



Australian Education Union

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23 July 2021

Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Secretariat
Department of Education, Skills and Employment
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: ITEReview@dese.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Australian Education Union Submission to the
Quality Initial Teacher Education Review**

Please find attached the Australian Education Union's submission to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to the Review of Quality Initial Teacher Education.

Please contact me if you have any questions in relation to this submission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'S Hopgood'.

Susan Hopgood
Federal Secretary



**Submission to the
Department of Education, Skills and Employment
on the Review of Quality Initial Teacher Education**

23 July 2021

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Federal President

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Introduction

The Australian Education Union (AEU) represents more than 194,000 members employed in public primary, secondary and special schools and the early childhood, TAFE and adult provision sectors as teachers, educational leaders, education assistants or support staff across Australia. The AEU has a primary strategic objective to “protect and promote quality teaching and learning” which, among others, includes the following aims:

- To enhance and support the professional and industrial status of AEU members in public education.
- To achieve minimum academic standards and entry scores for teaching degrees.
- To achieve minimum entry to teaching of a two year post graduate teaching qualification.
- To ensure access to professional development

The explicit purpose of each of these aims is to ensure that teachers are supported at each stage of their careers, including during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE). As such, the AEU welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to Quality Initial Teacher Education Review. The AEU has made multiple submissions to numerous bodies in recent years that are relevant to the current Inquiry, including the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) initial consultation concerning the development of national selection guidelines for admission into Initial Teacher Education (2013), the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (2017), the National Review of Teacher Registration (2018) and the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession (2018). This submission draws on, and updates some material of particular relevance to ITE from those previous submissions.

The OECD report *Effective Teacher Policies: Insights from PISA* states unequivocally that the “quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teachers; but the quality of teachers cannot exceed the quality of the policies that shape their work environment in school and that guide their selection, recruitment and development.”¹ The AEU is committed to the pursuit of higher standards in all facets of public education, and has consistently advocated for the application of uniformly high standards for the qualifications, induction and ongoing professional learning for teachers. The maintenance, and where necessary, the introduction of high standards in teacher education and ongoing development is essential to protect and enhance the status of the teaching profession.

This submission will address each of the ten terms of reference in turn. It will also offer a number of recommendations for actions required to improve ITE and encourage the attraction and retention of high performing school graduates to the teaching profession.²

¹ OECD (2018), *Effective Teacher Policies: Insights from PISA*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301603-en> .p.20

² Recommendations are throughout the submission and listed on page 27

1. How can we further encourage high-performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter ITE and choose teaching as a career?

Australia has a long way to go in presenting teaching as an attractive profession. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data shows that Australia is 27th of 34 OECD countries in the gap between the percentages of high achieving 15 year olds who expect to be working as a teacher at age 30 and those who expect to pursue a different career, with a 28 percentage point gap between the two.³ The requirements for entry to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) are broader in Australia than in most similar countries. Among the 19 countries and economies listed as high performing by the OECD, Australia has the highest share of students entering ITE with low marks in core subjects, at 11.1% of student teachers. Australia also has the fourth lowest share of top performers in at least one subject entering ITE.⁴

Student enrolment projections from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment predict that an additional 345,000 students will be enrolled in Australian schools by 2029⁵, and 2019 employment projections produced by the National Skills Commission showed that demand for school teachers was expected to increase by 10.2% (or 42,600 new jobs) over the five years to May 2024, above the average projected growth rate across all occupations of 8.3%.⁶ In New South Wales alone an additional 11,000 teachers will be needed over the next decade, and this increases to an additional 13,750 teachers if student teacher ratios were to be maintained at the national average.⁷

Attracting high performing school leavers to teaching requires reward and respect for the profession. If this review seeks to ensure that there are enough teachers available to meet the rapid increases in forthcoming demand and ameliorate the decline in high achieving and highly motivated students who want to enter ITE and pursue teaching careers, then it is essential that the primary drivers of this decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a profession are properly analysed and comprehensively addressed. There is an urgent need for systemic workforce planning and improved workforce retention strategies.

³*Ibid.* p.28.

⁴*Ibid.* p.47.

⁵ Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment, QUESTION ON NOTICE, Additional Estimates 2019 – 2020, Outcome: Schools, Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Question No. SQ20-000156, Projections for enrolments in schools

⁶ Australian Government Labour Market Information Portal (Senate Question on Notice SQ20-001980)

⁷ Rorris, R., *NSW Public Schools to 2031: Impact of Enrolment Growth on Demand for Teachers*, retrieved from <https://www.nswtf.org.au/files/rorris-report.pdf>

Reward - Teachers' Pay

To attract high quality candidates into teaching it is necessary to invest in appropriate salary structures that reward teachers' experience and expertise and to provide teachers with the time and space to do their jobs. Numerous international studies from the 1970s to the current decade have consistently shown that higher teacher salaries relative to those of other comparable professionals increase the likelihood of highly performing secondary students becoming teachers, and reduce long term rates of attrition. Chevalier, Dolton & McIntosh (2006) found that the number of high quality secondary school graduates who enter teaching rises and falls in direct correlation with teachers' salaries.⁸ As pointed out by Ingvarson et al. in their submission to the Teachers Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) in 2014, there is also a clear correlation between a country's investment in teachers' salaries and the performance of its students in PISA tests. Furthermore, whilst early career teachers are remunerated at similar levels to those in other graduate positions, there is a noticeable lag in teachers' pay progression over time which leads to shortages, attrition and difficulties in recruitment, particularly for teachers in Science, Technology, and Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Although pay is not the sole determining factor in the attractiveness or otherwise of any profession, it nonetheless is a significant consideration, and is an area where in Australia teaching has failed to keep pace with other professional occupations requiring similar levels of qualification and skill. One example of this is the artificial wage "cap" imposed on teachers' salaries by numerous state governments which has had a substantial and ongoing impact on the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession. There are also significant limitations to teachers' pay that reduce the attractiveness of the profession to high performing secondary students and university graduates from in demand disciplines.

The career and salary progression structure for teachers in most states and territories creates a severe disincentive for students to consider a career in teaching. The relatively narrow interval between graduate salaries and those of the most experienced teachers has the effect of forcing a decline in salary, relative to other professions, as experience and expertise increases.⁹ This is in stark contrast to evidence from a study of teachers' salaries in 30 countries that shows that the salaries of experienced teachers relative to other comparable professions distinguishes countries with high levels of student achievement from others. In Australia, by contrast, teachers' salaries have stagnated, particularly at the "flat" top end of the scale in existing salary structures, which research has shown discourages potentially good teachers from entering the profession.¹⁰

⁸Chevalier, A., Dolton, P. & McIntosh, S. (2007). Recruiting and retaining teachers in the UK. An analysis of graduate occupational choice from the 1960s to the 1990s. *Economica*, 74(293), pp. 71

⁹ Ingvarson, L., Reid, K., Buckley, S., Kleinhenz, E., Masters, G., Rowley, G. (2014). *Best Practice Teacher Education Programs and Australia's Own Programs*. Canberra: Department of Education, p.47.

