

Feedback response to **Quality ITE Review** document

It's interesting that in the report, recruitment into teaching qualifications in Australia has been compared with recruitment in countries like Finland and Singapore where the competition to become a teacher is very strong. This highly competitive environment is because teachers are highly valued in these countries for contributing to the good of society through developing human capital and to economic development. To get a similar level of high quality applications for teaching qualifications in Australia, there would need to be a substantive shift in valuing of teachers as professionals (both financially and through societal perceptions). The two-year requirement for a Masters in Australia is putting applicants off because of the loss of other income (it is an extended intensive year in NZ). Perhaps targeted federal or state scholarships or student stipends for Masters qualifications, would assist with increasing the number of applications. There could also be additional targeted funded places for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, for initial Bachelor qualifications, right through to Masters. There would need to be enough stipends to attract promising talent to consider teaching as a career or to switch careers, especially in high demand areas such as mathematics, computer science and data science, since these areas are cross-cutting of other subject areas and will be in high demand. More public accolades for the good work teachers do, would also raise the value of becoming a teacher.

The changes to initial teacher education as a result of the TEMAG review are being implemented as accreditation processes roll out. All these changes (Teaching Performance Assessments, Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education, Non-academic selection criteria, Quality assurance of ITE programs through strengthened accreditation processes and use of Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection) in combination will result in higher quality teacher education programs with clear accountability measures. It is too early yet to judge the efficacy of each of these on the quality of graduates. More research is needed on this with specific criteria for evaluating "quality" – other than PISA results. I also think we currently have high-quality applicants for these tertiary provider ITE programs right across Australia, but the numbers need to increase. Providers of ITE are also continuously making improvements not just to the structures of their programs, but in content and integrating content, skills development and capabilities simultaneously. To gain accreditation, programs must ensure they address learners' diverse needs and meet all the AITSL initial teacher education standards. Programs that require substantive time input from teachers in schools, do not take account of the substantive workloads they already have. As well, students in more apprenticeship - like models, tend to get limited experiences from the limited number of schools they are placed in, with consequential limitations to the range of expertise they receive from their mentors. The mentor teachers for these in-school programs should have HALT status, but that does not guarantee teacher education students gain the breadth of understanding about why they should adopt and adapt practices according to students' needs.

What is missing from the agenda to improve teaching is a clearer focus on beginning teachers' development (first two years) and ongoing teacher education, as supported and funded centrally by our neighbors across the ditch - the New Zealand Government. Teaching is a profession where we expect ongoing professional learning and development in cycles of targeted improvement, as part of what good professionals do. In my opinion, there needs to be much more funding available from state and federal sources, for teachers' ongoing professional learning. This is evidenced by the fact that only 1% of existing teachers have HALT status. Until this is addressed, the idea that the schooling system can be fixed by

Response to Quality ITE Review Doc – Professor Lindsey Conner

tweaking initial teacher education is somewhat misguided and simplistic. By far the greater number of teachers are already in the system. They could be supported much more to enhance and build their existing capabilities, which may help retain good teachers as well.

One of the driving forces for people considering careers is the number of jobs available. Making more accurate predictions about the number of teaching jobs potentially available may entice more people to be change careers. We want career changers in teaching as their life experience contributes hugely to the attributes and qualities of being outstanding teachers.

I would be very happy to provide specific feedback on other dimensions to the review panel since I have been involved in State ITE accreditation panels in NT and SA and been a Dean of Education here at Flinders University (over 26 years' experience in teaching and teacher education).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Conner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Lindsey Conner, Flinders University