



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION (ACPPA) RESPONSE :

'BETTER AND FAIRER EDUCATION SYSTEM'

The Board of the Australian Catholic Primary Principals' Association (referred to as ACPPA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System submission.

With respect to the terms of reference, ACPPA understands and supports the broad goals and initiatives outlined within the suggested reforms and stands ready to commit to working with the related authorities to introduce and implement any suggested reforms within the Catholic Primary school sector.

Given that the Terms of Reference state ' It will consider reforms that are evidence-based, leverage existing systems and high-impact initiatives, and consider the impacts on teacher and school leader workload', our response will centre around Point 3 of the Terms of Reference: **How the next agreement can support schools to attract and retain teachers.**

The ACPPA response is informed by previous research into Initial Teacher Education by the association, in conjunction with Australian Catholic University (ACU) and the University of Notre Dame (UND). This research project was supported by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC). The report was finalised in 2021 and the document can be found at <https://acppa.catholic.edu.au/research-and-development>.

Extensive research, involving principals from the Catholic primary sectors across Australia informed this report and the data shows some clear points of discussion for initial teacher education.

In summary, to respond to **how the next agreement can support schools to attract and retain teachers**, there also needs to be consideration given to the Initial Teacher Education programs, as well as Early Career Teacher supports within schools.

ADVOCACY AND ACTION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

acppa.catholic.edu.au



INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

- Those students studying education in universities need to be given more practical experience working within the school context, across different times of the school year. Understanding the rhythm and cadence of a school setting, in addition to the teaching component, is important in helping retain students in education degrees
- Modelling practical experience on an internship and cadetship/ apprenticeship concept, and remunerating with a salary commensurate with an apprentice, enables students to commit to the practical requirements without having to face financial pressures of earning an income through a part time job while working in a school. This allows greater dedication of time to completion of tasks related to the practical component
- Flexibility in LANTITE requirements: differentiated assessments to allow for successful LANTITE completion should be considered to cater for the diversity of graduate applicants who underperform in test conditions
- ITE should allow opportunities to develop appropriate content knowledge about how to teach and what to teach
- emphasis to be placed on the social element of the teaching profession and the required skills to be able to perform all elements and aspects of the role

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

- Reduce red tape and administrative tasks: the challenge of completing the requirements of a full teaching load, in addition to the ongoing attention to administrative tasks, can impact the wellbeing and teaching competencies of an early career teacher. A commitment to reducing these tasks for all teachers will enable a focus back in the core business of teaching and learning.
- The complexities of a primary school and in particular, building the sense of belonging and community in a Catholic school, is a responsibility that can be overwhelming for early career teachers. The culture of a catholic school has more need for building the faith community outside of school hours. Responding to current research around wellbeing and social engineering outside of the schools context is something that needs to be considered in the retention of early career teachers.
- Effective mentoring and support beyond the early career teacher program is essential for retention. The support needs to be provided to the beginning teacher,

as well as a strong support and professional learning program for the support or mentor teacher within the school. Investing in this area supports both parties, and a positive impact on the whole school community, knowing that staff are valued and provided with appropriate support.

TEACHER CAREER PATHWAYS

- The lack of unity across the country in recognition of teachers in the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification impacts some career progression. There is inconsistent policy within state and local jurisdictions and remuneration for certification varies.
- There is poor incentive for primary principals, particularly those in small schools, to encourage HALT certification due to budgeting and time release. The ability to demonstrate some elements are also difficult in smaller contexts, with limited opportunities to show success in key aspects due to school size or geographic location.
- Portability issues across states are a challenge and barrier for HALT certification
- ACPPA supports the notion of reward of excellence in the teaching profession but the application and support for the teacher and school is complex.
- HALT enhances teacher practices and there may be some positive impact to students; however, the process and reward does not address the issue of teacher workload, and in fact adds more load to those in the application process.
- Incentivising beginning teachers can enhance teacher career pathways to work outside metropolitan areas in difficult to staff schools.
- In hard to staff schools we ought to incentivise leaders and educators to work there as socioeconomic status impacts significantly on these schools.
- The challenges around portability of teacher registration and Working with Children and Vulnerable Adult clearances need to be streamlined and federalised where possible to allow for greater opportunity to move between jurisdictions for employment.