Submission regarding:

Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

TEACHERS AND TEACHING RESEARCH CENTRE

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DECEMBER 2022

The Teachers and Teaching Research Centre (TTRC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

Established in 2013, the TTRC is led by Laureate Professor Jenny Gore and sits within the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. Our current major research program, *Building Capacity for Quality Teaching in Australian Schools*, is supported by a $17.2 million grant from the Paul Ramsay Foundation. This program of research represents the largest study of teacher professional development in Australian education history and includes four randomised controlled trials on the impact of Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) on student and teacher outcomes across New South Wales, Victorian, and Queensland government schools.

This program of research and scaling builds on our development of the Quality Teaching (QT) Model, which has been the NSW Department of Education's framework for high-quality pedagogy since its release in 2003.

We have also conducted a substantial program of research on student aspirations – including aspirations for teaching – involving students in Years 3-12 in NSW government schools. This longitudinal work, conducted between 2012 and 2017, generated more than 12,000 student surveys and interviews/focus groups with more than 1,000 students, parents and teachers.

Our submission is informed by more than two decades of educational research into initial teacher education, quality teaching, teacher development, school change, leadership, student aspirations, equity, and STEM education.

We welcome the inclusion of the federal government's commitment to expanding Quality Teaching Rounds, as detailed in **Action 28**. Our submission seeks to provide feedback on each of the six priority areas where we can provide relevant research evidence and makes several key recommendations.

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

Education in Australia sits at a critical juncture. COVID-19 has exacerbated and shone a light on several longstanding issues that require serious attention – teacher supply shortages, high attrition rates, low morale and job satisfaction among teachers and principals, stagnating student achievement, concerning wellbeing issues and entrenched inequities.

This Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan sits alongside other critical policy work currently underway such as the Productivity Commission review of the National School Reform Agreement and the implementation of recommendations of the Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) Review, including the expert panel for Initial Teacher Education Quality Assessment.

This environment provides a rare opportunity for education reform that genuinely supports teachers and lifts outcomes for millions of students. To capitalise on this opportunity, we must adopt a system-wide approach that considers the entire teaching career lifecycle. Genuine reform that will make a lasting difference to educational outcomes in Australia requires that policy is informed by research and practice, practice is supported by research and policy, and research is valuable for policy and practice.

In our view, there are three key initiatives missing from the current draft of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan that would achieve outcomes sought across the six priority areas. The following three initiatives are further elaborated in Appendix A.

1. Improving the national evidence base

The actions outlined in the draft action plan offer an important opportunity for research and evaluation to improve our understanding of what works in education and how we can best tackle the critical challenges of the sector. Despite claims that we already know what works in education, there are many questions about teaching, learning and schooling more broadly for which the field does not have answers. Robust evidence about all facets of schooling is critical in building our understanding of which approaches and practices work and how we can create the conditions to achieve better outcomes for students, teachers and society more broadly.

Providing mechanisms for holistic evaluation of programs and initiatives in education in Australia is critical. One such approach is the implementation of recommendation 14 of the QITE Review: Establish a Centre for Excellence to teach, research and evaluate best teaching practice.

2. Providing a unifying model for quality teaching

At the heart of many of the issues facing education, schools and teachers in Australia, is the status of the teaching profession. As the draft plan rightly identifies, elevating the profession should be the number one priority. Raising the status of teaching was also the first recommendation of the QITE Review. To raise the status of the profession, teaching needs to be seen as intellectually demanding and important work. As a profession, we have failed to agree on what quality teaching looks like and, as a consequence, criticisms of teaching often become criticisms of teachers – their characteristics rather than their practice. Covered by the media more often and more negatively than other professions[1], it is no wonder we struggle to attract new teachers and retain the ones we have. Teachers are too often demoralised by a lack of respect for their important work.

A unifying model of quality teaching can provide teachers with the concepts and language to describe and enhance classroom practice at a level of specificity that is both clarifying and honours the complexity of teaching. As our research shows, when systematically embedded through the

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[1] Mockler, N. (2022). Constructing teacher identities: how the print media define and represent teachers and their work, *Bloomsbury Academic*, https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/Constructing_Teacher_Identities/zM5EEAAAQBAJ?hl

processes of Quality Teaching Rounds, such a model of quality teaching would build teacher morale, confidence, job satisfaction and, most importantly, teaching quality and academic achievement.

