**The Australian Council of Deans of Education**

The Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) is the peak body representing Australian Universities and several non-university Higher Education Providers that offer initial and post initial education degrees for teachers and educators across all sectors of education. ACDE works to ensure that Australia produces education graduates of the highest quality; has a strong teaching profession; and supports the development of an inclusive and innovative education system that enhances learning and teaching.

**Context**

Australia’s Higher Education system plays a key role in supporting the development of the Education sector across Australia. The Accord offers an important opportunity for the Higher Education sector as a whole to examine its role and to understand how, in the context of wider reforms to Teacher Education, what has been changed and is working well and where further change to the University sector (more broadly) may be required to accommodate these ongoing reforms. Along with other key stakeholders, ACDE believes that the Review offers opportunities to consider policy, funding, regulation and the operations of Higher Education Providers and the Vocational Education sector that will lead to better outcomes for the wider Australian community.

**Meeting Australia’s knowledge and skill needs, now and into the future**

The future workforce will rely heavily on the quality of education received by children and young people while at School. At this time, there is a significant shortage in the supply of teachers and school leaders which need to be addressed.

The Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) recommends that

* funding for Post-graduate qualifications in areas of workforce need for Education is given consideration; and
* careful consideration be given the Skills Priority List when making decisions about funding to support the Education sector; we need to address the current and future workforce needs in Education

**Access and opportunity**

ACDE believes that access and opportunity can be supported through the development of pathways which are adequately funded to support the movement of students between Vocational Education and Higher Education providers. Investment in rural/regional Higher Education Providers and the funding of innovative delivery models to provide better access to region and remote students to be able to study without leaving home may add to the suite of initiatives which aim to increase access and opportunity.

Better utilisation of mechanisms such as advanced standing and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may also increase affordability and accessibility to Higher Education – these are mechanisms which arguable are underutilised by at this time.

Access and opportunity need to be paired with attention to ensure that students are offered the support they need in order to be successful at University. Attention to the use of approaches to supporting retention, progression and completion which have been shown to be successful for particular cohorts need to be promoted. Greater attention to support research and innovation to drive enhanced retention, progression and completion rates for those groups that are currently underrepresented in Higher Education is needed.

As noted above, the quality of Education received by children and young people at school will make a significant contribution to addressing the underrepresentation of particular groups in Higher Education. This requires the development of a diverse teaching workforce; support for activities outlined in the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan which are aimed at increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce would be welcomed by ACDE. We would particularly point to the important role that the Higher Education sector must play in ensuring the future Indigenous teaching workforce for schools and early childhood education.

**Investment and affordability**

ACDE strongly supports the review of the Jobs-Ready Graduate Package, particularly as it relates to the reduced funding for places in Education programs. Like many professional qualifications, the cost of supporting high quality placements/work integrated learning is increasing – this matter needs urgent attention.

ACDE supports the retention, and potential expansion of the Tertiary Access Payment in support of increasing access and opportunity to take up post-school study.

**Governance, accountability and community**

In being accountable to staff and students, ACDE would point to the importance of supporting the safety and well-being of staff and students in Educational institutions as an important consideration as part of this Term of Reference.

**The connection between Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education**

ACDE supports the encouragement of stronger cross-collaboration between Universities and Vocational Education and Training Providers. These mechanisms which may support these directions include revisiting/reprising the outcomes of the review of the AQF (2019) and reviewing the value of a competency-based curriculum framework which is currently used in the Vocational Education and Training sector. In addition, increased flexibility and a clear focus on mission for the sections could support more effective integration between universities and VET institutions, which in turn, could support clearer and more effective pathways for students.

**Quality and Sustainability**

Enhancing engagement with industry is a pathway to ensuring that the quality of education at Universities can meet community expectations. However this should not be at the expense of universities as leaders in innovation.

**Delivering new knowledge, innovation and capability**

ACDE supports the Accord examining ways in which a balanced and innovative knowledge creation and translation system might be developed into the future. This means supporting both basic and translational research which may lead to commercialisation in its broadest sense. For education, the dissemination and update of evidence-based practices to support innovation and drive quality teaching and learning for children and young people across all sectors of Education are needed. The development and sustainability of a workforce that is capable of the knowledge work required of universities should also be addressed as part of this term of reference.