¹⁰ Akiba, M., Ciu, Y., Shimizu, K., & Lang, G. (2012). Teacher salary and student achievement: A crossnational analysis of 30 countries. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 53, 171-181. cited in Ingvarson et. al, *Op.cit.* p.47

In 2012 the Productivity Commission report on the schools workforce recognised this as a major issue for the attractiveness of teaching as a profession, noting that in most states and territories teachers will reach the top of the pay scale in around a decade, and (citing the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the OECD) concluded that “average weekly ordinary time earnings in the broader education sector are now only about 7% above the average for all surveyed industries, compared with 14% in 1994. Moreover, there is evidence that salaries at the top of teacher pay scales did not increase in real terms between 1995 and 2009.”¹¹ At that time the ratio between the top of the salary scale and teachers’ starting salaries in Australia was approximately 1.4, significantly lower than the OECD average of just over 1.6.¹² More recently the gap has further widened and *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2020* shows that whilst the OECD average ratio at the top of the scale has increased to 1.7 times starting salary, in Australia nothing has changed, with the average salary for Australian teachers stuck at 1.4 times starting salary.¹³ This means that unlike most OECD countries where experienced teachers continue to be rewarded through pay progression well into their careers, in Australia a teacher can spend most (and potentially up to three quarters) of their career at the top of the salary scale without access to pay progression.

Over time, and over the last two decades in particular, the complexity of teachers work has increased significantly. The frequency of practise changes to comply with policy changes, increased administrative and data requirements and increasing numbers of students requiring additional support have all increased whilst salaries have not. The recent independent inquiry *Valuing the Teaching Profession* made the following observations on the increased challenge inherent to teaching in recent decades and found that increased complexity has not been met by improvements to pay:

“The Panel is of the view the evidence from teachers and experts is persuasive in arguing that ... there has been a markedly significant change in teachers’ work. All aspects of the work of teachers has grown in volume and complexity.”¹⁴

“At the same time as these increases in work, complexity and responsibility there has been a decline in the relative position of teacher salaries alongside that of other professions and a reduced attractiveness of public sector teaching as a career; this being a contradiction that needs urgent attention by way of a significant upgrade in teacher salaries and an improvement in career options.”¹⁵

Further, the Inquiry’s Chair the Hon. Dr Geoff Gallop sounds the alarm on the short and medium term impact of the imbalance created by the failure of teaching’s pay structures to keep up with the demands of the profession.

“Taken with the fragile and inadequate staffing mechanisms currently in place, the salary levels in place and projected for the next three to five years are dangerous for the public standing of the profession, and for the quality of education available to the students of the state’s [NSW] public schools.”¹⁶

¹¹ Productivity Commission (2012), *Schools Workforce*, Research Report, Canberra. p5

¹² *Ibid.*, p111

¹³ Retrieved from [OECD Statistics Education and Training](#)

¹⁴ Gallop, G., Kavanagh, T. & Lee, P., *Valuing the Teaching Profession: An Independent Inquiry*, 2021, p.126

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.133.

The impact of teacher workload on attractiveness, retention and attrition

Workload is a major issue in attracting high performers to teaching careers and to retaining teachers after they have graduated. Whilst the challenge inherent to teaching can certainly attract high achieving students to the profession, there is a huge body of evidence showing that unrelentingly high workloads are actually driving teachers away.

Both the Victorian and the NSW Teachers Federation Branches of the AEU have conducted extensive studies of teachers' workloads and average weekly working hours in recent years, and both have found that teachers are working substantially more hours than contracted at significantly higher levels than the OECD average, and are undertaking a very large amount of work at home and during holidays.

In NSW, a survey of over 18,000 teachers found that the average full time teacher is working 55 hours per week during term time, with over 43 hours per week at school on average and a further 11 hours per week at home.¹⁷ In Victoria, a 2016 study of classroom teachers reported working an average of 53 hours per week, and leading teachers reported working an average of 55 hours per week. These results have since been validated by another 2021 survey of over 10,000 Teachers in Victoria which found that on average they work 53 hours per week.¹⁸ As pointed out by McGrath-Champ et al, both the Victorian and NSW average teacher working hours are considerably higher than the OECD average, which measures teachers' required hours overall at approximately 1,200 hours per year. McGrath-Champ, et al extrapolate teachers' reported hours in NSW to approximately 1,720 hours per year, suggesting they are high on an international scale, and exceeding their contractual workloads by up to 43%.¹⁹

In the 2021 Victorian workload survey, only 14% of teachers said that their workload is often or nearly always manageable, and only 15% felt that they often or nearly always had a good balance between home and work. 84% of teachers indicated that their workload at some stage has had a negative effect on their home life, and most alarmingly, 49% teachers in all schools indicated that their workload often or nearly always adversely affected their health.²⁰ In addition to excessive working hours, a large majority of teachers report significant workload intensification and sustainability concerns. The AEU's national *2020 State of our Schools* survey found that 73% of experienced teachers who are considering leaving the profession prior to retirement said that workload would be the driving factor for their decision.

The consistency of these results across states and across teachers of all levels of experience in both primary and secondary schools, clearly indicates that work in schools simply is too great in volume to be undertaken in the time available at school, and it is no surprise that less than one third of teachers say that they "have the time to do my job well."²¹

¹⁷ McGrath- Champ, S., Wilson, R., Stacey, M. & Fitzgerald, S., (2018) *Understanding Teaching in Schools, the Foundation for Teaching and Learning: 2018 Report to the NSW Teachers Federation*, Sydney, p. 14

¹⁸ *State of our School Survey Results: Survey of Victorian Public School Staff, conducted Feb-March 2021*, retrieved from <https://www.aeuvic.asn.au/sites/default/files/vgsa/210430%20State%20of%20our%20Schools-FINAL.pdf? t=1619736721>

¹⁹ McGrath- Champ, et al. *Op cit.* p.28.

²⁰ Weldon, P. & Ingvarson, L. (2016), *School Staff Workload Survey: Final Report to the Australian Education Union Victorian Branch*, p.38

²¹ *NSW People Matter Employee Survey 2020*, retrieved from <https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-data/people-matter-employee-survey/pmes-2020>

The workload burden on teachers in Australia is immense, and the general acceptance of teachers working up to the equivalent of two additional days per week for sustained periods of time and indeed often on a permanent basis, and being swamped with additional tasks only tangentially related to their practice, is one of the factors most frequently cited by teachers as the reason for burn out and attrition. A teacher from the NSW Teachers Federation workload study describes the experience:

“I am currently on leave from the Head Teacher position and am working as a classroom teacher. This decision was due to excessive work hours, averaging 80+ hours per week in term and 50+ hours in "holidays" as a Head Teacher for 6 years. The stress of this unsustainable workload left me physically exhausted and mentally drained. Total burn out. Having been working as a classroom teacher for a year, I still feel unable to resume my duties, although I am gradually recovering. I felt there was no real support for me in [the] couple of years building up to this decision. I was told to re-prioritise, but when I did, I was continually instructed to do things I had prioritised at a low level”²²

As recently noted by John Buchanan: “It is possible we are degrading the environment and habitat of all teachers, putting in jeopardy their capacity to survive.”²³

Respect - Teachers are being used as scapegoats for a litany of policy failures

In recent years the blame for Australia’s performance in international assessments has been consistently pinned on teachers by large sections of the media and by politicians looking to divert attention from their own policy failures. The ‘teacher quality’ narrative that any decline or flat lining in student performance in local and international standardised testing is due to flaws in the level of competence of teachers severely undermines public confidence in the profession and is a major disincentive to those considering joining the profession. Such messaging, inevitably accompanied by calls to curtail professional autonomy through the advocacy of direct instruction teaching methods and the teaching of synthetic phonics, unfortunately tells secondary school graduates, including high performers, that teaching is a ‘fall back’ profession - something to study if other courses with more competitive entry requirements are not accessible.