We applaud the Australian Government's commitment to expanding Quality Teaching Rounds, as outlined in **Action 28**, and recommend multi-jurisdictional support to achieve widespread uptake and rapid results.

3. Developing a national teacher and school leader development strategy

Actions 24 and 25 seek to improve career pathways for teachers through better development, support and guidelines. We argue that jurisdictions and key stakeholders should go further and develop a holistic national teacher and school leader development strategy that considers every stage of the teaching career lifecycle (based on a model adopted by AITSL[2]).

Such a strategy should underpin the entire National Teacher Workforce Action Plan and would support urgent government reform objectives to:

- Raise the status of the profession
- Strengthen initial teacher education
- Improve retention in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the teaching workforce
- Support teacher and student wellbeing
- Lift student achievement.

The strategy would impact teachers and teaching across the entire career lifecycle in the following ways:

Attract	Develop a national approach to teacher recruitment
Prepare	Strengthen mechanisms for ensuring ITE program quality
Place	Strengthen mechanisms for placement across jurisdictions
Induct	Guarantee induction supports and conditions
Develop	Build capacity in teaching and leadership
Recognise	Expand national system for recognising teachers including clear leadership pathways
Retain	Expand national system for retaining teachers and school leaders

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[2] AITSL (2021) Teaching Futures: Background paper. https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teachingfutures

COMMENTARY ON THE SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIONS

Elevating the profession

The status of teachers and teaching is at the heart of the current teacher shortages. Valuing teachers and raising the status of the profession have been enduring challenges of the field. Teachers are frequently subject to harsh criticisms and unfairly blamed for falling education standards.

We applaud the initiatives detailed in **Actions 1, 2 and 3** aimed at boosting the public image of teachers. However, positive publicity only addresses part of the problem surrounding the valuing of teachers (and is difficult to govern). The higher education sector has grappled with this same challenge by addressing quality through metrics like awards and student feedback rather than building capacity for quality teaching, which leaves large parts of the workforce disaffected[3]. We argue for a more holistic approach that values teachers as professionals undertaking challenging and rewarding work.

Teaching is and should be seen as intellectually (and emotionally) demanding work. Respecting the professionalism of teachers by recognising the importance of the theoretical and practical knowledge required for good teaching is paramount. Calls to reduce the length of post-graduate teaching degrees, rhetoric about recruiting the "best and brightest" teachers, and policing who enters teaching through measures like LANTITE, which are not supported by research, all work counter to policy objectives.

Recommendations:

4. End the rhetoric about "best and brightest" teachers.
5. Commission programmatic research on teacher education, possibly through establishing the Centre for Excellence proposed by the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review.

Improving teacher supply

Despite challenges facing the teacher workforce, enthusiasm for teaching exists among high school students[4]. We argue that the relentless policy and media discourse on needing "better and brighter teachers"[5], devalues teachers, their work, and their sense of professional identity, ultimately working against the aims of policy makers to attract high achieving and diverse cohorts into teaching.

Our research found teaching to be the second most popular career aspiration among students in NSW government schools in Years 3-12. Prior academic achievement (based on NAPLAN results) was **not** a significant predictor of interest in teaching[6] [7] – many high achieving students want to pursue teaching as a career.

Our research found a higher proportion of girls and a higher proportion of Indigenous students were interested in teaching, whereas students in the middle years of schooling showed less interest. Indigenous students in the highest NAPLAN quartile (quartile 4) were far less likely to desire to go to

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[3] Patfield, S. et.al (2022) Towards quality teaching in higher education: pedagogy-focused academic development for enhancing practice. *International Journal for Academic Development.* https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2022.2103561

[4] De Bortoli, L. (2021) What are the occupational aspirations of Australian 15-year-olds? *ACER* https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=snapshots

[5] Gore, J., Mockler, N. (2022). Teachers the fall guys for a failing system. *Sydney Morning Herald.* https://www.smh.com.au/national/teachers-the-fall-guys-for-a-failing-system-20220623-p5avxb.html

[6] Gore, J., Barron, R.J., Holmes, K., Smith, M. (2016). Who says we are not attracting the best and brightest? Teacher selection and the aspirations of Australian school students. *Australian Educational Researcher.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-016-0221-8

[7] Fray, L., Gore, J. (2018). Why people choose teaching: A scoping review of empirical studies, 2007–2016, *Teaching and Teacher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.06.009

university than non-Indigenous students – a result that highlights deep-seated cultural and historical factors that shape interest in attending university[8].

