



# **Queensland Government Submission**

## **Quality Initial Teacher Education Review**

July 2021



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Education in Queensland

Education has a profound influence on children and young people. Every day, our teachers make a difference in the lives of students in diverse communities across Queensland. A key part of this is in developing an empowered, engaged and supported workforce that delivers exceptional education services to the Queensland community. The Queensland Government continues to invest in teachers, schools and early childhood services by operating and establishing world-class facilities and ensuring teachers have access to a diverse range of career opportunities and benefits.

The *Quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Review* (the Review) is premised on two key questions: how to best attract and select high-quality candidates into ITE and how to best prepare them to become effective teachers. These are key focus areas for the Queensland Government, and there is value in collaborating to share, develop and evaluate initiatives that attract and create pathways to engage high potential teachers to teaching, and enhance programs that develop and support teachers throughout their careers.

The Queensland Government welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Review and acknowledges the importance of building on the significant reforms to date and work still underway in some jurisdictions to implement recommendations from the 2014 Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* report.

### 1.2 Teacher supply in Queensland

Queensland state schools are responsible for delivering high quality public education services to approximately 70 per cent of all Queensland school students. The Queensland Government is the largest employer of school teachers in the state, with approximately 54,000 teachers and 580,000 students across seven regions – each offering distinct benefits and experiences. Approximately 42 per cent of schools across all sectors are in major cities, with the remaining 58 per cent in regional and remote communities<sup>1</sup>.

Nationally and in Queensland, the supply of teachers is mostly reliant on graduates entering the sector<sup>2</sup>. As detailed in the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *ITE Data Report 2019*, Queensland has experienced an increase in commencing ITE students. Specifically, Queensland experienced the largest (18 per cent) increase in commencing students between 2008 and 2017. Similarly, when looking at ITE completions for all jurisdictions, Queensland recorded the largest (19 per cent) proportional increase of completing students between 2016 to 2017<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.3 Queensland's progress

ITE in Australia has been strengthened and transformed in recent years through improvements to both the content and delivery of teacher education courses, and with a view to ensuring every preservice teacher is ready upon graduation. Since release of the TEMAG *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* report, states and territories have shown a shared commitment to driving improvement in the training of teachers.

<sup>1</sup> <https://teach.qld.gov.au/teach-in-queensland-state-schools/working-with-us>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/research-evidence/ite-data-report/2019/aitsl-ite-data-report-2019.pdf>



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Some of the most significant actions as a result of this report include implementing the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), developing more robust national ITE accreditation standards, setting new prerequisites such as non-academic entry requirements, and incorporating mandatory requirements such as the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) and the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE).

The Queensland Government is proud of its record in implementing progressive national ITE reforms from the TEMAG review to date, and is a leading jurisdiction in a number of areas:

- All Queensland ITE programs have implemented the strengthened accreditation requirements related to primary specialisation, practical experience, graduate assessment and evidence of impact.
- In 2018, 100 per cent of Queensland's ITE programs were nationally accredited to stage one accreditation. Currently, there are 37 of the 62 programs having achieved stage two accreditation, with the majority to be assessed at this level by the end of 2023.
- Queensland is the only jurisdiction to undertake a two-day stage two process that includes a campus site visit.
- All of Queensland's ITE providers have an approved TPA in place. Some jurisdictions have yet to fully implement this reform, with eight out of 47 providers nationally yet to have an endorsed TPA in their ITE courses.
- LANTITE has been implemented for all ITE students commencing in Queensland.

#### 1.4 Key principles to guide future national reform

When considering further reform for ITE, it will be important to ensure that any proposed initiatives and activities are carefully selected and evidence-based to ensure a strong pipeline of teachers that can meet the needs of a changing world.

