



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS
SUBMISSION TO THE
PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE
DRAFT NATIONAL TEACHER WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) is the one voice for every child in government education in Australia. As an organisation, ACSSO welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

ACSSO holds that the quality of education is closely related to the quality of teachers.

The selection of potential teachers, their training, further development and professional attitudes and standing are vital factors in the quality of school education.

Among the qualities to be looked for and developed in teachers are enthusiasm, imagination, acceptance, empathy, sensitivity and perceptiveness, and affinity with young people and an ongoing desire to support the learning journey of younger generations. Teachers need to be able to build and sustain positive relationships with their students, the families of their students, their colleagues, and the community in which they serve. Many of our more successful teachers come to their initial training with valuable prior learning and experiences.

ACSSO believes that education is a partnership between the home and school. Teaching is most successful when the teacher can ensure that the delivery of content is contextualised to bring relevance to the learner.

The contribution of teachers in developing a collaborative school community is a key aspect of effective schooling, and teachers should recognise that the school is an integral part of the community and must promote the active engagement of families.

Family engagement must be integrated within pre-service training¹. Universities must develop in their students the purpose and value of sharing the funds of knowledge possessed by all parties to inform their practice and to cater for the individual needs of their students.

¹ Dr Debbie Pushor states that family engagement should identify roles, particularly the role of the parent as distinct from other family members. Australia is yet to define clearly, to this end ACSSO uses the term "Family engagement" assuming that the roles are clearly distinguishable

Elevating the profession

Objective: To recognise the value teachers bring to students, communities, and the economy.

Actions

<p>1. A targeted national campaign to raise the status and value the role of teachers.</p>	<p><i>ACSSO make the following observations: As an education stakeholder who already promotes teachers positively and celebrates their work we would like to be involved in the development of the messaging for families.</i></p> <p>Whatever the Campaign it is critically important that the landing page for the prospective teacher supports navigating the information with ease and we suggest a national support centre be provided to problem solve any questions aspiring applicants have.</p> <p><i>Challenges are already presenting with other sectors/jurisdictions “poaching” teachers from schools with remuneration and other incentives.</i></p> <p>Families could do this through <u>what</u> platforms? Can organisations be provided with additional funding to assist with this – ACSSO currently as a “Caught You Being Great” Campaign but this targets more than the teacher.</p> <p>There is a need to address the profession itself and its own “public talk” – many teachers and unions speak negatively with regard the profession – this then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.</p>
<p>2. Creation of new Australian Teacher of the Year Awards.</p>	<p><i>ACSSO recommends that an award for outstanding Family Engagement be included.</i></p> <p>Currently most (if not all) jurisdictions already have their own awards, is it envisaged that they put forward overall category winners to the NEW Australian Teacher Awards.</p> <p>There are existing Australian Education Awards https://www.educatorawards.com/</p> <p>Not all schools are supportive of individual Awards.</p>

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	Awards are great but outstanding teachers often do not nominate or are nominated – may help retain but have any of the existing awards been evaluated for their effectiveness – does this strategy work
3. Encourage members of the public to nominate teachers for Medals of the Order of Australia.	ACSSO agrees more needs to be done to encourage members of the community to do this. ACSSO notes that a public service medal already exists – PSM, this we believe is a more appropriate avenue for this recognition.
4. Targets to increase the number of classroom teachers recognised as high achieving and highly accomplished.	ACSSO reiterates that busy outstanding classroom teachers do not have the time nor the finances to apply for these positions. Being left in the hands of the teacher to apply and finance the application often misses the teacher most deserving – (too proud, too busy, does not believe they deserve it)

Improving teacher supply

Objective: To increase the number of students entering Initial Teacher Education (ITE), number of students completing ITE and the number of teachers staying in and/or returning to the profession.

Actions

5. More teaching places at universities in the right subjects and specialisations.	ACSSO strongly supports this action item, what resourcing will schools receive to support the pathways for paraprofessionals? Their transition should be also fee free and some form of recognised prior learning for their classroom and additional work. Assistance should be made available to the paraprofessional to enable the documentation of this work.
6. 5,000 bursaries worth up to \$40,000 each to help attract our best and brightest to the teaching profession.	Career changers- there needs to be recognition for greater support(s) if there is a need to relocate spouses/families to rural and regional settings. Attracting teachers is one step, retaining them is another long-term issue, which needs to be addressed. Additionally, accommodation support for beginning teachers moving away from family and support networks.