The student population in Australia is diverse. It is important that our workforce of teachers and school leaders is representative of wider society. Our research shows that equitable access to higher education is more complicated than overcoming crude barriers such as money, distance and prior education. While there is certainly value in the initiatives described in **Actions 5 and 6**, it is important that they are targeted and considerate of the cultural and socio-economic complexities of attracting a more diverse cohort into ITE. The implementation strategies for **Actions 5 and 6** should include: allocating places for students from underrepresented groups (at all universities, including prestigious institutions); offering targeted early entry schemes that do not rely solely on academic measures; and, providing financial support through scholarships and fellowships for disadvantaged students[9].

Policies and initiatives should also be developed that capitalise on the widespread interest in teaching among school students. One positive initiative designed to nurture students' interest in teaching is a NSW high school's "future teacher program" which takes students between Years 8 and 12 through a structured program where they have opportunities to teach in local primary schools, and learn more about what it is to teach and what it takes to become a teacher. Such career specific programs take various forms but could play an important role in attraction and recruitment.

Based on our existing research, and funded by the Australian Department of Education, we developed a free 10-hour accredited online professional development course[10] that explores how aspirations are formed and provides strategies for teachers, career advisers and school leaders to nurture aspirations in their students. This course offers an inexpensive, research-backed approach to capitalise on the existing interest in teaching in our schools.

While encouraging skilled migration is an important policy, as outlined in **Action 9**, many international jurisdictions are also battling crippling teacher shortages. The experience of attracting migrants in NSW to date has been underwhelming[11] which suggests this action should not be relied on to make a significant difference to teacher supply in the short term. We should, however, make it easier for Australian teachers to teach across jurisdictions. The accreditation and registration requirements in some Australian states are overly restrictive and need to be streamlined.

Recommendations:

6. Consider cultural and socio-economic complexities when implementing targeted higher education scholarship and placement allocation.
7. Promote the free Aspirations professional development course to teachers, school leaders and community members.
8. Streamline accreditation and registration processes across Australian jurisdictions.
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of the "future teachers program".

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[8] Gore J, Patfield S, Holmes K, et al. (2017). When higher education is possible but not desirable: Widening participation and the aspirations of Australian Indigenous school students. *Australian Journal of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944117710841

[9] Jackson, J., Tangalakis, K., Hurley, P., Solomonides, I. (2022) Equity through complexity: Inside the "black box" of the Block Model. *NCSEHE.* https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/tertiary-education/inside-the-black-box-of-the-vu-block-model

[10] University of Newcastle. (2018). Aspirations: Supporting Student Futures https://www.aspirations.edu.au

[11] O'Doherty, J. (2022) NSW Education department hiring bureaucrats three times faster than teachers. *The Daily Telegraph.* https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/new-south-wales-education/nsw-education-department-hiring-bureaucrats-three-times-faster-than-teachers/news-story/3fa41d88bc81094fb9455ff0d4ec939e

Strengthening initial teacher education

Reform in ITE is hampered by differing views on what teacher education should be and do[12]. These tensions arise from enduring differences in the ideological approaches and commitments of politicians, system leaders and teacher educators. There are four major traditions in teacher education, often pitted against one another, each with a different emphasis:

a. Disciplinary tradition: emphasises a strong background in the discipline/s one plans to teach.
b. Scientific tradition: emphasises skills in teaching based on empirical research.
c. Experiential tradition: favours apprenticeship and learning by doing.
d. Critical tradition: seeks to develop critical consciousness about the inequitable impact of schooling on children from disadvantaged social circumstances.

We argue that all four traditions in learning to teach are foundational to quality ITE, but a unifying framework is required to enhance quality and coherence in ITE programs. The ITE curriculum is crowded and fragmented, making it hard to provide the kind of program coherence that ensures graduates feel well prepared. One solution would be widespread use of the Quality Teaching (QT) Model.