Changes to state and federal funding of schools resulting from the bi-lateral National School Reform Agreements (NSRAs) signed between the various states and territory governments and the Commonwealth in 2018 and 2019 further entrench educational inequality. The result of these agreements is that only 1.3% of public schools will receive funding which meets the SRS from combined State/Territory and Commonwealth Government contributions by 2023 compared to over 90% of private schools.²⁴

²² McGrath-Champ, S. et al., *Op.cit.*, p 35

²³ Buchanan, J. (2020). Challenging the deprofessionalisation of teaching and teachers: Claiming and acclaiming the profession. Springer.

²⁴ AEU internal analysis of NSRA bi-lateral agreements 2018-19, retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.au/national-school-reform-agreement-0>

The unfair allocations of funding locked in by these agreements inevitably impact on the performance of Australian students in international and national assessments. The SRS allocations within the agreements deepen the existing inequity between school systems and entrench the gap in learning outcomes in education. The AEU's position, supported by a large and credible body of national and international research, is that investment in equity in our education system is vital to improving Australia's educational outcomes.

This is a fundamental issue for the attractiveness of teaching that cannot be addressed by tinkering with the content of ITE courses. What is required is a recalibration of school resourcing to enable true needs based school funding and an overhaul of teacher salary structures to enable continual progression throughout the course of a career.

2. What changes to admissions and degree requirements, including recognition of prior experience, would better attract and support suitable mid- and late-career professionals from other fields transition into the profession and become quality teachers?

A two year postgraduate masters is essential

Teaching, like other respected professions, must have a process for entry that includes rigorous preparation centred on academic study and professional experience, an in-depth test of subject and pedagogical knowledge, and a comprehensive teacher-readiness assessment. There must be no lowering of standards by reducing the duration of study or academic rigour required to gain teaching qualifications in Australia, regardless of prior experience. A suitable program of study and teacher professional experience (practicum experience) is a fundamental prerequisite for equipping future teachers with the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need to successfully teach in the increasingly complex 21st century school environments in which they will find themselves.

If the trend towards the recruitment of ITE entrants with low or undisclosed ATARs continues it has the capacity to seriously undermine current efforts to raise standards and the status of the profession through teacher registration processes. The AEU has always held the qualifications of teachers to high standards and is steadfast in its position that there must not be any weakening of either the content or entry requirements to ITE programs - as found by Darling-Hammond et.al "the greatest gains in student learning were attributable to...more experienced, better qualified teachers."²⁵ This is also supported by the OECD which raises concerns about the quality of teaching and learning in classes taught by teachers who are not fully qualified and found that "a higher concentration of lesser qualified or novice teachers in schools serving disadvantaged students can have a negative impact on student performance, further diminishing their chances of success."²⁶ This finding serves as a clear warning on the potential impact the further expansion of alternative pathways such as Teach For Australia (TFA), which deliberately and explicitly aims to place unqualified teachers into schools in disadvantaged communities.

²⁵ Darling-Hammond, L., et.al, *Empowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around The World*, 2017, p.111

²⁶ Schleicher, A. (2012), Ed., *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from around the World*, OECD Publishing, p.58

The AEU is committed to a minimum five year full time equivalent qualification for teaching qualifications, as was agreed by all Commonwealth, state and territory education ministers in 2013, and will oppose any lowering of qualification benchmarks from ITE providers, governments or registration authorities.

The AEU supports the entry of mid and late career professionals into teaching but this must not be accompanied by any lowering of qualification standards that could undermine the pedagogical knowledge and skills base required to teach effectively. As stated by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) it is essential that graduate teachers display “achievement and persistence at tertiary studies and bring maturity and knowledge and skills that provide a solid platform from which to develop specific pedagogical understandings”²⁷.

Whilst entry to teaching at the mid or late career stage does allow entrants to draw upon substantial knowledge and experience gained through extensive prior participation in the workforce, the science and pedagogy of teaching requires extended immersion and rigorous consideration of theories of learning and understandings of student complexity and their needs. For this reason, the AEU strongly supports the current requirement for post graduate ITE courses to consist of a two year master’s degree.

Fast tracks are fast failures

The 2018 review of *One Teaching Profession: Teacher Registration in Australia* found that that alternative authorisation to teach is used in inconsistent and variable ways across jurisdictions and often used in response to teacher shortages. Further, it found a need for “a better national understanding of how this category of registration is deployed. This includes how it fits into broader workforce planning and provides motivation for engagement of staff with the expertise to support leaders and teachers to create high quality learning opportunities for children and students.”²⁸ The AEU asserts that the risk inherent in lowering qualification standards is particularly acute in jurisdictions which use the alternative authority to teach to bring unqualified and under-qualified people into classrooms. The alternative authority to teach is designed as a stop gap where there is an acute shortage in a particular area, a significant issue arises when it is used as a core component of any program which seeks to fast track unqualified teachers into the classroom without adequate supervision. There is no evidence that this practice is in the interests of student learning, helps promote high standards or is a suitable mechanism for attracting and retaining people to the profession, and the result is indeed often harmful to both student learning and the retention of fast tracked teachers to the profession.

²⁷ MGSE (2014). A response to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Board’s Issues Paper on behalf of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from https://submissions.education.gov.au/Forms/TEMAG/_layouts/SP.Submissions/ViewDoc.ashx?id=%7B0b89f457-18a0-48bd-832b-e837ad42cc1e%7D, p.1

²⁸ *One Teaching Profession: Teacher Registration in Australia*, 2018, retrieved from <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/national-review-of-teacher-registration/report/one-teaching-profession---teacher-registration-in-australia.pdf> p. 8

Evidence from the implementation of programs such as TFA and its predecessor Teach Next,²⁹ actually demonstrates the reverse; that such ‘fast track’ programs are wasteful and inefficient and undermine both quality and retention. Where they have been implemented, such programs have been clearly demonstrated not to have a sustainable impact on teaching quality. Recruiting unqualified and inexperienced TFA associates to teach in the most disadvantaged communities is not just counterintuitive, it is damaging for all concerned; the model has not succeeded in its stated goals anywhere it has been implemented.

Teach for Australia is detrimental to the teaching profession. The program is expensive, with the Commonwealth having provided \$57 million for the program from 2008–09 to 2017–18, followed by additional funding of \$20.5 million to 2020–21³⁰ (an investment that has yielded a total of alumni of 650) and saddled with very high attrition rates. Furthermore, attrition rates demonstrate that TFA Graduates are ill-prepared for the role and have a substantially higher drop-out rate from the profession than their fully qualified peers. The evaluation report commissioned by the Commonwealth Department for Education and Training from management consultancy firm Dandolo Partners, shows that within a year of completing their two year placement more than a third of TFA associates have already stopped teaching, and that after three years less than half of all TFA associates are still employed as teachers.³¹ The estimated cost of training each Teach for Australia alumnus who remains in the profession for at least three years is close to a quarter of a million dollars.³²

The dangers of Teach for Australia are increased by the fact that the program is explicitly aimed at attracting and supporting graduates to teach in schools in disadvantaged communities for two years, reducing teaching for those concerned to a short term philanthropic exercise rather than a long term professional commitment. The placement of TFA associates in such schools may further increase educational inequity, as evidence clearly demonstrates that the skills required to become an effective teacher cannot be acquired over such a short period of time. This short term placement of TFA associates, also runs against academic evidence which indicates that teaching quality improves with years of experience, and has the potential to contribute to the instability of staffing arrangements, further undermining the quality of education provided to students.

