Joseph will finish her role as Board Chair in February 2024.

Additional

Ministers thanked Principal Ralph David and his team at JJ Cahill Memorial High School for hosting the EMM.

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