The Queensland Government believes future national ITE reforms should:

- be selective and targeted to avoid overburdening a change-fatigued sector that is still responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- consider application of all available levers and policy instruments including those within the remit of the Australian Government;
- acknowledge the role of states and territories as system managers and employers to retain the flexibility to respond to and manage local issues;
- adopt a longitudinal focus given it can take up to 10 years to realise the benefits from ITE reform;
- be based on strong evidence suitable for an Australian context and include planning for evaluation of impact;
- align to the goals and objectives of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* including to develop an Australian education system that promotes excellence and equity;
- acknowledge supply and demand issues including differences between and within jurisdictions, and balance teacher supply and quality;
- build on existing rigorous teacher registration and ITE accreditation standards;
- support and promote access to ITE to vulnerable cohorts to improve the diversity and representativeness of the teaching workforce;
- give due consideration to consequential impacts for the early childhood teacher workforce including registration, professional development and teacher standards; and



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- promote a positive view of the teaching profession acknowledging the critical importance of the profession in shaping the lives of young Australians.

## 2.0 Part A – Attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters

### 2.1 Attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters

The Queensland Government remains committed to ensuring all Queensland students have access to the quality learning experiences they need for success in a changing world. The 2021-22 State Budget continued this commitment through a record \$15.3 billion investment in school and early childhood education, with a focus on growing the frontline teaching workforce to further support learning outcomes in state schools. This is in line with the Queensland Government's election commitment to employ 6190 new teachers and more than 1100 new teacher aides over the next four years to help keep pace with Queensland's increasing student population. This is in addition to the more than 5600 new teachers and more than 1400 new teacher aides employed since 2015<sup>4</sup>.

To strengthen attraction and recruitment strategies, the Queensland Government undertook market research in 2019 to better understand attitudes towards teaching as a profession. The research found that:

- intrinsic factors were important motivators for career changers and students alike;
- work-life balance, making a difference and sharing a passion for learning were key motivators; and
- Year 11 and 12 students had fewer positive attitudes towards teaching than other professions / vocations.

To address these challenges, the Queensland Government has developed a range of activities to attract high-potential candidates into teaching, including:

- the *Teaching in Queensland* marketing campaign from September 2020 – January 2021 which was aimed at increasing Queensland's teacher supply. Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) insights showed a 31 per cent increase in enrolments in courses in the education field for 2021 (3,676), compared to 2020 (2,810).
- the \$19.8 million commitment for a *Turn to Teaching (TTT) Internship Program* to attract candidates seeking a mid-career change into teaching and place 300 new teachers in classrooms over the next three to four years<sup>5</sup>. The program is currently being developed, with an initial pilot to commence in 2022.

The Queensland Government has a number of events, engagement activities and incentives to further encourage people to consider a career in teaching, including:

- *Teach Queensland* career fairs and regular engagement with universities via open days and other information sessions;
- a wide range of pay and benefits, with Queensland state schools having one of the highest graduate starting salaries in the country; and
- flexible employment options, financial and career benefits and professional development opportunities.

<sup>4</sup> <https://budget.qld.gov.au/highlights/#investing-in-education>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.annastaciapalaszczuk.com.au/media-releases/more-frontline-teachers-as-labor-continues-education-investment/#:~:text=October%2018%2C%202020&text=The%20plan%20also%20includes%20nearly,the%20road%20to%20economic%20recovery.>





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Attracting candidates from diverse backgrounds to teaching is a key focus area for the Queensland Government to encourage representation, diversity and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's perspective in teaching<sup>6</sup>. Data indicates only two per cent of the Australian teaching workforce is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The Queensland Government has implemented additional pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who aspire to become teachers through the *Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP)*. This is a community-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education pathway enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete teacher education through external study<sup>7</sup>.

With 63 per cent of Queensland state schools in rural and remote locations, the Queensland Government has a range of initiatives to attract teachers to work in rural and remote schools. A key incentive to attract teachers to move to rural and remote locations includes the *Recognition of Rural and Remote Service (RoRRS) Scheme*, which provides additional financial allowances to support all teaching staff and their families to take up the adventure of teaching and living in a rural and remote community<sup>8</sup>.