²⁹ Topsfield, J, *Gillard's school plan costly failure*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 14/02/2013, retrieved from <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/gillards-school-plan-a-costly-failure-20130213-2edbi.html>

³⁰ Answer to Question on Notice No. SQ17-000482, Additional Estimates 2016-2017, cited at <http://www.saveourschools.com.au/teachers/teach-for-australia-fails-in-its-mission>

³¹ Dandolo Partners (2017). *Teach for Australia Program Evaluation Report*. retrieved from https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/final_tfa_public_report.pdf, p.16

³² Total Commonwealth funding provided to Teach for Australia (\$77.5 million) divided estimated maximum total alumni still working as teachers after three years (650/2)

We note that this review's discussion paper lists the move to a two year master's degree as a potential deterrent for mid-career professionals to become teachers and we are aware that the cost of the master's program and the cost of not working while undertaking the program have been touted as major disincentives. In order to ameliorate this the focus must be on ensuring that ITE students have access to adequate financial support during their studies to enable them to study for the required period of time, rather than on lowering standards to avoid the potential impact of time out of the workforce. Our position is that these costs should be mitigated by making scholarships and/or bursaries available to mid-career professionals who wish to teach, rather than the counterproductive approach of fast tracking through TFA or other similar programs which result in underprepared fast tracked graduates in the classroom, which may increase the 'flow' of teachers into the profession but actually increases short and long term attrition and ultimately reduces the 'stock' of experienced teachers working in Australia's education systems.

Continued attempts to fast track mid-career professionals through ITE amount to an admission of policy failure and neglect by government – teacher shortages have been ignored for over a decade. Evidence from the implementation of such programs that aim to fast track mid-career professionals into teaching such as TFA demonstrates that they undermine quality and retention and wherever they have been implemented, in Australia, in the US and in the UK and such programs have been clearly demonstrated not to be effective in preparing mid or late career ITE students to enter the classroom.

Australia needs a systemic approach to preparing teachers for a successful career in the classroom and a more rigorous threshold to ensure that every teacher entering the profession at any stage of their career is actually ready to teach. The top-performing countries in international assessments spend substantially more time and resources than Australia does to ensure that standards, programs and entry assessments are aligned and coherent. As found by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Professional Standards) and the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures provide a strong foundation for improvement and the maintenance of quality in ITE. These standards must now be effectively applied and implementation timeframes improved to ensure that all those entering the teaching profession are properly prepared.

Undergraduate ITE entry and qualification requirements

For many years the AEU has advocated for the consistent application of high level undergraduate ITE, and we again reiterate our commitment to ensure that ITE providers uphold the qualification benchmarks that reinforce the higher level of knowledge, skills and expertise required to be a proficient teacher in contemporary public education. The process to register ITE programs must be rigorous and uphold the high standards expected by the teaching profession.

The deregulation of modern higher education in Australia has meant that the academic standards required to enter many tertiary courses, including undergraduate ITE courses, are significantly lower than they should be, and lower than standards were in previous decades. A consequence of this decline in standards is a massive increase in the numbers of people undertaking ITE - in 2001 there were 54,000 people training to be teachers, in 2019 there were over 92,000.³³ In order to bolster the capabilities of newly qualified teachers it is imperative that this long term but recently accelerated decline in ITE entry standards is urgently reversed.

The worst case scenario in Australia's deregulated and under-funded higher education system would be one where ITE applicants are treated as 'cash cows' by tertiary institutions, and an ever increasing number of ITE students are admitted with lower (or undisclosed) Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores with their fees used by universities to cross subsidise the more in demand and more expensive courses on offer.³⁴ This scenario would have dire implications for the status of the teaching profession and for Australian school students in the future. Unfortunately, the current low and declining average ATAR scores for ITE courses are consistent with just such a situation.³⁵

The AEU's position is that minimum entry requirements should be adopted for selection into ITE to recruit the top 30% of students into the profession, with equivalent measures for those seeking entrance to ITE from points/pathways other than completion of schooling. This standard is not currently maintained in recruitment to ITE, and is actually declining. According to the most recent data from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), the number of students entering ITE via a secondary education pathway with an ATAR lower than 70 has grown from 25% in 2006 to 36% in 2017.³⁶

Dr Rachel Wilson of the University of Sydney has conducted an analysis of the ATAR scores of secondary students admitted to ITE from 2006 to 2015. It shows a rapid increase of students admitted to ITE without providing an ATAR to their university over that decade, coupled with a marked decline in students with ATARs of at least 70 or greater entering ITE. The trend from 2013 onwards shows a marked decline in the number of students with ATARs of 70 and above admitted to ITE in conjunction with a long term trend from 2010 onwards, of places on ITE courses that have increasingly been filled with students with ATARs of less than 60 with a steady increase of those with ATARs of less than 50 also being admitted to ITE.³⁷

³³ 2019 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Data Report, retrieved from <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/research-evidence/ite-data-report/2019/aitsl-ite-data-report-2019-highlights.pdf>

³⁴ <https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-publications/resources/2019-transparency-higher-education-expenditure-publication>

³⁵ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2017), *Insights. Initial teacher education: data report 2017*, Retrieved from https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/research-evidence/ite-data-report/2017/ite-data-report-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=a33fe93c_2

³⁶ Deloitte, *Transparency in Higher Education Expenditure*, retrieved from <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/ite-data-report-2019>

³⁷ Wilson, R., *Standards and Transparency in Intake to Teacher Education*, presentation to NSW Education Standards Authority, (April 12, 2018)

As stated by Ingvarson et al in their report to the teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, “teacher education programs cannot be both remedial... and high quality.”³⁸ To improve the standard of ITE minimum entry requirements should be adopted for selection to recruit from the top 30% of secondary school students into the profession.

The international best-practice benchmark for entry into teacher education remains at the top 30% of school graduates and Ingvarson shows that high performing countries in international student assessments have strict controls over access to ITE. For example, in Canada ITE institutions ‘select trainees from the top 30 per cent of cohorts and pre-service teachers must have high grade point averages to gain entry to teacher training’.³⁹ In Singapore ITE applicants are subjected to a meticulous screening process. Decent wages and conditions along with job security were also factors in bolstering demand in all of the countries studied. Demand for ITE places in Finland significantly outstrips supply: only 10% of applicants are accepted into primary teacher training courses and consequently there are very high course completion rates, especially considering that the minimum qualification to become a primary or secondary teacher is a master’s degree.⁴⁰

Unfortunately this is not the case in Australia. Ingvarson argues that “tougher selection alone will not ensure that many more of our brightest graduates will see teaching as an attractive, high status career option and increase demand for places.”⁴¹ He cites the results of surveys of secondary school students showing that although they see teaching as an important profession, the most able secondary students indicate that the lack of long term salary progression and career status prevents them from considering a career in teaching.

This is reiterated by Wilson, who writes that “Low standards at admission contribute to the current low status of the profession, and calls for the development of a national teacher recruitment strategy.”⁴² In addition, Wilson recommends investment in a campaign to acknowledge the importance of teachers to society and for the National Teacher Workforce Strategy to develop a better plan to recruit Australia’s brightest to the profession.⁴³

3. How can we increase ITE completion rates so that quality ITE students graduate and pursue careers as quality teachers?