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Actions

	Mid-career professionals who opt to take on teaching – how do we account for salary loss?
7. 1,500 more places in the High Achieving Teachers program to encourage more professionals to switch careers to teaching.	Working with Corporate and Industry employers (deployment and placement opportunities where skills and expertise are identified)
8. Trial new ways of attracting and keeping teachers in the schools that need them most.	<p>ACSSO makes the following observation: <i>We often put great teachers in schools of need, but it is often a practice to put them on the “top classes” rather than the class that needs them most. As a result, the school gets better “top” results but not the individual – we need to drift away from what is the schools highest ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) and work with the young people that need their life chances improved.</i></p> <p>Promoting these programs and any new ones will be refreshing, we need to amplify these opportunities widely to the community.</p> <p>Attracting is one thing, but ongoing retention is another, job satisfaction is key.</p> <p>Suggest our Learning Institutes (Universities) try other outreach recruitment programs to encourage school students to consider this pathway. Recruitment/Course Officers visit schools and support Career Teachers and staff.</p>
9. Prioritise visa processing for qualified teachers and prioritise teachers from State and Territory nominated visa allocations.	<p>In competition with other countries doing similar with Express Entry processes. There is a need to be mindful how these express opportunities are promoted to potential applicants.</p> <p>As the majority of our schools are not bi-lingual, it is essential to ensure the command of English language is supported. Place these teachers where students do not already have difficulty with processing information, whilst the migrant teacher is becoming more proficient in English.</p>

Strengthening initial teacher education

Objective: To ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and delivers classroom ready graduates.

Actions

<p>10. The Teacher Education Expert Panel, led by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Professor Mark Scott, is reviewing initial teacher education and will recommend ways to boost graduation rates, and broadly ensure graduating teachers are better prepared for the classroom through:</p>	<p>ACSSO believe strongly there is not enough focus on family engagement and community partnerships</p> <p>ACSSO has developed several tools and run a significant conference with regard Family Engagement. https://acsso.joyn-us.app/ http://www.familyengagementcircle.org.au/login https://www.openlearning.com/tfh/courses/parent-engagement-for-beginning-teachers/homepage/?cl=1</p> <p>There is limited opportunity in Teaching Courses across Australia to support emerging teachers develop the skills to have quality relationships with families and communities, which is key to quality educational outcomes (Relationship base Education) https://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au/issues_category/relationship-based-education/</p> <p>As ACSSO outlined in its submission to the ITE review, there is a need to increase the amount of on-the-job training in initial teacher education. There needs to be significant work to improve the teacher professional experience which would include interaction with family</p> <p>More content on lived experience of Family Engagement from all perspectives, the neurodivergent student, colleague, or family member</p>
<p>11. Recognise previous study, work experience and skills that may be transferable to teaching.</p>	<p>Agree - Removing the barriers for those seeking to pursue teaching.</p> <p>Not just limiting it to curriculum content expertise – i.e., engineers and Maths</p> <p>Considering other qualities and expertise paraprofessionals, mid or late career changers</p>
<p>12. Co-design actions to attract and retain more First Nations teachers.</p>	<p>ACSSO supports this</p>

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13. All teaching students will undergo initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills in their first year to ensure they can receive targeted support if they need it.

ACSSE is not aware of any statistics on how effective the testing is, is all this testing a barrier to entry and is it beneficial to the students they are teaching. Whatever the answer it is imperative that appropriate and timely support is provided to all neophyte teachers.

Maximising the time to teach

Objective: To improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration.

Actions

14. Pilot new approaches to reduce teacher workload through a Workload Reduction Fund to maximise the value of a teacher's time.

Not enough detail here to understand if this funding is for (as described under action 15) - the purpose of teaching resources hubs, educational support, and administration assistants to support teachers to free them up to teach?
Need to also evaluate whether the current amount of administrative workload is required – the many check lists are more about being risk averse rather than improving student outcomes.

15. Build on work already underway to maximise teachers' time to teach, plan and collaborate and independently evaluate the effectiveness of these measures on teachers' time.

Governments need to consider any research recommendations where the future of education/schooling/redesign may assist in flexible learning and teaching options to attract and retain teachers in the profession. Flexible work contracts and employment conditions especially when teachers are planning and having their own families. Well thought out employee benefits plan.

Evaluate and balance the compliance and accountability measures and reporting by teachers in schools. Much of it is a checklist that does little for school and student improvement and is never really looked at once completed.