The Queensland Government has a number of scholarships, grants and other opportunities to promote rural and remote teaching, including:

- *Become a Rural or Remote Graduate Teacher scholarships* of up to \$20,000, which support preservice teachers from rural and remote locations who are studying online, with a commitment to teach in a rural or remote location upon completion of their course<sup>9</sup>;
- *Aspiring Teachers Grants*, which provide a one-off lump-sum grant payment of \$2,500 for general applicants, or \$5,000 for rural or remote residents, during the first semester of study<sup>10</sup>; and
- *Pearl Duncan Teaching Scholarships*, which assist Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who are studying or intending to study an undergraduate or postgraduate teacher qualification<sup>11</sup>.

The Queensland Government also has a range of activities specifically aimed at attracting people into early childhood education, which is important given the unique challenges in this sector related to lower salaries, varied working conditions, professional status and the demanding nature of the work itself<sup>12</sup>. These activities include:

- *Workforce Qualification Assistance Grants and Plan Your Future Workforce Grants* which can be offered to eligible early childhood education and care (ECEC) services to assist educators studying towards an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) qualification;
- quarterly residential blocks to provide students living in Queensland's rural and remote areas access to a week of training and tutorials; and
- an *Early Childhood Workforce Careers Campaign* targeted at attraction, retention, diversity and sustainability.

In considering future actions to improve attraction and retention, it will be critical to ensure the teaching profession is valued and regarded in a positive light. As part of this, it will be important

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/comms/cultural-competency/aitsl\\_indigenous-cultural-competency\\_discussion-paper\\_2020.pdf](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/comms/cultural-competency/aitsl_indigenous-cultural-competency_discussion-paper_2020.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://education.qld.gov.au/about-us/budgets-funding-grants/grants/state-schools/core-funding/ratep>

<sup>8</sup> <https://teach.qld.gov.au/teach-in-qld-state-schools/Documents/remote-teaching-booklet.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://teach.qld.gov.au/scholarships-and-grants/rural-and-remote-graduate-teacher-scholarship>

<sup>10</sup> <https://teach.qld.gov.au/scholarships-and-grants/aspiring-teacher-grant>

<sup>11</sup> <https://teach.qld.gov.au/scholarships-and-grants/pearl-duncan-teaching-scholarship>

<sup>12</sup> [https://eprints.qut.edu.au/98507/4/Sharon\\_McKinlay\\_Thesis.pdf](https://eprints.qut.edu.au/98507/4/Sharon_McKinlay_Thesis.pdf)



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to recognise the wide range of motivations, ages, subject matters and cultural and community contexts in which teachers operate, and avoid assumptions that rely only on high academic achievement. In this vein, it may also be beneficial to improve consistency in non-academic selection criteria for ITE courses and establish a clear national definition for a 'mid-career' professional to support targeted action to remove barriers for this cohort.

To attract the best candidates to the teaching profession, the Queensland Government believes that future ITE reforms should consider:

1. **Accessibility of ITE programs:** The location of ITE programs can significantly affect accessibility for prospective students. Research already undertaken at the federal level could inform exploration of attraction strategies to increase ITE participation and completion in line with current workforce demands, including alternate study models such as virtual delivery.
2. **Attracting mid-career professionals:** This might include additional strategies that enable high-performing, mid-career professionals to access an accelerated pathway into the teaching profession and address the significant barrier of loss of income while studying. Opportunities to lessen barriers and incentivise opportunities for mid-career changers without a formal qualification to enter teaching through a scholarship program (e.g. expand *Study Assist*<sup>13</sup> to include specific teaching scholarships) could be explored. The Australian Government could use its higher education funding and regulatory levers to attract these cohorts, including through taxation benefits and government assistance.
3. **Raising the status of the teaching profession:** There is an opportunity to address the reasons why teachers stay in the profession through a positive national media campaign, which highlights the benefits of teaching.
4. **Encouraging inclusion and diversity:** There is also an opportunity to explore initiatives that further encourage people from diverse backgrounds to enter teaching. The Australian Government could consider investing in:
  - reducing cost inhibitors and incentivising regional and remote opportunities to improve attraction in hard-to-fill locations;
  - supporting current initiatives in rural and remote locations, such as the RATEP model, so they can operate in more areas and through a greater number of providers;
  - using the National Careers Institute to encourage all students, including students with disability, to consider the full scope of tertiary opportunities available (including applying for ITE); and
  - attracting graduates to rural and remote locations through the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) by extending HELP assistance to those graduates moving to remote locations.

