Submission to

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

In response to the National Schools Reform Agreement (NSRA)

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Executive Summary

The Institute of Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) at Australian Catholic University (ACU) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Commonwealth's "Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System" (the Review) which will report to all Australian Education Ministers on 31 October 2023 about the upcoming National Schools Reform Agreement (NSRA).

IPPE answers questions eight to twelve from the consultation paper's third chapter and questions 26-32 from the consultation paper's fifth chapter, grouping these questions into four sections:

1. Effective Support for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing (Question 8)
2. Evidence-Based Wellbeing Approaches and Target Setting (Questions 9 and 10)
3. Student Surveys and Assessment Programs for Wellbeing Evaluation (Questions 11 and 12), and
4. Data Collection, Accessibility, and Utilization for Educational Reforms (Questions 26-32).

Australian Catholic University is making a separate submission on Questions 15 to 25 from the consultation paper's fourth chapter and ACU's Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education (ILSTE) is making a separate submission on Questions 26 – 34 from the consultation paper's fifth chapter.

Regarding Chapter 3, IPPE makes seven recommendations, specifically, that the NSRA should:

1. Provide additional supports to school leaders and teachers in the form of evidence-based wellbeing training and professional development programs.
2. Review multi-level approaches to student mental health support wich are crucial in fostering a comprehensive and coordinated system that addresses the diverse needs of students effectively.
3. Assess reforms for students most in need and include Indigenous Australian student voices.
4. Considers multiple sources of information including the synthesis of existing international research for their evidence base.
5. Investigate and streamline student wellbeing data already captured in existing national surveys or assessment as well as potentially expand survey attempts by adding in climate type variables.
6. Conduct independent student surveys to offer unbiased insights into various aspects of school experiences (also see Recommendation 1).
7. Investigate the potential for longitudinal research into the teacher workforce outside the Australian Teacher Workforce Data initiative.

Overall, IPPE's recommendation is to direct more funding to evidence-based program initiatives for whole school approaches to support students, school leaders, teachers, and school staff.

1.   Effective Support for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

This section responds to the following consultation paper questions:

> *8. What does it look like when a school is supporting student mental health and wellbeing effectively? What is needed from school, systems, government and the community to deliver this?*

When a school is effectively supporting student mental health and wellbeing, it demonstrates a holistic and proactive approach that fosters a positive and nurturing environment for all everyone.

Mental wellbeing includes feeling good and functioning well.[1] There is a plethora of research on mental capital and wellbeing, but it has thus far been in silos with different research teams focussing on different factors linked with different aspects of mental capital and wellbeing. Moreover, there has been insufficient research coordinating the contributions of multiple levels of analysis in the prediction of adaptive outcomes. Despite the plethora of research on wellbeing, there has been little systematic study of the effect sizes of different determinants of wellbeing.[1] There is no comprehensive scientific model in the literature accounting for how the myriad, multilevel aspects of mental capital are linked to better functioning in either adults or adolescents. Thus, the literature provides little guidance in terms of where leverage can be most efficiently applied to enhance student wellbeing and functioning.

In the absence of a unified model, school policy makers lack a strong empirical basis for making strategic decisions about strengthening the wellbeing of teachers and students. There are limited wellbeing measures that have been developed specifically for schooling and little longitudinal data are available testing the efficacy of school-based interventions that target students, teachers, or school leaders (but see for a focus on student outcomes[2]). In such a climate, school principals and teachers are faced with eclectic strategies with sparse empirical basis. For example, the New Economics Foundation's report to the UK government's Foresight Project suggests "five ways to wellbeing," a generic set of actions intended to have a wide-ranging appeal: engaging in activities that encourage social connections, physical activity, taking notice of the details in one's surrounding and appreciating the moment, learning new things and challenging oneself, and giving to others[3]. Yet, these wellbeing recommendations are entirely focussed on personal wellbeing of individuals, are silent regarding different contexts (schools and students), and have never been systematically tested in a unified model. Therefore, they cannot inform action and policy at the school level.

The Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey Report[4] highlights that student mental health and wellbeing is a significant concern in our Australian schools. Some key aspects school, systems, government and the community support may include:

Engaging Staff to Support Positive School Climates with Mental Health Promotion and Education: The school integrates mental health education into the curriculum, providing students with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions effectively. Suggestions regarding this

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[1] Huppert, F. A. (2009). Psychological Wellbeing: Evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology: Health and Wellbeing, 1,* 137-164.

[2] Dix, K., Ahmed, S. K., Carslake, T., Sniedze-Gregory, S., O'Grady, E., & Trevitt, J. (2020). Student health and wellbeing: A systematic review of intervention research examining effective student wellbeing in schools and their academic outcomes. Main report and executive summary. *Evidence for Learning.* https://www.evidenceforlearning.org.au/assets/Uploads/Main-Report-Student-Health-and-Wellbeing-Systematic-Review-FINAL-25-Sep-2020.pdf

[3] Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C., & Thompson, S. (2009). *Five Ways to Wellbeing: A report presented to the Foresight Project on communicating the evidence base for improving people's wellbeing*. London: The New Economics Foundation.

[4] See, S-M., Kidson, P., Marsh, H., & Dicke, T. (2023). *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey* (IPPE Report). Sydney: Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University

aspect should be complemented by evidence-based procedures such as systematic reviews and meta-analysis on what works to improve student mental health and wellbeing. The findings of such studies can be used as a basis to identify effective and feasible intervention modules that can be adapted for the Australian school system and individual schools.[2] Furthermore, schools require adequate resources and funding to implement mental health programs and initiatives effectively.

Teachers and staff that are supported in their own mental health and wellbeing, allow them to be more effective in supporting their students[5]. The school promotes a positive school climate, free from bullying and stigmatization, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Recommendation 1

The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) implements additional supports to school leaders and teachers in the form of evidence-based wellbeing training and professional development programs.

Data Collection and Monitoring with Multi-Level Approach:

Collaborative efforts between schools, systems, government, and the community ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to student mental health support. Regular data collection and monitoring help identify trends and assess the effectiveness of mental health programs. Teachers' and students' wellbeing data can help identify targets of intervention – both in terms of potentially influential teachers and particularly influential constructs in the system of school wellbeing – that can be leveraged in future tailor-made interventions to strengthen the wellbeing students (and their educators). Importantly such interventions should be co-designed and integrating the voices and expertise of the most important stakeholders in schools, such as principals, teachers, parents, and students. Teachers and staff need training in mental health awareness, first aid, and strategies for supporting students effectively. For students' wellbeing, students' views are key to effective intervention, but unfortunately their voices are mostly unheard, and their agency is never optimised.[6]

In our view encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration between education professionals, mental health experts, policymakers, and community stakeholders is key. This collaboration will enable a holistic understanding of students' mental health needs and facilitate the development of targeted interventions.

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological theory of nested contextual influences highlighted the multilevel nested structure of interrelated elements. The larger ecological system within which a human being grows consists of microsystems including relationships between the individual and the immediate social environment (e.g., school and family), and the macrosystem, which includes larger patterns of culture, such as economy, social customs, and bodies of knowledge[7]. Put simply, there are many layers in a multilevel complex system. A common example of an ecological model places the individual in the centre, surrounded by four nested levels of influences.[8]

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[5] Dicke, T., Marsh, H. W., Parker, P. D., Guo, J., Riley, P., & Waldeyer, J. (2020). Job satisfaction of teachers and their principals in relation to climate and student achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 112(5), 1061.

[6] Durmush, G., Craven, R. G., Brockman, R., Yeung, A. S., Mooney, J., Turner, K., & Guenther, J. (2021). Empowering the voices and agency of Indigenous Australian youth and their wellbeing in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 109. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101798

[7] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). The ecology of the family as a context for human development. *Developmental Psychology, 22,* 723-742. and Bronfenbrenner, U., & Ceci, S. J. (1994). Nature-nuture reconceptualized in developmental perspective: A bioecological model. *Psychological Review, 101*(4) 568-586.

[8] Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2018, Wellbeing Practice Guide, Melbourne, https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/earlyyears/EYWellbeingPracticeGuide.pdf. Also referenced in https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/spotlights/wellbeing-in-australian-schools

> **Recommendation 2**
>
> Multi-level approaches to student mental health support are crucial in fostering a comprehensive and coordinated system that addresses the diverse needs of students effectively.