The QT Model provides a common language and set of concepts that teacher educators can use to underpin and articulate what constitutes quality teaching for their students. Such a framework would add clarity on what is expected in classrooms and help build both the confidence of ITE students and their confidence in the profession in ways that impact positively on retention and completion rates in ITE and the quality of graduates.

The QT Model is comprised of elements of practice for which there is evidence of impact on student outcomes[13]. It was developed in 2003 by Associate Professor James Ladwig and Laureate Professor Jenny Gore at the University of Newcastle. The Model was commissioned by the NSW Department of Education and has been its endorsed pedagogical framework ever since. The Model focuses on what teachers do in the classroom rather than who they are. In other words, it examines the quality of teach*ing* not teach*ers*. Such a focus positions 'outputs' from ITE programs (graduates) as the primary target rather than 'inputs' (recruits). It recognises that high quality teaching can be taught and learned and teacher education matters.

The QT Model focuses on three key concepts:

1. Intellectual Quality - pedagogy focused on deep understanding of important ideas.
2. Quality Learning Environment - pedagogy that creates productive classrooms focused on learning.
3. Significance - pedagogy that helps students see value in what they are learning.

The QT Model provides a shared conceptual language for defining and understanding quality. More than a list of teaching skills or practices, the Model describes good pedagogy – the central plank of school improvement[14]. Importantly, the QT Model goes beyond the unhelpful binary distinctions that so often cloud a proper focus on pedagogy, such as explicit instruction vs inquiry oriented learning. Teachers need to select strategies appropriate to the changing needs of their students. The *quality* of the teaching that underpins whatever instructional strategy is employed is what matters most for

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[12] Gore J. (2001). Beyond our differences: A reassembling of what matters in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487101052002004

[13] Ladwig, J., King, M. (2003). Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An annotated bibliography. *NSW Department of Education and Training Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate*.

[14] Gore, J. (2022). Rethinking pedagogy: the central plank for school improvement? *Australian Association for Research in Education 2022 Conference.*

student learning[15]. It is important that ITE students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to deliver quality teaching regardless of the context in which they are teaching.

Having a quality teaching framework is a partial step to improving teaching practice. When the QT Model is combined with the powerful processes of Quality Teaching Rounds professional development, we find significant positive effects on teachers[16], teaching[16], and student outcomes[17]. Quality Teaching Rounds and the evidence behind the approach is the basis for our section on **Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession**.

Pilot studies of QT in ITE have delivered exciting results for final year students at the University of Newcastle. Participants reported greater confidence in their ability to teach, including motivating students, using a variety of teaching and assessment strategies, and successfully managing student behaviour. They also reported reduced pre-internship stress and less desire to leave the profession. Broader studies in the sector should follow. We look forward to engaging with the **Teacher Education Expert Panel (Action 10)** to provide advice on strengthening ITE program coherence.

Recently, there have been calls to reduce the two-year master's degree requirement especially for mid-career professionals in priority areas, such as engineers and accountants, so they can transfer into teaching via a single year graduate diploma or other accelerated program. While this might be a partial solution to dire teacher shortages now, it runs counter to the aim of raising the status of teaching and risks sending underprepared teachers into classrooms, exacerbating burn out and attrition[18]. Attrition from fast-track programs, such as Teach For Australia, is known to be high[19]. Quality should not be compromised. Students throughout Australia deserve qualified, well-prepared teachers, not just the quickest response to current teacher shortages. Short ITE programs are not the solution.

Recommendations

10. Pilot use of the Quality Teaching Model in ITE programs at several universities.
11. Commission research on teaching program length and maintain current standards until evidence is available.
12. Commission comprehensive programmatic research on teacher education, such as the Centre for Excellence proposed by the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review.

Maximising time to teach

We wholly support initiatives aimed at reducing the burden, red tape and administrative load on teachers.

Our research shows that teachers and school leaders are feeling increasingly under pressure and overburdened[20], as well as dispensable and unappreciated, despite working incredibly hard for their students. Covid-19 has exacerbated many of the major sources of stress for teachers – workloads,

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[15] Gore, J. (2022). Ideological battles over the curriculum and pedagogy miss the complexities of teaching. *EducationHQ.* https://educationhq.com/news/ideological-battles-over-the-curriculum-and-pedagogy-miss-the-complexities-of-teaching-113237/

[16] Gore, J., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., Ellis, H., Lubans, D. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds, *Teaching and Teacher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007

[17] Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., Harris, J., Prieto, E. (2021). Improving student achievement through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007

[18] Morrison, C., Bentley, B., Clifton, J., Ledger, S. (2022). Growing numbers of unqualified teachers are being sent into classrooms – this is not the way to 'fix' the teacher shortage, *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/growing-numbers-of-unqualified-teachers-are-being-sent-into-classrooms-this-is-not-the-way-to-fix-the-teacher-shortage-186379

[19] dandolo (2017). Teach for Australia program evaluation report, *Department of Education, Skills and Employment.* https://dese.gov.au/teaching-and-school-leadership/resources/teach-australia-program-evaluation-report

[20] Fray, L., Jaremus, F., Gore, J., Miller, A., Harris, J. (2022). Under pressure and overlooked: the impact of COVID-19 on teachers in NSW public schools, *The Australian Educational Researcher.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-022-00518-3

student behaviour, and expectations[21]. The need to cover additional classes has limited teachers' time for planning, assessment and professional development, adding to their workloads and reducing their morale.

Principals and other school leaders are suffering through increased workloads, greater stress and dealing with more behavioural issues and a drop in staff morale and school culture[22].

It is important that initiatives aimed at reducing teacher workload are developed in consultation with representatives from the profession to avoid them inadvertently devaluing teachers and their work. Recent announcements by the NSW Government highlight this important balance.

The announcement of an outsourced program to develop curriculum resources, teaching tools and lesson plans, while on the surface seemingly useful, alienated teachers who regard these activities as integral to their professional practice. More support is required, but not the kind that devalues teachers' professionalism. In the same vein, calls for paraprofessionals and parents to monitor playground duty may be detrimental as this can be a valuable time for teachers to build rapport and develop relationships with their students. Engaging with teachers to determine their needs is crucial.

We urge caution regarding **Action 18** and the deployment of ITE students in the classroom. In response to the current teacher shortages, conditional accreditation has been provided to final year ITE students to teach. Without adequate support from an already stretched workforce, this initiative risks becoming a "throw them in the deep end" approach that could exacerbate burn out and contribute to greater attrition. Furthermore, awarding conditional accreditation to ITE students runs the risk of devaluing teacher education and the strategies put in place by previous governments, including LANTITE and the Teaching Performance Assessments, designed to ensure that all students have teachers who are fully prepared to provide high quality teaching.

In our research, teachers are frequently crying out for time to plan, collaborate and engage in meaningful professional development. We argue that this is the best course of action to genuinely deliver positive change[23]. Workforce models should include adequate time and resources for such activities. A national teacher and school leader development strategy should be created to ensure consistency and quality for teachers across Australia throughout their teaching career (as outlined in Appendix A).

Recommendations:

13. Develop a national teacher and school leader development strategy.
14. Ensure time for collaboration and high-quality professional development is built into workforce agreements.

Better understanding future workforce needs

Research will be critical to understanding the future needs of the teaching profession. Initiatives should include voices from across disciplines including demography, business, psychology, sociology, linguistics, STEM, health, and education.

Actions 19, 20, and 23 are of critical importance. The need to improve the evidence base in education is clear. Too often, evidence in education and initial teacher education comes from small

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[21] Collie, R., Mansfield, C. (2022). Teacher and school stress profiles: A multilevel examination and associations with work-related outcomes, *Teaching and Teacher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103759

[22] Pierpoint, A. (2020) ASPA: School leader wellbeing – it's time to act. *Educations Matters Magazine.* https://www.educationmattersmag.com.au/aspa-school-leader-wellbeing-its-time-to-act/

[23] Coe, R., Kime, S., Singleton, D. (2022). School environment and leadership: evidence review. *Evidence Based Education.* https://evidencebased.education/school-environment-and-leadership-evidence-review/

scale and/or methodologically weak studies[24]. Often studies lack necessary sample sizes to generate generalisable findings, they measure proximal outcomes which are easier to change but less likely to demonstrate broad impact than distal outcomes, and they apply correlational or quasi-experimental designs which are more prone to bias than experimental research, particularly randomised controlled trials[25].