## 2.2 ITE program completions and entry into a teaching career

### Learning to be a teacher

As noted above, Queensland is a leading jurisdiction in implementation of the TEMAG reforms, particularly in relation to ITE program accreditation requirements. In Queensland, the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) administers ITE program entry requirements,

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/you-study/scholarships>



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including academic and non-academic eligibility requirements<sup>14</sup>. Queensland also has an additional academic prerequisite that students entering undergraduate early childhood and primary programs must achieve at least a 'sound achievement' in a Science subject.

A requirement for graduation is the successful completion of the LANTITE, which can be undertaken prior to entry or at any time throughout ITE study<sup>15</sup>. The level of support offered to students to complete the LANTITE can differ significantly between higher education institutions (HEIs), with some offering considerable support and others providing only minimal assistance or requiring students to undertake tutoring at their own cost. There are instances in Queensland where ITE providers meet the cost for students to re-sit LANTITE if unsuccessful on the first attempt. It would be preferable for more consistent standards to be required of ITE providers in relation to the nature and levels of support available for students to pass the LANTITE.

Early childhood presents its own challenges. The *Additional requirements for program accreditation in Queensland guideline* for 'Professional experience placements – early childhood' details that professional experience placements in the birth to 2-year age bracket do not contribute to minimum professional experience requirements<sup>16</sup>. This can result in ECT qualifications approved by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) not meeting the national initial teacher education accreditation requirements. There are also national and Queensland-specific barriers to eligibility for teacher registration for some qualified ECTs, including barriers related to qualification requirements, the ITE program accreditation framework, and policies and procedures, that can impact on entry numbers in early childhood.

When considering any initiatives to improve ITE completion numbers, it is important to acknowledge that ITE accreditation is about the content of the program and not the operations of the university. The Australian Government may have levers it can apply in this regard, while remaining sensitive to the fact that universities are still dealing with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including loss of jobs, revenue and fewer returning students<sup>17</sup>.

### Teacher supply

The Queensland Government is focused on delivering contemporary, high quality services to meet the changing needs of Queenslanders, through a sufficient supply of dedicated teachers. The Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Graduate Outcome Survey provides insight into Queensland's undergraduate employment outcomes. In the area of teacher-education, the total employment of graduates was 93 per cent in 2020 (5th highest study area out of 21)<sup>18</sup>.

Since 2005, the number of ITE students enrolling and obtaining teacher registration in Queensland has remained relatively static, despite steady population growth. While there is currently no state-wide shortage of teachers in Queensland state schools, the Queensland Government is committed to ensuring the state continues to have a sufficient supply of teachers to meet population growth. To achieve this, the Queensland Government continues to work with HEIs, other education sectors, and states and territories to ensure a holistic and

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.qct.edu.au/teaching-in-queensland/teacher-education-programs>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.qct.edu.au/teaching-in-queensland/literacy-and-numeracy-test>

<sup>16</sup> <https://cdn.qct.edu.au/pdf/TemplateD.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/media-item/17000-uni-jobs-lost-to-covid-19/>

<sup>18</sup> QILT Graduate Outcome Survey



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consistent approach is developed to increase attraction, retention and completion rates for ITE programs and participants, during and after qualification.