Streamlining communication demands on teachers where other school staff could be utilised to answer enquiries, assist with student individual learning and support plans. Support the employment of Family

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Actions

	<p>Engagement Officers and allow further responsibility to other paraprofessionals such as SLSO's to facilitate the connection with Families</p> <p>Teachers do seek professional autonomy and opportunities to have agency in learning and teaching decisions of the school.</p>
<p>16. Examine how to support implementation of the national curriculum and literacy and numeracy progressions</p>	<p>Teachers need to be engaged in any curriculum reviews to identify challenges and seek and suggest solutions.</p> <p>Due to the ever-changing nature of content – curriculum needs to be reduced and teacher to facilitate inquiry and give students further agency over their learning</p>
<p>17. Each initiative in the next National School Reform Agreement will be subject to a Teacher Workload Impact Assessment.</p>	<p>That is an imperative – is there a strategy in place should the assessment return an unsatisfactory workload</p>
<p>18. Identify the most effective use of initial teacher education students, teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff.</p>	<p>Teaching Assistants and Support Staff should be part of these discussions to co-design their employment strengths and options</p> <p>Quality induction and training for these employees too.</p> <p>An assurance that the profession values and respects the support these people give. As an organisation we have heard many stories where this is not so.</p>

Better understanding future teacher workforce needs

Objective: Improve the information available for teacher workforce planning

Actions

<p>19. Develop and publish nationally consistent teacher workforce projections based on consistent standards, disaggregated at a regional level and by subject specialisation, to enable a national understanding of teacher demand.</p>	<p>Accurate forecast data is essential to prevent further workforce shortfall.</p>
<p>20. Develop and publish nationally consistent ITE graduate supply data, including disaggregated by subject specialisation and participation in ITE at the regional level, to enable a national understanding of teacher supply.</p>	<p>Ensure quality and accuracy of data over speed of production.</p>
<p>21. Establish a National Quality Framework to guide Teacher Regulatory Authorities in teacher accreditation and ensure nationally consistent standards for initial teacher education.</p>	<p>Consistency across the nation is essential – the inconsistency across the jurisdictions not only brings mixed messaging but aids feeling of dissatisfaction. There is a need ensure that the needs of students inform the design of ITE and ongoing professional learning for teachers.</p>
<p>22. Prioritise conditional or provisional registration to increase the supply of teachers.</p>	<p>National Registration is essential, national working with children check essential for teachers and volunteers -include all the required checks for suitability and fitness to teach in all jurisdictions.</p> <p>Please assess to the necessity of many of the checks</p>
<p>23. Develop and publish comprehensive data about why teachers leave the profession and what careers they move into and what would improve</p>	<p>Exit interviews to identify the challenges they experienced for use in future planning</p> <p>Acknowledge that the recent generation is not one for staying in a job for an extensive period</p>

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Actions

<p>retention, as well as why other career leavers choose teaching.</p>	<p>Interesting that it is held standard that teaching is for life, particularly when we talk to students and say that in their lifetime they will have 7 career changes – yet when someone leaves teaching, we believe it is because they are unhappy. Most millennials stay in a job for no more than 5 years</p> <p>Ask students in secondary education why they are considering teaching as a career.</p>
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Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession

Objective: To improve career pathways, including through streamlining the process for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation, and providing better professional support for teachers to retain them in the profession.

Actions

<p>24. Develop and support career pathways which value teachers and reflect transitions in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.</p>	<p>ACSSO believes there is an urgent need to strengthen training and professional development for middle leaders.</p>
<p>25. Develop national guidelines to support early career teachers and new school leaders including mentoring and induction.</p>	<p>The professional learning and mentoring of early career teachers are essential</p>
<p>26. Improve access to high-quality First Nations’ cultural competency resources to ensure teachers are better prepared to teach First Nations peoples in culturally safe ways.</p>	<p>Just providing access to First Nations’ cultural competency resources does not make a person better prepared to teach First Nations peoples in culturally safe ways. Cultural competence is about our will and actions to build understanding between people, to be respectful and open to unfamiliar cultural perspectives. It is about respecting difference and embedding it in “framework.”</p>
<p>27. Streamline HALT accreditation processes to make it less</p>	<p>ACSSO supports and willing to be engaged in a review of HALT programs, in collaboration with the profession, to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting their intended purpose.</p>

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Actions

<p>burdensome for teachers to be accredited and incorporate recognition of equivalent qualification and certification processes.</p>	<p>The profession currently barely has enough time to carry out the work required – the requirements for apply to be classified HALT are burdensome and along with cost are a substantial barrier to teachers applying.</p>
<p>28. Develop micro-credentials and expand the Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) to enhance teachers’ access to quality professional development.</p>	<p>ACSSO supports the development of micro-credentials as a formal recognition that teachers have upskilled. Completing any micro-credential exhibits that teachers are keeping their skills fresh and identifies a passion for teaching and an ongoing commitment to their career.</p> <p>Consideration could be given to a percentage of micro credentials fulfilling requirements towards post graduate recognition.</p>