The prevalence of low-quality research in Australian education is not a slight on researchers – Australia has a great number of eminent researchers undertaking world-leading research in education. Rather, educational research is limited by the funding available in the field. Over the past 20 years, Education has received just 1.6 per cent of all grant funding provided by the ARC[26]. The average grant in Education over that same period is $358,164 (compared to $472,273 for all fields), which is wildly insufficient to carry out the kind of large-scale, systematic and/ or longitudinal research required to genuinely inform education policy and practice.

Making data available to the nation's researchers, including inter-jurisdictional datasets such as NAPLAN, would significantly reduce the costs of running the kinds of large, longitudinal, programmatic education research that would provide the meaningful evidence to inform policy reform and improve educational outcomes at scale. AERO is well positioned to lead the negotiation between jurisdictions and national bodies that hold important data such as ACARA and AITSL, and the brokerage of rigorous academic research in education. This kind of research could properly inform policy and practice for both better understanding our future workforce needs and lifting outcomes for education more broadly.

Recommendation:

15. Empower AERO to negotiate access to national datasets for Australian educational researchers and to commission rigorous experimental research.
16. Streamline research ethics approval processes across jurisdictions.

Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession

We applaud the government's commitment to expanding Quality Teaching Rounds as a mechanism to improve learning outcomes and support teachers in the classroom, as outlined in **Action 28**.

QTR has been subjected to some of the most rigorous research in Australian education, and has received national accolades including, in the past month alone, the Engagement Australia 2022 Excellence Award for Outstanding Engagement for Research Impact across disciplines and fields of study, and Laureate Professor Jenny Gore was named the Top Researcher in Teaching and Teacher Education in The Australian's Research Magazine 2023, based on the number of citations for papers published in the top 20 journals in each field over the past five years.

In the four years since beginning our *Building Capacity* project (funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation), we have conducted multiple randomised controlled trials, case studies and longitudinal analyses to examine the impact of QTR. In this time, QTR has positively impacted more than 3,500 teachers and 400,000 students. Despite the difficult circumstances of the past two-and-a-half years, research on QTR repeatedly shows positive effects for teachers and students.

The provision of professional development that both improves the quality of teaching and supports teacher wellbeing is especially critical in the current climate of teacher shortages and unprecedented

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[24] Miller, D., Ho, P. (2020). Effect sizes in education: bigger is better right?, *Evidence for learning.* https://evidenceforlearning.org.au/news/effect-sizes-in-education-bigger-is-better-right

[25] Miller, D. (2021) Effect sizes: Bigger is better, right? ACER *Teacher.* https://www.teachermagazine.com/au_en/articles/effect-sizes-bigger-is-better-right

[26] Australian Research Council. (2022). NCGP Trends: Areas of Research, *accessed 13 October 2022.* https://www.arc.gov.au/funding-research/funding-outcome/grants-dataset/trend-visualisation/ncgp-trends-areas-research

pressures facing the profession. First identified in our 2014-2015 randomised controlled trial (RCT)[27] and replicated in both our 2019 RCT[28] and the 2021 QTR Digital RCT[29], the evidence of positive effects of participation in QTR for teacher morale[30] and teaching quality is compelling[31].

Importantly, through the QT Model, we have a measure of teaching quality that is valid, supported by teachers, and critical in testing assumptions about teaching and teachers.

Building capacity for quality teaching should improve student achievement. To date, two studies have demonstrated that QTR improves student achievement:

1. The 2019 RCT identified two month's additional growth in mathematics achievement, and one month's (non-statistically significant) additional growth in reading achievement for students in Years 3 and 4 over the 8-month study period, relative to the control group;
2. The 2021 QTR Digital RCT identified two-month additional growth in reading achievement for primary school students in regional, remote and small schools over the 8-month study period, relative to the control group.

In these studies, two teachers per school attended a two-day QTR workshop. They then returned to school to lead a professional learning community of four teachers through four-days of in-school QTR professional development over the course of a term without further external input. In 2019, the workshops were facilitated by researchers/program developers. In 2021, the workshops were facilitated by trained "QTR Advisers". This single "set" of in-school Rounds achieved these striking results for students. Our qualitative evidence strongly suggests that these results are sustained over time[32].