Many students are entering teacher education ill-prepared and with and completion rates show that many struggle to finish their degrees.⁴⁴ Teacher education is taking in record numbers of students, yet only one in two students who started in 2012 went on to finish their degree within 6 years.

³⁸ (2014), p.66., quoted in Rachel Wilson, *The Profession At Risk – Trends in Standards for Admission to Teaching Degrees* (2020).

³⁹ Ingvarson, L., Reid, K., Buckley, S., Kleinhenz, E., Masters, G., Rowley, G. (t, 2014). *Best Practice Teacher Education Programs and Australia’s Own Programs*. Canberra: Department of Education. Retrieved from http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=teacher_education, p.53

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.53

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p.xiii

⁴² Wilson (2020), cited in Gallop, G., *Op. cit.*, p.96.

⁴³ Wilson, *The Profession At Risk – Trends in Standards for Admission to Teaching Degrees* (2020).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Universities have a responsibility to ensure their students have every opportunity to successfully complete their course, but they also have a responsibility to ensure that high standards are maintained. This is particularly relevant for courses such as undergraduate ITE where large and increasing numbers of entrants begin their enrolment without disclosing their prior academic history which limits the ability of universities to identify where there is an increased need for assistance and to provide appropriate support.

Ensuring that entry requirements are met is key, as is ensuring that students are enrolled in a form of ITE that continues to challenge and engage them throughout their course. As detailed in this review's discussion paper, from 2009 to 2019 total ITE commencements have increased by 4% whilst ITE completions have declined by 5%. At the same time, there has been substantial growth in the proportion of ITE students studying either partially or wholly online. The AITSL National Teacher Education Pipeline Report shows that enrolment in online ITE courses has grown significantly since 2006 and that by 2016 19% of enrolled students were undertaking part of their studies online and 25% of students were studying their ITE programs entirely online.⁴⁵ It also shows that those who studied externally via online programs only had the lowest completion rates, both for undergraduates (27%) and for postgraduates (59%). This is highly inefficient, serving neither the interest of the entire economy in terms of workforce planning, nor the interests of candidates who are ill-suited to teaching when they could be pursuing alternative career pathways. For this reason the AEU is very concerned about the continuing efforts of some providers to normalise online training as the primary mode of ITE delivery.

Benefit can be found in combining online and in person delivery modes, and high completions are evident in mixed delivery courses, particularly for post graduate students.⁴⁶ It is essential, however, that in person study must be the primary component of every course as it is necessary to build professional networks, develop a collaborative approach and to provide the support that individuals need to develop as good teachers.

Rigorous entry requirements focused on recruitment of the top 30% of school graduates, coupled with workforce planning to meet future demand, must be urgently introduced to ensure a stable and steady supply of teachers into Australia's schools.

4. What more can be done to address issues with workforce supply in some subject areas (particularly maths) and schools?

Comprehensive workforce planning is required to provide more focussed and better resourced delivery of ITE, to plan for future workforce requirements and to maximise the retention of graduates in the teacher workforce. The *Valuing the Teaching Profession: an independent inquiry* report outlined the broad contours of this problem in NSW, including: "shortages in the areas of Mathematics, science with physics and specific subjects in particular geographical areas" and referred to looming retirements over the next 10 years; the resignation rate among early career teachers; and the NSW Auditor General's statement in

⁴⁵ National Initial Teacher Education Pipeline: Australian Teacher Workforce Data Report 1, retrieved from https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/atwd/reports/new-pipeline-report/2020_aitsl-atwd_pipelinereport.pdf p.13

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.13

2019 that the supply and demand for secondary teachers was not being accurately tracked by the Department of Education.⁴⁷

There is no doubt that there are teacher shortages in Science and Maths, but as the inquiry also highlights the factors driving shortages are multiple and intertwined. Shortages are also evident in English and Languages. There are also location based shortages in outer metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas and in many schools in neighbourhoods with low socio-economic status (SES). The narrow focus on some subjects in this review betrays a lack of attention towards workforce supply and demand and a lack of strategy for dealing with teacher shortages from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

The AEU's 2020 *State of Our Schools* survey shows that almost half (47%) of 787 public school principals surveyed experienced teacher shortages in the last year, and this increases to more than half of principals in remote schools (54%) and three quarters in very remote schools (75%). There was also significant differentiation by the socio-economic status of the school student cohort, with 53% of Principals at low SES schools reporting teacher shortages compared to 38% of Principals at high SES schools.

Shortages are also endemic in schools with disadvantaged and low SES student cohorts. It stands to reason that schools in disadvantaged communities and under resourced schools have greater shortages driven by lower levels of teacher satisfaction and higher levels of attrition and turnover than advantaged and well-resourced schools. Australia is the only high performing OECD country where schools in disadvantaged areas are resourced to a lower level than schools in the most advantaged areas⁴⁸ and continually stands out among OECD countries because of its failure to allocate resources where they are most needed and the impact of this failure is felt most heavily in public schools. Data derived from PISA 2015, summarised in the table below, shows that teachers and students in Australia's schools in disadvantaged communities are systematically denied the resources that are essential for effective teaching and learning, and that are available to their peers in more advantaged communities. These schools have higher student/teacher ratios and more teacher shortages. This leads to more teachers teaching out-of-field and the recruitment of less experienced teachers. This in turn increases teacher turnover, and increases the number of teachers employed on short term insecure contracts.⁴⁹

The driver of all these impacts on teaching resources in schools in disadvantaged communities is a lack of true needs based funding. The bi-lateral agreements between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments lock in this inequity so that 99% of public schools will not meet the minimum Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2023, a shortfall that economic analysis shows deprives public schools of a total of \$4.8 billion dollars funding each year, a total of more than \$1,700 for each public school student every year.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Gallop, *Op. cit.*, pp.90-91.

⁴⁸ Trevor Cobbold (2018), [Massive Gaps in Teacher Resources Between Disadvantaged and Advantaged Schools In Australia.pdf](#), Save Our Schools, Oct. 2018

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Rorris, R., *The Schooling Resource Standard in Australia: Impacts on Public Schools*, retrieved from https://www.aeufederal.org.au/application/files/5016/0393/4220/The_Schooling_Resource_Standard_in_Australia.pdf

These funding shortfalls prevent the hiring of potentially tens of thousands of additional teachers and specialist support staff in Australia’s public schools, and significantly increase workloads for teachers already employed which limits their ability to engage in professional development. It is this lack of full funding, and a lack of quality ITE aimed specifically at recruiting to schools in disadvantaged communities that prevent the development of the resources needed to uphold the qualification benchmarks expected for all schools - those that reinforce the higher level of knowledge, skills and expertise required to be a proficient teacher.

