

# Australian Council of State School Organisations Limited



*One voice for every child in public education*

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National Review of Teacher Registration  
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The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) is pleased to contribute to the National Review of Teacher Registration. ACSSO is the national voice for the families and communities of more than 2.5 million students enrolled in public schools across Australia. We also acknowledge parents as the initial and ongoing educators of their children that seek to work in partnership with their child's teachers – a defining tenet of ACSSO's policy approach

In our response we acknowledge and support a review of the National Teaching Standards which is to occur in 2018 – this would be timely particularly if this report looks favourably at the inclusion of Early Childhood Educators and those who wish to register as vocational education and training (VET) teachers in school settings.

We also acknowledge the Teacher Education Ministers Advisory Group (TEMAG) and their work with initial teacher education and supporting our pre-service teachers in gaining the appropriate accreditation and skills to begin their teaching career.

ACSSO believes a nationally accredited teacher registration would allow for consistency across jurisdictions and enhance the professionalism of teaching as a career. Where teachers move from one jurisdiction to another, for whatever reason they need to be confident that their current teaching credentials are recognised and acknowledged so that they are able to be gainfully employed, and can confidently consider positions wherever they may be. There currently are inconsistencies which result in additional burdens when changing location to another state or territory – these are an unfair imposition on ensuring that they best candidates are free to apply for a new position.

For parents, who are upwardly mobile, a nationally consistent registration would provide a level of confidence and understanding that the teacher of their child or children has had the same level of nationally consistent terms of registration, ongoing professional development and subject to the same conditions wherever they live.

Pre-service teacher courses are diverse in their content and mode of delivery. We support the inclusion of pre-service teachers in a form of registration as either an additional element, associate membership or another defined category. We understand that pre-service training is currently in the hands of TEMAG; the inclusion of initial education students through a pre-registration process to transition into teaching would be of great benefit to enable an exposure to a diverse range of experiences prior to achieving the graduate level in the standards. We note the experiences are varied in both time and content.

We support the need for consistent suitability requirements for teacher registration and absolutely support the specific measures for fit and proper persons particularly in line with *the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* recommendations.

There is opportunity here to also support the “supervising teacher or Principal” at the school level by way of professional learning to be recognised for leadership and mentorship that can be attributed to the standards. We are aware that professional support for the supervisor is provided in many jurisdictions but varies greatly in both quality and quantity.

ACSSO supports the inclusion of early childhood trained teachers in the Teacher Registration process. Key to laying foundations for our young people early childhood teachers are subject to a nationally accredited framework and are required to complete training equal to those of a primary school teacher. Many early childhood trained teachers move into the school system. It ensures that prior to school services fulfil their professional development obligation. Being part of a national teacher’s registration scheme not only allows for this transition into mainstream education it would also acknowledge the importance and professionalism of this role.

We would also support the registration of VET teachers. It is to be acknowledged there would be some opposition to this but note that registration would provide assurance of the quality of teaching and learning delivery. The requirements for ongoing professional learning and accreditation would need careful consideration so as to not create barriers for VET teachers whilst alleviating any concerns that mainstream and early childhood teachers may have in respect of the VET teacher’s status. However, the access to this professional learning can only be seen as wholly worthwhile.

A rigorous scheme of national Teacher registration is a key to professionalising teaching as a career. As parents, we recognise and value the role teachers play in our children’s lives. We know that education is an ever-evolving space and as research and data continue to inform its constant improvement there is a need for ongoing and nationally consistent professional learning. We need to ensure that the reflection and recording of this is not an onerous task but rather supports the opportunity to put the learning into practice and ensure any reflections are done with colleagues in either a professional dialogue or mentoring. We should not allow this to be dominated by ineffective administration combined with individual jurisdictional anomalies.

We note the low number of teachers registering as Highly Accomplished or Lead, to us, this is a concern. As parents, we know that there would be thousands of teachers who would have attained these standards in their work career. Administrative processes for those who wish to be promoted will always be pursued and completed. However, those who are highly accomplished teachers and who just want to “get on with the job” find the time needed to collect the evidence (over a three-year period) and then submit annually, excessive, and removes them from the work that they do in the classroom – the work that makes them the exceptional (highly accomplished) classroom teacher. We need to find a more efficient way of recognising those skills.

One of our member organisations raised a concern, shared by many, that significant numbers of teachers do not have sufficient professional learning in the education of students with diverse abilities, learning difficulties and disabilities. The delivery of inclusive education of all students, is dependent on a teacher’s professional learning. Whilst this will obviously be part of TEMAG’s work, many have expressed a desire for additional professional teacher training with regard to supporting students with diverse abilities, learning difficulties and disabilities would promote best practice teaching within schools for all students.

As an organisation that supports and promotes family engagement in education it is somewhat disappointing to note that parents are not mentioned in the Consultation paper. The term 'relationships' does not appear at all.

Under Areas for Discussion (p.9 of the Consultation paper) the case is opened and closed by a statement attributed to John Hattie:

*"We know that the biggest in-school effect on student outcomes is the quality of teaching and school leadership."*

It is understandable that such a statement might be chosen as the starting point by AITSL, but the whole thing has a strong processing/production orientation that largely sidelines parents and students (and their communities).

We have a duty to highlight that family / parent engagement is the major driver of in-school (and out-of-school) student engagement which in turn is the major driver of student outcomes. Ideally, parent engagement will be complemented by the best possible teachers who have established sound purposeful working relationships with students, their parents and the school community.

ACSSO believes it will be important to ensure that the Review moves teaching in the direction of a rich highly collaborative endeavour and expands the role of the family-school partnership in the community and away from a pre-existing form of industrialised education from past times.

ACSSO would be happy to expand on these comments through the consultation process

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