Our studies provide evidence of positive impact of professional development on students' academic achievement of a kind that is rare on the international stage. Most professional development providers do not subject their interventions to such rigorous evaluation. RCTs on PD conducted in Australia and internationally indicate that evidence showing positive impact of specific interventions has been highly elusive[33]. QTR now has evidence in scope and quality that few other programs have achieved.

Our RCT methodology has been endorsed by the RAND Corporation, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (NSW Department of Education), the Institute for Social Science Research (University of Queensland), the Australian Council for Education Research and the research team led by Dr Sam Sims who conducted the meta-analysis of effective professional development at University College London[34].

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[27] Gore, J. et.al. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007

[28] Gore, J. et.al. (2021). Improving student achievement through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103297

[29] Harris, J. et.al. (2022). Creating networks and connections through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds Digital. *NCRRRE Conference*

[30] Gore, J., Rickards, B. (2021). Rejuvenating experienced teachers through Quality Teaching Rounds professional development. *Journal of Educational Change.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10833-020-09386-z

[31] Gore, J., Rosser, B. (2022). Beyond content-focused professional development: powerful professional learning through genuine learning communities across grades and subjects. *Professional Development in Education.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1725904

[32] Gore, J., Bowe, J. (2015). Interrupting attrition? Re-shaping the transition for preservice to inservice teaching through Quality Teaching Rounds. *International Journal of Educational Research.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2015.05.006

[33] Lortie-Forgues, H., & Inglis, M. (2019). Rigorous Large-Scale Educational RCTs Are Often Uninformative: Should We Be Concerned? *Educational Researcher.* https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19832850

[34] Sims, S., & Fletcher-Wood, H. (2021). Identifying the characteristics of effective teacher professional development: a critical review. School Effectiveness and School Improvement. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2020.1772841

Our published research is highly cited – the 12 papers published on QTR to date have a field-weighted citation impact score of 4.01. This score indicates that the papers are being cited in top tier journals at four times the level that is typical for education research.

Finally, QTR has been identified as a valuable approach to improving teaching and learning by the NSW Productivity Commission[35], the Quality Initial Teacher Review expert panel[36], the Australian Productivity Commission[37], and the Australian Government[38].

Recommendation

17. Secure multi-jurisdictional support for systematic implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds to achieve widespread and rapid benefits for teachers and students.

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[35] NSW Productivity Commission. (2021). White Paper 2021: Rebooting the economy. https://www.productivity.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-04/Productivity-Commission-White-Paper-2021.pdf

[36] QITE Review Expert Panel. (2021). Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review. https://education.gov.au/quality-initial-teacher-education-review/resources/next-steps-report-quality-initial-teacher-education-review

[37] Productivity Commission. (2022). Review of the National School Reform Agreement: Interim Report. https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/school-agreement/interim/school-agreement-interim.pdf

[38] Department of Education. (2022). Issues Paper: Teacher Workforce Shortages. https://ministers.education.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Teacher%20Workforce%20Shortages%20-%20Issues%20paper%20.pdf

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve the national evidence base.
2. Provide a unifying model for quality teaching.
3. Develop a national teacher and school leader development strategy.

Elevating the profession

4. End the rhetoric on "best and brightest" teachers
5. Commission comprehensive programmatic research on teacher education, such as the Centre for Excellence proposed by the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review.

Improving teacher supply

6. Consider cultural and socio-economic complexities when implementing targeted higher education scholarship and placement allocation.
7. Promote the free Aspirations professional development course to teachers, school leaders and community members.
8. Streamline accreditation and registration processes across Australian jurisdictions.
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of the "future teachers program".

Strengthening initial teacher education

10. Pilot use of the Quality Teaching Model in ITE programs at several universities.
11. Commission research on teaching program length and maintain current standards until evidence is available.
12. Commission comprehensive programmatic research on teacher education, such as the Centre for Excellence proposed by the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review.

Maximising time to teach

13. Ensure time for collaboration and high-quality professional development is built into workforce agreements.
14. Develop a national teacher and school leader development strategy.

Better understanding future workforce needs

15. Empower AERO to negotiate access to national datasets for Australian educational researchers and to commission of rigorous experimental research.
16. Streamline research ethics approval processes across jurisdictions.

Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession

17. Secure multi-jurisdictional support for systematic implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds to achieve widespread and rapid benefits for teachers and students.