Table 1: Teaching Resources in Schools in Disadvantaged and Advantaged Communities in Australia⁵¹

	Schools in Disadvantaged Communities	Schools in Advantaged Communities
Students per teacher (no.)	12.6	11.6
Teacher shortage (% of schools)	35.6	6.3
Teacher absenteeism (% of students in schools where teacher absenteeism hinders learning)	21.1	5.6
Out-of-field teaching (science)	25.0	15.4
Out-of-field teaching (other subjects)	21.7	15.5
Students in schools with poorly qualified teachers (%)	31.9	4.8
Students in schools with teachers not well-prepared for classes (%)	20.7	5.8
Average years of teaching (science %)	14.3	17.5
Less than 5 years’ experience (science teachers %)	26.5	17.4
Less than 5 years’ experience (other teachers %)	22.8	14.6
On contract of 1 year or less (science %)	12.0	8.9
On contract of 1 year or less (other teachers %)	12.5	9.7

⁵¹ OECD (2018), *Effective Teacher Policies: Insights from PISA, 2018*, Online tables. cited in Trevor Cobbold, [Massive Gaps in Teacher Resources Between Disadvantaged and Advantaged Schools In Australia.pdf](#), Save Our Schools, Oct. 2018

In addition to the focused induction, mentoring and professional development programs required to equip all teachers with the support required to progress through the professional standards, governments have a responsibility to ensure that schools in disadvantaged communities receive a greater level of support and investment to ensure that all schools can attract highly qualified and skilled teachers.

It is essential that personnel and resource management systems are put in place to address supply and demand within the teaching workforce and that systemic workforce planning is enacted to ensure a workforce that is diverse and reflective of the community it serves.

As shown time and time again by the OECD, salaries for experienced teachers are not competitive. Pay and conditions are the most important signal to the labour market and the most effective way to attract and retain the teachers we need, in the numbers we need, is by lifting the appeal of the profession by investing in teachers. This has been known for decades and the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University found higher salaries to be essential to lifting the aptitude of those entering the profession nearly fifteen years ago. In 2007 it concluded that:

“As to enticing students with aptitude to seek a teaching career it was recommended teachers’ salaries should be used to attract the high-achieving student into the profession. The research expressed the view that this would be cost effective and raise the quality of the teaching profession.”⁵²

Improving pay and conditions must be a priority across the profession as a whole. A national teacher recruitment strategy is key to turning things around. Such a strategy must detail principles for the whole pipeline into the profession, ensuring sufficient rewards and permanent jobs are available to recruit fully qualified and professionally supported teachers. It should provide full transparency and high improvement targets for standards at entry to teaching degrees and for completion rates, alongside factors like teacher pay and conditions. Importantly, such a strategy could also include a targeted education and media campaign for the public.

Additionally, in order to address the intractable issue of shortages and out of field teaching, federally funded scholarships should be made available to train teachers in fields where demand exceeds supply. Such scholarships should be available for all teachers and, critically, should encourage the participation of those currently employed on insecure contracts by offering permanency upon completion to increase incentives for the take up. This could go some way towards addressing the intractable problem of out of field teaching and teacher shortages.

It is essential that greater co-operation between state and territory education departments and universities occurs on issue of ITE enrolments and the need to address teacher shortages for specific subjects. The Victorian Teacher Supply and Demand Working Party is an example of a higher level of co-operation that could be instigated in all jurisdictions.

⁵² Quoted in Gallop, *Op. cit.* pp.93-94.

5. How can we attract a more diverse cohort into ITE so that teachers better mirror the diversity in school students and society?

Workforce planning needs to prioritise a diverse workforce that is reflective of the community, and that supports entry to the profession whilst upholding entry and qualifications standards. This review's discussion paper refers in particular to the under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the profession so our response here is focused on measures that have proven very successful in attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers that could be recommended for reinstatement by this review.

The AITSL National Initial Teacher Education Pipeline Report shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ITE students are under-represented in the commencement ITE student cohort at 2% of ITE enrolments compared to 3% of the population, are 3 times underrepresented compared to the nearly 6% of school students who are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background and have lower completion rates than all ITE students.⁵³

Evidence from previous successful initiatives to recruit and train First Nations teachers provides a clear path forward. The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI) was a national project funded by the then Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and managed by the University of South Australia through the office of Professor Peter Buckskin, Dean, Indigenous Scholarship, Engagement and Research. The overarching objectives of the MATSI project were to increase:

- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching positions in schools;
- the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers; and
- the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in teaching positions in schools.

The project commenced in 2011, and despite recommendations to support its continuation, based on robust research and evidence of positive outcomes, the project was finalised in 2016, with opportunities for its extension lost in changes to the machinery of government in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, following the election of the Abbott government in 2014⁵⁴.

⁵³ National Initial Teacher Education Pipeline: Australian Teacher Workforce Data Report 1, retrieved from https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/atwd/reports/new-pipeline-report/2020_aitsl-atwd_pipelinerreport.pdf p.12

⁵⁴ Rose, M., (2018), *Close the Gap: More Indigenous Graduates*, La Trobe University, accessed at <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2018/opinion/close-the-gap-more-indigenous-graduates>

An independent evaluation of the initiative⁵⁵ found that project partners intensified their commitment to achieving MATSITI's aims through their formal participation in the project and further, that partners and stakeholders raised their awareness of the 'direct relationship between the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools and improvements in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.'⁵⁶ Finally, the project resulted in a 16.5% increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers between 2012 and 2015, "due to recruitment and improved levels of identification."⁵⁷

In order to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking ITE, a comprehensive workforce strategy, of the scale of MATSITI and which builds on the outcomes of that program, needs to be developed and implemented. The overarching objectives of the strategy must be to increase: the number, capacity and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching positions in schools. This is critical to develop leaders and provide appropriate professional development that leads in a meaningful and appropriate way to a full qualification.

PART B – Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

6. What more can we do to ensure that ITE curriculum is evidence-based and all future teachers are equipped to implement evidence-based teaching practices?

The ITE curriculum should reflect the changed and changing contexts in which teachers and principals now do their work. A broad evidence base is essential, and universities as research-based institutions should be supported to offer a curriculum as part of the course accreditation standards which is evidence-based. However, it must begin with a recognition that teachers collect huge amounts of data every day through their own professional practices, including essential qualitative data, which informs their teaching and learning programs. It must be imparted to ITE students as future professionals that constant measurement and data collection is not the meaning of "evidence-based" that would support a high-quality workforce and education system, or improved outcomes. Nor is "evidence based teaching practice" to be used as euphemism for the imposition of direct instruction approaches or programs that limit teachers' pedagogical autonomy.

What is essential is providing teachers with the time, professional development and support to explore a range of evidence applicable to their student contexts. This remains fundamental to exploration of successful teaching practice. Opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn from one another, share experiences, resources and strategies is inherent in the success of such examination of evidence.

⁵⁵ Johnson, P., Cherednichenki, B. and Rose, M., *Evaluation of the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative Project: Final Report* (2016), accessed at <http://matsiti.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/MATSITI-2016-Project-Evaluation-Final-Report.pdf>