To improve ITE program completions and entry into teaching, future ITE reforms should consider:

1. **Assessing suitability of ITE candidates:** There is an opportunity to explore enhancements to enable ITE candidates to self-assess suitability prior to entering the teaching profession, as this may positively impact completion rates. However, it would be important to balance proposed enhancements with supply requirements and careful consideration of any unintended consequences that may arise from suitability testing.
2. **Enhancing information sharing:** It will be important to continue initiatives that help with sharing of discipline-specific information to improve Australia's understanding of completion rates and workforce distribution across subject areas. This may be achieved through accelerating work under the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) strategy.
3. **Additional support for ITE students:** Research and evidence suggest preservice teachers often re-evaluate their study choices after practicum, particularly with the publication of research indicating an increase in occupational violence incidents within schools<sup>19</sup>. To address this, ITE courses could include support for students in explicit positive behaviour management techniques and strategies that lift confidence in putting behaviour theory into action. A standardised, explicit program of learning for practicum may also help to support supervising teachers and mentors.
4. **Investment in reliable IT infrastructure:** The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how adaptive and responsive the education sector can be. Learnings from this serve as an evidence base to capitalise on what worked well, particularly around virtual delivery and online learning (e.g. the Queensland Government's Learning@Home Work Integrated Learning initiative<sup>20</sup>). Digital and communications infrastructure also deserve further exploration at the national level, particularly to address mobile blackspots to assist with online learning in rural and remote locations<sup>21</sup>.

### 2.3 Does the supply of teachers entering the workforce match areas of need?

#### Ensuring supply meets workforce needs

While there is no state-wide shortage of Queensland state school teachers, there remain challenges in staffing for certain subjects and locations. With a workforce of 54 000 teachers in state schools across Queensland, it is normal to have vacancies – largely due to retirements, resignations, compassionate transfers and illness. Notably, the retention rate of permanent teachers in Queensland state schools is unrivalled by most other professions and industries, remaining consistent in the range of 96 per cent for the last decade.

The Queensland Government maintains a 5-year teacher supply and demand forecast for state schools, and undertakes workforce planning to ensure there is a sustainable supply of teachers. This includes development of 3-year workforce action plans with each secondary, P-10 and P-12 school, as well as prioritised primary schools, to ensure growth and critical teaching vacancies are proactively addressed. State school teacher supply and demand forecasts for the next 12-24 months indicate the demand for teachers will be lower than pre-

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.healthandwellbeing.org/reports/AU/2020\\_AU\\_Final\\_Report\\_Embargoed.pdf](https://www.healthandwellbeing.org/reports/AU/2020_AU_Final_Report_Embargoed.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/206975/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-program>





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COVID-19 periods due to reduced international net-migration, causing reduced student enrolment growth in Queensland. This position is likely to revert once international borders and migration re-open.

While state school's data indicates there is not an overall shortage of teachers in Queensland, there is a national shortage of qualified ECTs. In Queensland, attracting and retaining qualified ECTs in ECEC services is challenging, particularly in rural and remote communities. The *Queensland ECEC Services Census* is an annual data collection from the ECEC sector, including long day care, kindergarten, family day care, outside school hours care, and state and non-state schools that provide kindergarten programs. It includes collection of ECEC workforce data, including ECT qualifications and registration status<sup>22</sup>. The need to undertake a biennial national workforce census and develop a longer-term data collection system is being considered as part of the *10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy* under development.

Schools in rural and remote locations often experience difficulties in the attraction and retention of qualified staff, leading to teacher shortages and reduced curriculum offerings. The Queensland Government has established a number of initiatives to attract teachers to rural and remote locations, including grants, scholarships and accommodation refurbishments. A key program is the *Rural and Remote Teacher Experience Program* which gives urban teachers considering teaching in a rural or remote state school a one-week experience that is organised and funded through an expression of interest program. Successful applicants are matched with hosts in rural or remote schools who teach similar year levels or subjects to ensure continuity for students and their learning environment.

#### Addressing demand for subject specialisation

The Queensland Government works closely with HEIs to ensure alignment between current and emerging curriculum offerings and ITE specialisation and output. As noted above, state schools experience contained issues of supply in some disciplines, such as Senior English, Industrial Technology and Design (ITD), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Languages other than English (LOTE), and in supporting students with disabilities.