By combining advocating for these updated processes in a comprehensive wellbeing framework, schools can create a safe and supportive environment that not only addresses mental health challenges but also promotes overall wellbeing and enhances students' academic and personal development.

2.   Evidence-Based Wellbeing Approaches and Target Setting

This section responds to the following consultation paper questions:

> *9. What evidence-based wellbeing approaches currently being implemented by schools and communities should be considered as part of a national reform agenda?*

> *10. Should a wellbeing target be included in the next NSRA? Could this use existing data collections, or is additional data required?*

Evidence-based school wellbeing approaches are useful for strengthening the social fabric and wellbeing of the school community. Our research capitalises on a positive psychology of thriving[9] sophisticated research design, measurement, and analysis. This research leverages positive psychology approaches to explore the essence of wellbeing and identify the key factors that contribute to enhancing and maximizing overall wellbeing. Hence, we suggest considering the following:

Additional reforms for students most in need and Indigenous Australian student voices: To support student mental health and wellbeing, the first priority is to listen to students' voices about strategies to make a positive impact that they see beneficial to them[10]. Marsh (2023) published an article[12] that directly addresses school students' wellbeing from a multidimensional perspective based on current psychological theories and relevant to the multicultural context of Australia and Indigenous Australian student populations. The measurements in this study have strong theoretical underpinnings, are evidenced based, and have demonstrated validity and applicability for Australian students of different backgrounds and characteristics, so the instrument can be a good one to use. Although research**Error! Bookmark not defined.** [10] suggests Indigenous Australian young people's viewpoints, research has shown that what works for Indigenous students works similarly effectively with non-Indigenous students.[11] [12]

For Indigenous Australian students, wellbeing in schools have been mostly unknown and untapped until recently.[13] While wellbeing should be a target in NSRA, measurements should be appropriate to the multiple cultural groups in Australia including Indigenous Australians.

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[9] Craven, R. G., Ryan, R., Mooney, J., Vallerand, R. J., Dillon, A., Blacklock, F., & Magson, N. (2016). Toward a positive psychology of indigenous thriving and reciprocal research partnership model. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 47,* 32-43.

[10] Durmush, G., Craven, R. G., Yeung, A. S., Mooney, J., Horwood, M., Duncan, C., & Gillane, R. (2023). Enabling Indigenous wellbeing in higher education: Indigenous Australian youth-devised strategies and solutions. *Higher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01067-z

[11] Dillon, A., Craven, R. G., Guo, J., Yeung, A. S., Mooney, J., Egan, A., & Brockman, R. (2022). Boarding schools: A longitudinal examination of Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous boarders' and non-boarders' wellbeing. *British Educational Research Journal.* https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3792

[12] Marsh, H. W., Craven, R. G., Yeung, A. S., Mooney, J., Franklin, A., Dillon, A., Barclay, L., vanWestenbrugge, A., Vasconcellos, D., See, S-M., Roy, D., Kadir, M., & Durmush, G. (2023). Self-concept a game changer for academic success for high-achieving Australian Indigenous and NonIndigenous students: Reciprocal effects between self-concept and achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 72,* 102135. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0361476X22000947

[13] Dillon, A., Craven, R. G., Kaur, G., & Yeung, A. S. (2020). Support for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australian students' wellbeing at school. *International Journal of Educational Research, 99.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2019.101520

Mooney, J., Seaton, M., Kaur, G., Marsh, H. W., & Yeung, A. S. (2016). Cultural perspectives on Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students' school motivation and engagement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 47*, 11-23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2016.04.006

Tikoft, C., Craven, R., Mooney, J., & Yeung, A. (2023). High-ability Aboriginal Australian students' reasoning about source of effort. *Cambridge Journal of Education.* https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/PKJKASUMIMZM4PXSUYMB/full?target=10.1080/0305764X.2022.2161475

> **Recommendation 3**
>
> Wellbeing targets in the NSRA should assess reforms for students most in need and include Indigenous Australian student voices.

Cultivating a Comprehensive School Environment with Evidence-Based Wellbeing Approaches: Interventions need to consider schools as an environment and systemic entity. This means that when investigating school learning and wellbeing, it is crucial to consider the school environment and the interrelationships of all those interacting in this environment. Undeniably, research has demonstrated the importance of principals for teachers' wellbeing.[5] [14] In turn, identifying factors that foster teachers' professional development, resilience, and wellbeing are of great importance for student learning, as other research has shown that teachers are the most influential factor for student learning[15] and teacher wellbeing is positively related to student experience, including engagement, motivation and achievement[16] and wellbeing.[17] Moreover, research indicates an (indirect) relationship between principals' behaviour and students' wellbeing,[18] which in turn impacts student outcomes. Interventions that have been proven to be effective in the school context ideally target and improve student *and* teacher experience. For example, IPPE's autonomy-supportive intervention program[19] (ASIP, based on the self-determination theory[20]) has demonstrated improvements in student engagement and teacher wellbeing.

It is necessary to ascertain the theoretical underpinning, research rigour, and psychometrics of the measurement, and applicability to the stakeholders of the Australian school context. Evidence-based procedures, such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses, can complement suggestions in this regard. Analysing what interventions effectively enhance student mental health and wellbeing provides a basis for identifying feasible and successful modules adaptable to the Australian school system and individual schools. Crucially, these interventions should be co-designed, incorporating the perspectives and expertise of key stakeholders in schools, including principals, teachers, parents, and students.

> **Recommendation 4**
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> The NSRA consider multiple sources of information including the synthesis of existing international research for their evidence base.

Including a wellbeing target in the next NSRA could be beneficial to prioritize and monitor school wellbeing at a national level. This target could focus on specific wellbeing indicators or outcomes, such as emotional

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[14] Shen, J., Leslie, J. M., Spybrook, J. K., & Ma, X. (2012). Are principal background and school processes related to teacher job satisfaction? A multilevel study using schools and staffing survey 2003-04. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(2), 200-230.

[15] Hattie, J. A. C. (2009). Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. London, UK: Routledge.

[16] Maricuțoiu, L. P., Pap, Z., Ștefancu, E., Mladenovici, V., Valache, D. G., Popescu, B. D., ... & Vîrgă, D. (2023). Is Teachers' Well-Being Associated with Students' School Experience? A Meta-analysis of Cross-Sectional Evidence. *Educational Psychology Review, 35*(1), 1.

[17] Harding, S., Morris, R., Gunnell, D., Ford, T., Hollingworth, W., Tilling, K., ... & Kidger, J. (2019). Is teachers' mental health and wellbeing associated with students' mental health and wellbeing?. *Journal of affective disorders, 242,* 180-187.

[18] Sebastian, J., & Allensworth, E. (2012). The influence of principal leadership on classroom instruction and student learning a study of mediated pathways to learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*, 626–663.

[19] Cheon, S. H., Reeve, J., Yu, T. H., & Jang, H. R. (2014). The teacher benefits from giving autonomy support during physical education instruction. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 36*(4), 331-346.

[20] Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology, 25*(1), 54-67.

resilience, life satisfaction, or a reduction in mental health challenges among students. To implement this, a combination of existing data collections and additional data may be required:

Existing Data Collections: Some aspects of student wellbeing may already be captured in existing national surveys or assessments. There should be a scoping of such attempts and evaluation of how to avoid multiple efforts. If structured to be longitudinal these data collections can provide a baseline for measuring progress towards the wellbeing target.

Key variables within the school environment are school climate and relational variables, such as sense of belonging to school[21], student -teacher relationships[22], and job satisfaction with the school environment.[5] Our recommendation would be a data collection that assesses the same wellbeing constructs nationwide for comparability and transparency of the data. To minimise survey burden by students and administering organisations (i.e., schools) we recommend replacing or streamlining existing data collections. Further, we recommend providing individual (student level) instantaneous feedback as well as organisational level and national level reports as demonstrated by e.g., the Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey) conducted by IPPE. This procedure contributes to survey participation and increases the acceptance of survey measures which is demonstrated by the minimal drop-out rate and constant sample size of the ongoing and established Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing survey.