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6

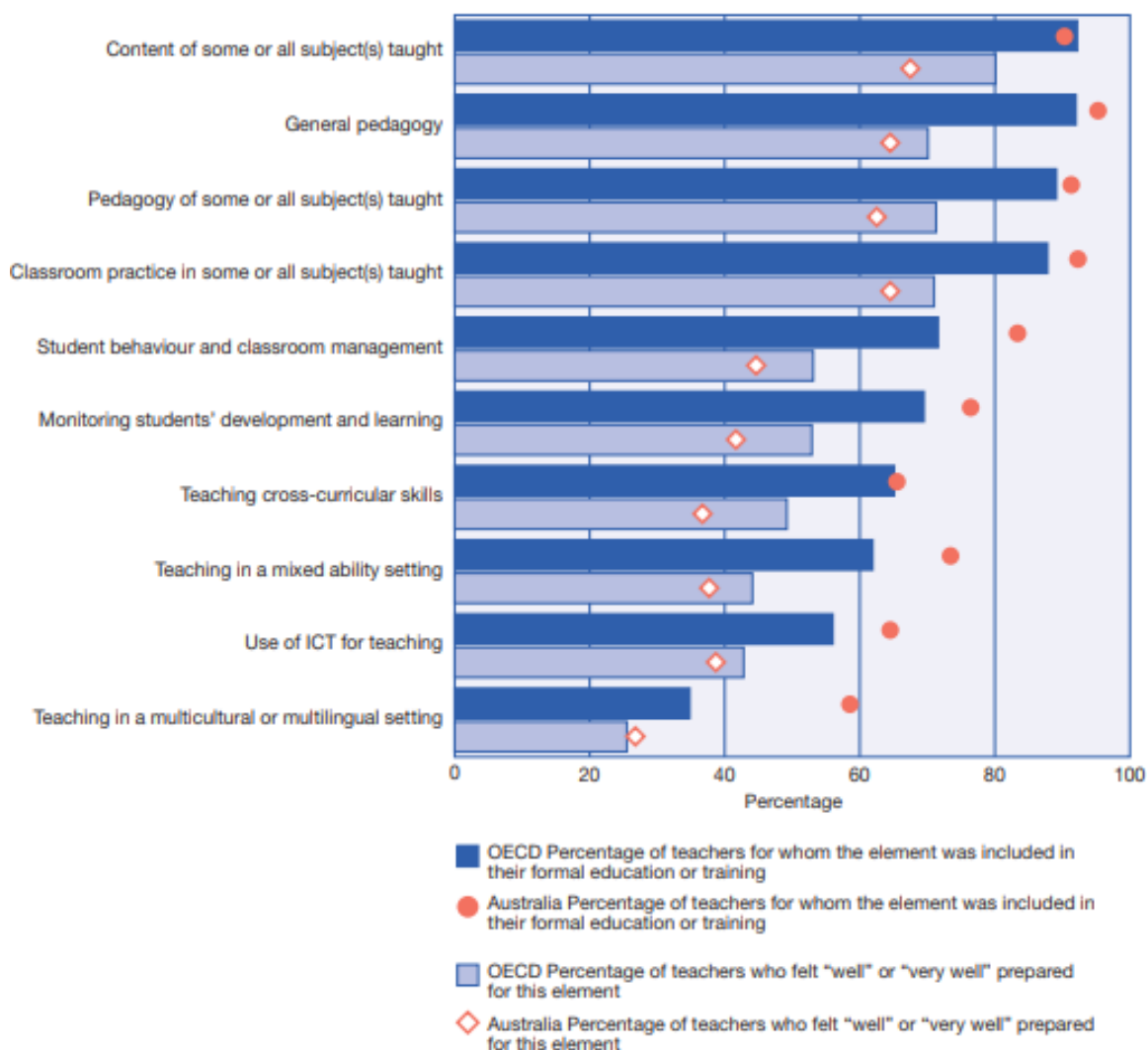
⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6

This is more important than ever as 30% new educators (those with three or less years' experience) have told the AEU that they do not believe their ITE sufficiently prepared them for the complex realities of the classroom. Among those who were felt underprepared the main areas lacking were teaching students whose first language is not English (62%), dealing with difficult behaviour (55%), teaching students with disability (47%) and teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (43%, 48% in remote schools and 46% in very remote schools). 26% of new educators said that their ITE was not helpful in preparing them to deliver strategies for teaching numeracy, rising to 39% among new secondary teachers and 35% of new educators said that their ITE was not helpful in preparing them to manage classroom activities, in under resourced schools this increased to 41%. 39% also said that ITE did not prepare for collaborative working with peers.⁵⁸

This survey data is confirmed by the TALIS 2018 results which show that across nearly all elements new educators in Australia feel less prepared to teach than their peers in other OECD countries, despite a higher percentage having covered each element during their ITE.

⁵⁸ AEU internal analysis of survey data

Figure 1: Content of teacher education and sense of preparedness for teaching⁵⁹



7. What more can ITE providers and employers do to ensure ITE students are getting the practical experience they need before they start their teaching careers?

There is a clear need for better professional experience (practicums) for student teachers and for better assessments of their readiness to teach, and to ensure they meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The AEU 2020 *State of our Schools* survey shows that new educators are not enthusiastic about how their ITE prepared them for teaching, and many did not receive assistance with the transition into teaching. On average they rate their ITE experience as 6 out of 10 and only one third intend to continue teaching in public schools until retirement. Very tellingly, only 5% of new educators said that they had received any follow up from their ITE institution at the start of their career.

⁵⁹ The Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018. *Australian Report Volume 1: Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners* by Sue Thomson and Kylie Hillman (Australian Council for Educational Research). p.80.

Increased support for ITE students is sorely needed, and this must include ongoing observation of, interaction with, and advice from experienced teachers during practicums as well as a significant increase in support from ITE providers. There needs to be financial assistance for ITE students to undertake further or additional practicum during their studies, including support with living expenses and the maintenance of student lodgings.

Extended practicums must include an adequate level of in class supervision by a mentor. However, this must be done without creating additional workload burdens for teacher mentors. Current supervision payments which have been used to support teacher mentoring of ITE students have not kept pace with the cost of living and ITE providers often try to avoid making payments to teachers and/or schools.

This review has an opportunity, as part of a national teacher workforce strategy, to instigate an ambitious Commonwealth program that funds pre-service teachers to undertake additional extended practicum and provides schools with the resources to enable experienced teachers to mentor effectively.

8. How can Teaching Performance Assessment arrangements be strengthened to ensure graduate teachers are well-prepared for the classroom?

The AEU is committed to the pursuit of higher standards in all facets of public education and supports the role of the established Professional Standards and the registration process in achieving this goal. Teacher unions campaigned for the introduction of registration decades ago and teacher registration across all states and territories, high standards for qualifications, induction and ongoing professional learning have always been priorities for the AEU. In 2014, the AEU Federal Conference re-affirmed “the AEU’s continued advocacy for and defence of high standards across the teaching profession, including Initial Teacher Education, and the application of rigour in the attainment of teacher qualifications and registration requirements and processes.”

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers have provided the necessary foundation for this consistency. The AEU believes that the seven graduate standards below cover professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement to ensure that graduates:

1. Know students and how they learn
2. Know the content and how to teach it
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on learning
6. Engage in professional learning
7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents / carers and community

At the core of that consistency is the qualification that registered teachers must have at their point of entry to the profession. The AEU reiterates its commitment to ensure that initial teacher education providers uphold the qualification benchmarks that reinforce the higher level of knowledge, skills and expertise required to be a proficient teacher in contemporary public education. We recognise the importance of school based professional experience and internships as a vital tool in preparing ITE students to enter the classroom as graduate teachers. We do not support assessments such as LANTITE, which is not an appropriate measure of graduate standards for teachers. Rather we assert that the process to register ITE programs must remain rigorous and continue to uphold the high standards expected by the teaching profession

Standards among graduates should ultimately be safeguarded through the use of minimum entry requirements to ITE and the national implementation of the Australian Professional Teaching Standards for Graduates.

The best assessments ensure graduate teachers are well prepared for the classroom and begin with a rigorous university entry score and a qualification from a university teacher education course which addresses the great complexity and diversity of our student cohorts today across Australia. As found by TEMAG, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers provide a strong foundation for improvement and the maintenance of quality in ITE.