Queensland state schools build STEM capability in the existing workforce through a range of initiatives, including a \$81.3 million STEM education program to build teacher capability and invest in resources to boost STEM education in primary schools. The Queensland Government also hosts an annual STEM teacher symposium – a two-day professional learning opportunity for state school teachers to learn from the experts about translating research into practice.

To ensure demand for specialist STEM teachers is met in high-needs rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the Queensland Government has committed to incentivising high-quality teachers and school leaders to work in state schools within these communities through the *Rural and Remote – Graduate and STEM Graduate Teacher Scholarships*<sup>23</sup>. Recipients are provided with a one-off payment of \$15,000 (before tax), to assist with study and employment expenses as a teacher in a priority region.

Queensland state schools are also experiencing challenges in recruiting languages teachers. In response, the Queensland Government has developed the *Languages Upskilling Program*,

<sup>22</sup> <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications-and-research/early-childhood-education-and-care-services-census>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/education/jobs/teacher/school/scholarships/rural-and-remote-graduate-teaching-scholarships#:~:text=The%20Rural%20and%20Remote%20Graduate,career%20in%20a%20high%20priority>



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a 24-week online training program for state school teachers proficient in another language, designed to teach the pedagogy of teaching languages in a classroom setting. As a result of completing 2018, 2019 and 2020 upskilling programs, 120 more teachers are available to teach languages in Queensland state schools.

When looking at subject specialisation, there is currently no national or consistent definition for 'teaching out-of-field'. As life-long learners, teachers gain expertise through professional development, mentoring, additional study, qualifications and classroom experience. This enables teachers to deliver curriculum outside subject specialisations in their original ITE program<sup>24</sup>. Recognising the value of experience is important to determining expertise as it relates to 'teaching out-of-field'. Building a shared understanding of this would assist in the public narrative and demonstrate the value of teaching experience.

To ensure the supply of teachers meets workforce need, future ITE reforms should consider:

1. **Continuation of information sharing:** This can be achieved through the continued development and active participation and progression of the ATWD to provide a greater understanding of the distribution of STEM capabilities, as well as other disciplines in high demand such as ITD and LOTE, across jurisdictions and nationally.
2. **Improving STEM knowledge:** Challenges in STEM areas such as Design and Technologies (workshop) and Sciences (Agricultural) require specific consideration of teacher competence. By enhancing the digital/virtual learning capacity and capability of teachers, the expertise and skills of under-utilised teachers could be used to deliver STEM curriculum, particularly in rural and remote locations which have difficulty attracting STEM staff. Programs the Australian Government could expand include:
  - the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) *STEM Professionals in Schools program* that facilitates partnerships between schools and industry to bring real STEM into the classroom to explore other disciplines beyond STEM<sup>25</sup>; and
  - the national *Advancing Women in STEM Strategy* to increase the scope of the program to encourage more female STEM teachers<sup>26</sup>.
3. **Targeted professional learning:** The Australian Government could explore opportunities to fund and develop targeted professional learning for teachers already working 'out-of-field' (e.g. skills for teaching students with disabilities) to increase supply over time.

## 3.0 Part B – Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

### 3.1 Are graduate teachers ready for the classroom?

#### Early childhood

Introduction of the National Quality Framework (NQF) in 2012, which sets out the minimum qualification requirements for ECEC services, has increased the qualification requirements for staff working in ECEC<sup>27</sup>. Since the NQF, early childhood services have reported that the

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/blueprint\\_ite\\_teacher\\_workforce\\_full\\_report.pdf?sfvrsn=c3dceb3c\\_0](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/blueprint_ite_teacher_workforce_full_report.pdf?sfvrsn=c3dceb3c_0)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.csiro.au/en/education/programs/stem-professionals-in-schools>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/advancing-women-in-stem-strategy>

<sup>27</sup> <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislation-and-guidelines/staffing-requirements-and-leadership/qualifications-and-training>



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demands, responsibilities and complexity of working in ECEC are increasing, with challenges amplified for services and educators in rural and remote communities.

From 2016, new entrants to ECT qualifications in Queensland had to meet new prerequisites for undergraduate early childhood and primary ITE programs. Educators in remote communities, including many remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, face particular barriers (e.g. geographical, cultural and linguistic) to participating in training and gaining ECT qualifications<sup>28</sup>. However, the issues affecting the ECEC workforce are broader than qualifications, including receiving lower wages than teachers in schools. The importance of 'being valued' is a consistent theme in the need to raise the professional standing of the sector.

Establishing a solid foundation for quality early learning experiences has been a key goal of the Queensland Government in developing strong partnerships with early years services, schools and communities. The Queensland Government is developing the next iteration of its *ECEC Workforce Action Plan* to continue to develop the capacity, training, skills, confidence and resilience of Queensland's ECEC workforce.

#### Preparing preservice teachers for the classroom

Professional experience provides an important avenue through which preservice teachers develop and demonstrate their teaching capabilities under the direct supervision and guidance of experienced teachers. The Queensland Government has adopted the APST for assessment of all final professional experience placements in state schools. This is bolstered by a commitment to mentoring beginning teachers as they work toward proficiency in the APST.

A key initiative to achieve this in Queensland was the development of the *Queensland Professional Experience Reporting Framework* (QPERF), which guides the supervision and assessment of preservice teachers during their professional experience placements.

The Queensland Government has a range of other strategies in place to provide support, including the Teacher Learning Centres (TLCs) and Centres for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAWs):

- The TLCs are local coordination centres that provide streamlined on-the-ground support for preservice, beginning and early career teachers by helping them to navigate the wide range of professional learning programs and development opportunities available in Queensland state schools.
- The CLAWs in Atherton, Mount Isa, Emerald and Roma provide essential professional learning, mentoring, coaching and wellbeing support delivered by the Centres' Heads of Learning and trained mentors. CLAWs play a key role in supporting new and beginning teachers to transition to teaching and to adjust to living and working in rural and remote communities. Through partnerships with HEIs, the CLAWs also encourage preservice teachers to consider undertaking a rural or remote practicum by completing a week-long community engagement program at their centre. The program includes professional learning in areas such as cultural capability, poverty and trauma-informed practice, school visits and community engagement activities.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/IndigenousParticipationInECEC-QualitativeCaseStudies.pdf>



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The Queensland Government also spends significant resources to provide on-the-job training to meet specific education needs. Queensland state schools currently teach over 60,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with some needing additional support to learn English as an additional language or dialect. Many teachers require support in recognising cultural differences and in meeting the needs of these students, as defined in APST 1.4 and 2.4. To cover the skills shortfall in this area, the Queensland Government has invested in targeted regional officers, additional funding for students, and central office design and delivery of professional development.

Any changes to the existing ITE architecture would need to account for how heavily embedded key components such as the APST and professional experience are within the profession. Changes to one component may precipitate broad impacts across the many facets of teaching, from ITE to registration to employment, which should be understood fully prior to committing to further reform.

Changes to professional experience may also result in an increase to workload and administrative burden on schools. Supervising teachers have the responsibility of mentoring and guiding the next generation of teachers, and expectations on supervising teachers are considerable. Professional experience is tailored to meet the needs of the student to provide the learning experiences that they need for the particular placement. Supervising teachers are expected to make good judgements on preservice teachers' progress at different stages of their development to support them to meet the graduate career stage of the APST.

To ensure graduates are prepared for the classroom, future ITE reforms should consider:

1. **Building cultural capability:** In several tertiary institutions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies is not a mandatory area of study in ITE programs, and many non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are entering the field of education knowing very little about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Given the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is low across Australia's teaching workforce, it is critical that the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching workforce develop cultural capability for the benefit of all students. To address this, the Australian Government could explore increasing their investment in building cultural capability. Course content could be reviewed to ensure general ITE offerings address inclusive education, teaching diverse student cohorts and differentiation, and provide guidance to schools in providing a broad professional teaching experience for ITE students.
2. **Meeting the needs of the future:** There is an opportunity to explore national initiatives to help prepare future teachers to meet the needs of a changing environment, where different skills and knowledge are required. Incorporating and emphasising global competence into ITE ensures that graduating teachers can engage positively within diverse communities, and have the understanding and skills needed to provide education relevant to the societies and economies of the future.

### 3.2 The role of teachers and school leaders in supporting the next generation of teachers

The Queensland Government has worked in partnership with HEIs to develop a range of course offerings to build teacher confidence and capability in priority curriculum areas and to support the next generation of teachers. This has been achieved through the development of





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extensive resources for beginning teachers and early career teachers to support ongoing development<sup>29</sup>.

To further support professional development, motivated teachers may apply for the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification, which is in place across all three employing sectors in Queensland. In Queensland's state schools, 112 Highly Accomplished Teachers and 8 Lead Teachers have been certified since 2017.

Any proposal for HALTs to increase their focus on development of preservice teachers would need to take into consideration the voluntary nature of national teacher certification as an optional career pathway, as well as the dispersed locations of certified teachers across Australia. It is also important to note that not all jurisdictions have an established HALT certification in place.

In Queensland, there are not sufficient HALTs to support all preservice teachers and their placements. As HALTs work across only 99 of the 1250 state schools, any requirement to supervise preservice teachers would place an unreasonable burden on these schools. While teachers who achieve certification are required to demonstrate that they have provided quality placements and support for preservice teachers, they are not the only teachers who share their expertise with preservice teachers. There are many excellent teachers in our system who have not chosen the HALT pathway and provide support for preservice teachers.

To focus on how HALTs can support new teachers misconstrues the role and nature of certification, and underestimates the value of supervising teachers who do not choose the certification pathway. It will also be important for any future ITE initiatives to recognise the valuable role school leadership plays in influencing the professional learning teachers undertake, affecting both professional and student outcomes.

In this context, future ITE reforms should consider:

1. **Mentors for beginning teachers:** The training of mentors is critical to the success of supporting new and beginning teachers. The Australian Government could explore other programs and models to increase support, such as using teaching alumni or retired teachers to mentor supervising teachers and school leaders to improve their skills and effectiveness in supporting the next generation of teachers. Such initiatives would need to be carefully supported by evidence of impact on educational outcomes.
2. **Improving data on graduate teachers:** There is also value in exploring and understanding the distribution of graduate teachers as their careers progress. Active participation in initiatives, such as the ATWD, may provide ongoing awareness of graduate career progression to inform the subsequent development, by ITE providers and employers, of supports at the necessary milestones.

#### 4.0 Closing remarks

As discussed in the submission above, to ensure the ITE system in Australia is as effective as possible in attracting and preparing a high calibre of future teachers, the Queensland Government would suggest future national ITE reforms explore opportunities to:

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<sup>29</sup> <https://teach.qld.gov.au/teach-in-queensland-state-schools/progressing-your-career>



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- attract more people to the teaching profession through a national approach to raising the status and esteem of the teaching profession;
- reduce barriers and incentivise pathways into teaching through scholarships and other incentives, including through use of Australian Government higher education funding and regulatory levers;
- further embed inclusion and diversity in all aspects of education delivery to build cultural capability and ensure our workforce reflects the communities we serve;
- provide additional support to ITE students to ensure they are ready for the classroom;
- invest in reliable IT infrastructure through Australian Government funding to explore alternate models of online learning and education delivery; and
- develop targeted professional learning to address skill challenges and gaps, and ensure future teachers meet the needs of a changing environment.

Prior to the Queensland Government considering any new initiatives or reforms, the Australian Government should make clear its commitment to new funding streams, genuine consultation including a shared role in design of initiatives, and avoidance of additional burden on schools or adverse resourcing implications. Finally, in making recommendations as part of this Review, it will be critical for maximum flexibility to be afforded to state and territory governments, so jurisdictions may adapt reforms to suit local contexts.