Additional Data: However, since wellbeing is a multifaceted concept, additional data collection may be necessary to cover all relevant aspects comprehensively. This could involve targeted surveys or assessments that specifically focus on wellbeing-related factors. Given the multidimensional nature of wellbeing, additional data collection becomes crucial to comprehensively cover all relevant aspects.

Furthermore, statistical methods like matrix sampling can be employed to reduce the survey burden on students while maximizing the breadth of the surveys. Researchers at IPPE have extensive experience in such methods and can attest to their efficacy in large-scale educational surveys. By considering evidence-based wellbeing approaches and incorporating a wellbeing target, the national reform agenda can foster a supportive and nurturing educational environment that prioritizes the mental health and overall wellbeing of all students.

Recommendation 5

NSRA will investigate and streamline student wellbeing data already captured in existing national surveys or assessment as well as potentially expand survey attempts by adding in climate type variables.

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[21] Allen, K. A., Jamshidi, N., Berger, E., Reupert, A., Wurf, G., & May, F. (2022). Impact of school-based interventions for building school belonging in adolescence: A systematic review. *Educational Psychology* Review, 34(1), 229-257.
Korpershoek, H., Canrinus, E. T., Fokkens-Bruinsma, M., & de Boer, H. (2020). The relationships between school belonging and students' motivational, social-emotional, behavioural, and academic outcomes in secondary education: A meta-analytic review. *Research papers in education, 35*(6), 641-680.
[22] Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The influence of affective teacher–student relationships on students' school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach. *Review of educational research, 81*(4), 493-529.

3.   Student Surveys and Assessment Programs for Wellbeing Evaluation

This section responds to the following consultation paper questions:

11. Would there be benefit in surveying students to help understand student perceptions of safety and belonging at school, subjective state of wellbeing, school climate and classroom disruption? Would there be value in incorporating this into existing National Assessment Program surveys such as NAPLAN?

12. To what extent do school leaders and teachers have the skills and training to support students struggling with mental health?

IPPE holds the view that the primary theme underlying these questions is the prioritisation and addressing of student mental health and wellbeing within the education system. Additionally, the importance of considering the necessary support and resources for school leaders and teachers to effectively tackle these challenges is emphasised. We strongly believe in the advantages of surveying students to gain valuable insights into their perceptions of safety, belonging, wellbeing, school climate, and classroom disruption.

Surveying students can provide valuable insights into various aspects of their school perspectives and is essential in understanding their needs, challenges, and overall experiences within the educational environment. Gathering this data can help identify areas for improvement, tailor support systems, and enhance overall student wellbeing. As such, incorporating such student surveys into existing National Assessment Program surveys can offer several benefits to promote a more comprehensive assessment of student development. However, we recommend keeping these separate from government administered initiatives such as NAPLAN and commissioning independent research organisations to conduct such surveys to a) ensure honest responses minimising social desirability that students and educational staff might display if such survey is administered by the government or related institutions and b) signal that these key factors are as important as any achievement related assessment. Additionally, to optimize the survey process, statistical methods like matrix sampling can be employed. These methods help reduce the survey burden on students while still capturing a wide range of valuable data (see 2.).

Recommendation 6

Conducting independent student surveys is highly recommended as it offers valuable insights into various aspects of school experiences.

We recognize the mental health challenges faced by school leaders and teachers and the need for comprehensive and sustainable solutions that include adequate support structures and resources. As demonstrated in the Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey Report[4], student mental health and wellbeing is a key concern for Australian school leaders demonstrating that they currently do not feel adequately prepared/supported to deal with this issue. Furthermore, Australian educational staff is showing alarming levels of low mental health and wellbeing and reporting high workload as major stressor[4] [23] [24]. This means that even if they acquire these skills placing this additional burden on them will in the current situation be counterproductive. IPPE recognises the importance of evidence-based procedures, such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses, in identifying effective interventions that can positively impact student mental health and wellbeing. Analysing what interventions effectively enhance student mental

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[23] Australian Teacher Workforce Data: National Teacher Workforce Characteristics Report December 2021 (the ATWD Teacher Workforce Report).
[24] Longmuir, F., Gallo Cordoba, B., Phillips, M., Allen, K.A. & Moharami, M. (2022). Australian Teachers' Perceptions of their Work in 2022. Monash University. https://doi.org/10.26180/21212891

health and wellbeing provides a basis for identifying feasible and successful modules adaptable to the Australian school system and individual schools. Crucially, these interventions and professional development trainings should be co-designed, incorporating the perspectives and expertise of key stakeholders in schools, including principals, teachers, parents, and students (see also above). Additionally, schools should also be supported to access professional learning during working hours to encourage the uptake. See Recommendation 1.

4.   Data Collection, Accessibility, and Utilisation for Educational Reforms

This section responds to the following consultation paper questions:

> *26. What data are of most value to you and how accessible are these for you?*

> *27. Is there any data that are not currently collected and reported on that is vital to understanding education in Australia? Why is this data important?*

> *28. Should data measurement and reporting on outcomes of students with disability be a priority under the next NSRA? If so, how can this data be most efficiently collected?*

> *30. Is there data collected by schools, systems, sectors or jurisdictions that could be made more available to inform policy design and implementation? What systems would be necessary to enable these data are made available safely and efficiently?*

> *32. Should an independent body be responsible for collecting and holding data? What rules should be in place to govern the sharing of data through this body?*

IPPE strongly advocates the necessity of collecting data to achieve a comprehensive understanding of education in Australia. To facilitate this, we propose entrusting an independent body with the responsibility of collecting and holding this valuable information. To efficiently gather the data, we recommend developing standardised and inclusive assessment methods and fostering collaboration between educational institutions. Drawing on our extensive experience in utilising valuable data from schools, systems, sectors, and jurisdictions to inform policy design and implementation, IPPE suggests implementing a nationwide data collection that assesses the same wellbeing constructs for comparability and transparency. To minimise the survey burden on students and administering organizations (such as schools), we propose replacing or streamlining existing data collections.

Furthermore, to enhance survey participation and the acceptance of survey measures, IPPE advocates for providing individual (student level) instantaneous feedback, as well as organisational and national-level reports. This approach, exemplified by the Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey,[4] has demonstrated success in maintaining a constant sample size and minimal drop-out rate.

Additionally, we recognise the utility of statistical methods such as matrix sampling in large-scale educational surveys, which effectively reduces the survey burden on students while maximising the scope of the surveys. Our researchers at IPPE possess extensive experience in employing such methods, further affirming their usefulness in the educational context.

> **Recommendation 7**
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> That the NSRA investigate the potential for longitudinal research into the teacher workforce outside the ATWD initiative.

Appendix A: Institute of Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) at Australian Catholic University (ACU)

The Institute of Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) at the Australian Catholic University is a flagship research institute. We have well-established reputation as a world-class research centre internationally recognised for substantive and methodological advances in positive psychology, wellbeing, resilience, motivation, self-determination and self-concept research; advanced quantitative analysis; and for developing psychometrically sound measures of important psychosocial outcomes.

Research at IPPE capitalises on the positive psychology revolution sweeping social science research worldwide. Working collaboratively with scholars across the world, our researchers drive and achieve tangible success in international research in positive psychology.

We are recognised for substantive and methodological advances in research into physical and psychological well-being, resilience, and self-concept, for developing psychometrically sound measures of important psychosocial outcomes, and for achieving synergistic blends of rigorous quantitative, qualitative, and applied research.

Collectively our research teams have been awarded over 70 Australian Research Council grants (including ARC Future Fellowship and DECRAs). Before gaining Institute status at ACU, IPPE was an established world-class research centre (founded by Professor Marsh in 1998). There are three central research programs:

- Educational & Developmental Psychology: This research steam explores the factors that allow humans to flourish and to contribute to their community and society.

- Indigenous Game Changers: Indigenous Game Changers' purpose is to enable Indigenous children, youth and communities to, not just succeed, but thrive.

- Motivation & Behaviour: This program focuses focused on understanding human motivation and behaviour for the promotion of human wellness.

In recent years, the public standing of ACU's research has improved dramatically. The last Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment (in 2018) awarded ACU particularly high ratings in the fields of research identified as strategic priorities and in which investment has been especially concentrated. For example, ACU more than doubled the total number of top scores of 5 (well above world standard) in the 2018 ERA.