There must be a universal application of standards for graduate teachers and rigorous preparation for pre-service teachers centred on academic study and professional experience, pedagogical knowledge, and a comprehensive teacher-readiness assessment. The graduate teaching standards provide a robust and clear expectation of what is required in this regard.

9. How can leading teachers, principals and schools play a greater role in supporting the development of ITE students?

Teachers build on their ITE by teaching, researching, self-reflection, working with colleagues, students, parents, community and through experience. Teachers must be given time within the school day to undertake these essential tasks to grow their own teaching and learning. This is especially true in the context of supervising ITE students on the professional experience/practicum components of their tertiary education.

At present, there is very rarely enough time for experienced teachers to effectively juggle the demands of their existing jobs whilst also providing mentorship and guidance to ITE students placed in a school setting. Often, payments from universities schools to provide supervision and mentorship to ITE students are delayed and the administrative requirements of supervising teachers from universities are extensive and often different between ITE institutions. All of this creates further obstacles to professional discussion and reflection, collaborative lesson planning, and provision of feedback.

Experienced teachers need to be provided with the capacity and workload relief required to mentor both student teachers during practicums and beginning teachers. Principals and school leaders need the resources to free up experienced teachers to do this. At a minimum, these should form part of the agreement between schools and universities to ensure that these resource needs are met – that universities provide prompt and full payment for the supervision of ITE students during practicums and that once graduates enter the teaching workforce, education departments provide sufficient resources to for mentoring.

As outlined in our response to number 7 above, there is a significant opportunity for this review to instigate a national program that provides adequate support for pre-service teachers to undertake extended practical experience in schools and provides the necessary resources to experienced teacher mentors and principals to allow them to engage effectively.

10. Can ITE providers play a stronger role in ongoing professional development and support of teachers?

There is a significant lack of focus on professional needs, induction, mentoring, workload, pay, secure employment and conditions of employment for beginning teachers from ITE providers. As we have seen above new educators are not enthusiastic about how their ITE prepared them for teaching, and many did not receive assistance with the transition into teaching. There is definitely room for universities to play a greater role in the ongoing professional development of teachers, and as highlighted earlier in this submission there should be specific Commonwealth funding for scholarships for teachers to undertake higher education degrees in areas of entrenched shortages. Additionally, professional development and support through the early stages of teaching careers could be funded federally and delivered by ITE institutions as part of an ongoing package of support post qualification. However, this must not be imposed in a prescriptive fashion and must be delivered in partnership with schools to meet individual requirements and avoid one-size-fits-all courses and models delivered online without collegial and collaborative interaction amongst teachers and their peers. Such models fail to meet teachers' needs for professional growth.

A consortia of universities, state and territory education departments, unions, and professional subject associations could develop and nationally implement a national professional development program with Commonwealth funding to deliver professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers, based on the successful program that was deployed throughout the 1990s.

List of AEU Recommendations to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review

Recommendation 1: That in order to attract high achieving secondary school graduates to ITE, teaching must be able to compete with in demand professions in terms of the level of continued and career long salary progression and professional development opportunities it provides. This requires a significant uplift of salaries at all points of the scale culminating in an increase of 20% at the top of the scale to meet the OECD average ratio between salaries for graduate and experienced teachers.

Recommendation 2: That Commonwealth, State and Territory governments ensure that there is systemic resource allocation with a minimum of 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard delivered to all schools.

Recommendation 3: That the teaching profession and its union representatives are involved in the consideration and implementation of educational policy change at national, state and local levels, including the formal assessment of the workload implications and the resources required for any change prior to its adoption.

Recommendation 4: That the professional autonomy of teachers is recognised and respected by governments and departments of education.

Recommendation 5: That governments address the issue of escalating and unsustainable teachers' workload

Recommendation 6: That the Inquiry refer to the MATSITI Project's extensive research archive, and implement the recommendations from the MATSITI Project's Final Report⁶⁰, Evaluation Report⁶¹, the Tarndanya Declaration⁶² and the MATSITI teacher workforce scoping plan.⁶³

Recommendation 7: That new educators are provided with workload relief in the form of additional non-teaching hours as a matter of course during their first three years of employment, and that experienced teachers are provided with appropriate workload relief to deliver mentorship.

Recommendation 8: That a strategy and timeline is developed to transition all postgraduate initial teacher education courses to two-year master's qualifications.

Recommendation 9: That, in order to protect the quality of school education, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments should not fund or accredit "fast-tracked" initial teacher education programs such as Teach for Australia or similar.

Recommendation 10: That minimum entry requirements should be adopted nationally for selection into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to recruit the top 30% of students into the profession, with equivalent measures for those seeking entrance to ITE from points/pathways other than completion of schooling.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122

⁶² Accessed at <http://matsiti.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/MATSITI-OurMobTeach-Declaration-V4.pdf>

⁶³ NSW Government (2013), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Scoping Plan*, accessed at <http://matsiti.edu.au/plans/MATSITI-Scoping-Plan-June-2013.pdf>

Recommendation 11: That a range of measures are adopted by all ITE providers to ensure candidates for entry, in addition to high academic standards, display motivation, aptitude, capacity and commitment.

Recommendation 12: That there is an urgent review of the use by some providers of predominantly or exclusively online delivery for ITE, including a more thorough published comparison of attrition, retention and compliance with the graduate and proficient career stages of those who received their training through primarily online delivery and those who did not.

Recommendation 13: That a program of incentives is developed to encourage high performing graduates of hard to recruit subject areas to become teachers, and to recruit teachers to schools that have exhibited recruitment difficulties including those in low SES areas and schools in outer metropolitan, regional and remote areas. That such incentives should include bursaries, scholarships or discounted HECS-HELP contributions for graduates from in demand subjects and permanent ongoing employment for insecurely employed teachers who undertake additional study in areas of shortage.

Recommendation 14: That a comprehensive workforce strategy is developed across all states and territories, using metrics of Teacher Supply and Demand to determine where greater ITE capacity is required, to provide more focussed and better resourced delivery of ITE and to maximise the retention of high quality entrants and graduates in the teacher workforce.

Recommendation 15: That, as a core part of this strategy, the Commonwealth should fund pre-service teachers to undertake further or additional practicum during their studies, including support with living expenses and the maintenance of student lodgings whilst away in practicum.

Recommendation 16: That processes for the receipt of payment from universities for the supervision of student teachers are reviewed and streamlined to improve efficiency.

Recommendation 17: That the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment facilitate the provision of effective induction, professional development and mentoring programs in schools for new and experienced teachers and principals. Options for doing this include the provision of incentives such as matched contributions to states and territories for induction, mentoring and continuing professional development (separate and above agreed Commonwealth, State and Territory SRS amounts) or through a national programme administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment itself. This greater level of systemic support for mentoring support must include time-release and workload relief for participating experienced teacher mentors and principals.

Recommendation 18: That a more thoroughly regulated and coordinated approach to ITE funding and accreditation in Australia is implemented, one which reviews the number and output of ITE providers to ensure high quality provision of ITE.

Recommendation 19: That LANTITE is discontinued as an assessment of teacher preparedness.

Recommendation 20: That high levels of insecure employment within the teaching profession be addressed by governments and education departments, with a concerted plan to increase secure employment, in particular for staff employed on casual and short term contracts.

Recommendation 22: That a consortia of universities, state and territory education departments, unions, and professional subject associations develop and nationally implement a professional development program with Commonwealth funding to deliver professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers.