

Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace
Relations

**Inquiry into teaching and learning – maximising Australia’s investment
in schools**

Submission from the
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Term of Reference One: The effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools.....	5
Term of Reference Two: The structure and governance of school administration - local and central - and its impact on teaching and learning	9
Term of Reference Three: The adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment	12
Term of Reference Four: Factors influencing the selection, training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system.....	15

Introduction

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) welcomes the inquiry into teaching and learning - maximising Australia's investment in schools. This paper provides an overview of the Australian Government's reform agenda for schooling and discusses this in the context of the inquiry's Terms of Reference:

- a) the effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools;
- b) the structure and governance of school administration local and central and its impact on teaching and learning;
- c) the adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment;
- d) factors influencing the selection, training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system; and
- e) other related matters.

The Australian Government recognises that the capabilities and capacities of teachers and school leaders are immensely important and evidence has established that they are the two strongest school-based factors influencing student outcomes.¹

In recognition of this, between 2007 and 2012, the Australian Government and state and territory governments have been working together to deliver a range of reforms to improve the quality of learning and teaching and school leadership. These reforms are being delivered under the auspices of the Smarter Schools - Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership (TQNP), the National Education Agreement and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.

The national reforms that have been developed and implemented to date which improve the quality of teaching and learning include:

- The National Professional Standards for Teachers;
- National system of accreditation of initial teacher education programs;
- Nationally consistent approach to teacher registration;
- National approach to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers;
- Professional development needs for principals and school leaders;
- National Professional Standards for Principals; and
- The Australian Curriculum.

In September 2012, the Prime Minister announced a forward plan for school reform entitled the National Plan for School Improvement.² The Plan is built around those things that make the

¹Hattie J, (2009), *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Rutledge.

²Gillard, J the Hon, Prime Minister of Australia, *National Plan for School Improvement*, 3 September 2012, National Press Club, Canberra, ACT. Source: <http://www.betterschools.gov.au/news/prime-ministers-speech-national-plan-school-improvement>

most difference in improving student outcomes, including ensuring that the best teachers are in every school.

The Prime Minister indicated that the Australian Government will enter into discussions with state and territory governments, Catholic schools and the independent sector with the aim of reaching agreement on the Plan prior to the first Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in 2013.

While the Australian Government plays a leadership role in driving forward national educational reforms and provides funding for areas of national educational importance, school education in Australia is principally the constitutional responsibility of the states and territories who are responsible for the delivery and management of schooling.

To assist with the delivery of national educational reforms the Australian Government has established the Australia Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to provide national leadership for Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to oversee the development of an Australian schools' curriculum, development and administration of national assessments and collection, management and analysis of student assessment data and other data relating to schools and comparative school performance.

Term of Reference One: The effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools

There is a large body of evidence that indicates that there is wide variation in the quality of teachers and that this quality impacts on student learning.^{3,4,5} It is estimated the difference in outcomes between a student who is taught by a poor quality teacher and a student that is taught by a good teacher can be up to 12 months difference in terms of levels of achievement.⁶ A study has found that a student who spent a semester with a teacher who had been rated two standard deviations higher in quality could add between 25 to 45 per cent to a student's maths scores.⁷

There is also evidence that the impact of an effective teacher on student achievement is cumulative. A study conducted in 1997 in the United States found that students with three effective teachers in three consecutive years were achieving results in school assessment 49 per cent higher when compared to students who were taught by ineffective teachers.⁸ This is supported by a study conducted in 1996 that found students who were taught by high performing maths teachers for three consecutive years achieved results that were approximately 50 points higher than students who started with comparable maths scores but were taught by lower performing teachers for three consecutive years.⁹

In recognition that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student achievement within the school environment, the Australian Government has committed \$550 million to the TQNP. Through the TQNP, all Australian governments are implementing a range of nationally significant reforms targeting critical points in the teacher 'lifecycle' to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and leaders in our schools and classrooms.

AITSL has led the development of the National Professional Standards for Teachers. The Standards are an explicit statement of what effective teachers should know and be able to do. They describe what is expected of teachers across three domains: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement; at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

The Standards provide consistent benchmarks to help teachers to define the knowledge and skill levels required throughout their career, assess performance, identify further learning requirements and provide a means of identifying and recognising teachers who excel against the Standards. They will also increase public confidence in the professionalism of teachers,

³ Aaronson, D., Barrow, L., & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 25, 95-135.

⁴ Hanushek, E. (1992). The Trade-off between Child Quantity and Quality. *Journal of Political Economy*, 100, 84-117.

⁵ Hanushek, E., Kain, J., & Rivkin, S. (1998). *Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement*. Cambridge, MA: NBER Working Paper Series No. 6691.

⁶ Hanushek, E, et al (1992)

⁷ Aaronson, et al (2007)

⁸ Jordan, H., Mendro, R., & Weerasinghe, D. (1997). *Teacher Effects on Longitudinal Student Achievement: A Report on Research in Progress*. Paper presented at the Presented at the CREATE Annual Meeting, National Evaluation Institute, Indianapolis, IN.

⁹ Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement Summary of Findings. Knoxville, Tennessee

providing a public statement of what parents and the community can expect of effective Australian teachers.

The Standards are the centrepiece of national reforms being implemented under the TQNP. The Standards align with the career pathways of the teaching profession and form the basis for attracting, preparing, developing and supporting teachers. Through this alignment, the Standards will be used to form the basis for:

- A national system of accreditation of initial teacher education programs;
- A nationally consistent approach to teacher registration; and
- A national approach to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers.

National system of accreditation of initial teacher education programs

High quality teacher education is a first, critical step in delivering high quality teaching in schools. On 15 April 2011, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) endorsed the Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia. The national approach, developed by AITSL, outlines what an initial teacher education program needs to do to prepare teachers to teach in Australian schools, and to meet the National Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate career stage. The national approach will assure a high level consistent quality across the country. The national approach will see programs being assessed against common, rigorous standards using an agreed national accreditation process.

Nationally consistent approach to teacher registration

On 14 October 2011, MCEECDYA endorsed a proposal regarding a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration. The national approach builds on existing good practice in jurisdictions and means that across Australia provisionally registered teachers will provide evidence, against a set of standards, that they are proficient practitioners in order to become fully registered. To achieve full registration teachers are required to demonstrate that:

- their teaching meets the Proficient career stage of the National Professional Standards for Teachers;
- they have fulfilled the minimum requirement for professional practice in an Australian or New Zealand school setting;
- they continue to meet the elements of suitability for registration; and
- they have met any additional conditions which might apply to their provisional registration.

Consistency in teacher registration will give a more flexible national teacher workforce, allowing simpler movement of teachers between jurisdictions.

National certification of teachers at the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers

On 20 April 2012, all Ministers for Education endorsed a national approach to voluntary certification - based on the National Professional Standards for Teachers - of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. The national approach, developed by AITSL, means that all Australian teachers will have access to a rigorous and transparent process that recognises Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers and is portable throughout Australia. Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers has three primary purposes:

- to recognise and promote quality teaching;
- to provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice; and
- to provide a reliable indication of quality teaching that can be used to identify, recognise and/or reward Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

The certification approach will enhance the professionalism of teachers, enabling them to gain recognition for the quality of their teaching and progress their careers while remaining in the classroom.

Professional development needs for principals and school leaders

In recognition of the critical role of principals in leading the implementation of the education reform agenda at the school level, a specific commitment of an additional \$50 million over five years was made by the Australian Government at the COAG meeting of 29 November 2008, to be implemented through the TQNP to deliver world leading professional development and support. This additional commitment by the Australian Government complements strategies being undertaken by government and non-government education jurisdictions through the TQNP which will empower principals to better manage their schools to achieve improved student results and performance improvement at the local level.

Funding of \$12 million from this amount has been allocated to AITSL for the development and implementation of the National Professional Standard for Principals, strategic development and delivery of national flagship professional development programs and the development of a national professional learning framework.

National Professional Standards for Principals

School leadership is the most powerful driver of change in a school setting. The National Professional Standard for Principals was endorsed by all Education Ministers in 2011. This national approach will promote greater productivity and transportability in the schools workforce.

The Principals' Standard sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. The Standard informs current, emerging and aspiring principals on what leadership of schools entails. The Standard also provides a basis for the broader Australian community to understand the scope and complexity of a principal's work and what they can expect of their school leaders.

Smarter Schools National Partnerships

In addition to the Teacher Quality National Partnership, the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on Literacy and Numeracy (LNNP) and Low Socio-Economic Status School communities (Low SES NP) are funding reform activities that includes the widespread adoption of in-classroom support for teachers by specialist coaches; increased teacher skill and confidence in using data to better address individual student learning needs; and innovative approaches to supporting the holistic needs of students and families to improve student attendance and engagement.

Term of Reference Two: The structure and governance of school administration - local and central - and its impact on teaching and learning

Constitutionally, the responsibility for the administration – registration, regulation and delivery – of school education in Australia lies with the states and territories. States and territories develop policy and provide a regulatory framework for the operation of all schools, and are directly responsible for the administration of government schools. The states and territories have a range of measures to ensure that government and non-government schools deliver appropriate education to students. These arrangements are reasonably similar in each state and territory, particularly in relation to the requirements that ensure schools adhere to curriculum and teacher qualifications.

The Australian Government does not currently impose any regulations on the establishment and registration of new non-government schools, leaving this responsibility to each state and territory. However, under current arrangements, to be eligible for Commonwealth government funding, a non-government school must be:

- recognised by the relevant state or territory education minister as having satisfied the requirements of registration as a school in that state or territory; and
- must not be conducted on a 'for profit' basis.

School Autonomy and Accountability

Research has found that school leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on learning, and has the greatest impact in those schools where the learning needs of students are most acute.¹⁰ The 2011 OECD analysis of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results suggests that when autonomy and accountability are effectively combined, they tend to be associated with better student performance.¹¹

The OECD has found that in countries where schools are required to make student achievement data public, schools that enjoy greater autonomy in relation to resource allocation tend to show better student performance than those with less autonomy. The research suggests, for example, that the relationship between school autonomy and student performance is significant, even when other school characteristics are held constant. High levels of parent and school community engagement have also been identified as a characteristic that is common to high performing schools.

¹⁰ Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. N.Y.: The Wallace Foundation. See: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/WF/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics>.

¹¹ Woessmann, L. (2007) School Accountability, Autonomy, Choice, and the Level of Student Achievement: International Evidence from PISA 2003, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No 13, Paris: OECD

A number of reports over recent years have supported greater local empowerment. They all have some caveats, although taken together in the Australian context make a strong case for further devolvement of decision making as part of a broader reform agenda that also includes accountability, support for school leadership, investment in teacher quality, school improvement and evaluation.

A 2004 OECD report, for example, found that 'Increased autonomy over a wide range of institutional operations, with the objective of raising performance levels through devolving responsibility to the frontline and encouraging responsiveness to local needs, has been a main aim of the restructuring and systemic reform since the early 1980s. In fact, in most of the countries that performed well in PISA 2000, local authorities and schools now have substantial autonomy with regard to adapting and implementing educational content and/or allocating and managing resources.'¹²

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening school improvement and autonomy. The Empowering Local Schools and the Rewards for School Improvement initiatives encourage schools to undertake school improvement activities as well as build school autonomy.

Empowering Local Schools

The Empowering Local Schools initiative is designed to complement existing school autonomy initiatives with flexibility to tailor to local circumstances and provide the opportunity for increased local decision-making to a greater number of schools. 927 schools have been selected to participate in Phase One of the Empowering Local Schools initiative over 2012 and 2013.

Rewards for School Improvement

The Empowering Local Schools initiative will be complemented by the Reward for School Improvement initiative which aims to encourage a nationally consistent, rigorous approach to school self-evaluation and improvement planning, through the implementation of a National School Improvement Framework to assist schools to undertake school evaluations from 2014. The elements of the Reward for School Improvement initiatives are:

- development of the National School Improvement Framework;
- annual school self-evaluations against national measures;
- annual assessments of school improvement; and
- payments to schools showing improvement from 2015.

The National School Improvement Framework will assist schools evaluate their performance against nationally agreed domains of teaching and learning. This will help schools focus their improvement efforts on practices that make a difference to student outcomes.

¹² OECD Raising the quality of educational performance at school (February 2004) Policy Brief See: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/8/29472036.pdf>

In addition, the Australian Government will provide AITSL with funding to provide professional development support for principals and school leaders to lead and manage schools with greater levels of local empowerment. AITSL has commenced the delivery of its national Flagship Professional Learning Program: Local Leadership to support schools participating in the initiative. There are approximately 150 participants, principals and education system leaders, in the first in-take of this program – which commenced in August 2012 and concludes in March 2013. There will be two further in-takes under the program, in March and October 2013.

Term of Reference Three: The adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment

The Australian Government does not play a role in determining the curriculum resources or programs used in schools. Government and non-government education authorities in the states and territories have responsibility for this. In many instances, these decisions are made at the local school level.

While it does not have primary responsibility for the delivery of education in schools, the Australian Government is committed to delivering a world class education system to ensure Australians are armed with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the 21st Century.

The Australian Government in collaboration with the states and territories has initiated the development of the Australian Curriculum to assist teachers with delivery of high quality learning that is engaging and meaningful for students. Teachers will be able to use the curriculum as a resource upon which to draw, to shape learning programs that stretch individual children from their current stage of learning to the next achievable stage. The Australian Curriculum is being developed by ACARA.

In December 2010, education ministers endorsed the content of the first four Australian Curriculum learning areas for Foundation to Year 10 – English, mathematics, science and history. In 2011, ministers agreed the achievement standards for those learning areas.

The Australian Curriculum provides teachers, parents and students clear and explicit direction on content and the standards to which all young Australians should have access, regardless of their socioeconomic background, their location or the school they attend.

It provides the flexibility for teachers to shape learning around the agreed content, including the flexibility to incorporate local content and contexts into the teaching of the Australian Curriculum.

Widespread implementation of the Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history is now underway. For the first time, students all over Australia are studying the same curriculum in these four key learning areas.

Ongoing development of the Australian Curriculum continues to progress well. ACARA has held public consultations on the draft geography and arts curricula. Later this year, ACARA will be consulting on the draft Australian Curriculum for languages. Work is also underway on an Australian Curriculum for Health and Physical Education, Civics and Citizenship, Technologies, and Economics and Business.

The Australian Curriculum is published online because it provides maximum flexibility in how the curriculum can be accessed and organised. For example, the curriculum can be viewed by learning area, by multiple year levels, or by year level across learning areas, and may be

downloaded and printed in those views. Users are also able to view content with a focus on one or more of the general capabilities or cross curriculum priorities.

Historically, curriculum has been published in hard copy form, typically with separate booklets for each learning area. These booklets have usually had limited distribution to schools for the use of teachers in their lesson planning. This has tended to reinforce notions of a static, subject-centred curriculum for the exclusive use of educational professionals. By publishing the Australian Curriculum online, it can be accessed by all teachers.

It also allows the curriculum to be linked directly to high quality online resources that support teaching and learning. This provides teachers with the maximum flexibility in terms of how the curriculum is translated to classroom teaching, and supports them in their efforts to provide a student learning experience which is relevant and engaging through the integration of information and communication technology within their classrooms.

Many resources already exist in the states and territories or through the national digital resource collection, which is managed by Education Services Australia (ESA). It provides schools with access to over 5700 resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum, with more to be added.

AITSL is also delivering professional development in the form of the 'Leading Curriculum Change: Professional Learning Flagship Program', which aims to build teacher capacity to enhance implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

The Online Diagnostic Tools initiative also provides Australian teachers with access to online tools and resources that help assess student progress and link to relevant digital learning resources to help them improve. A key feature of this initiative is the establishment of a flexible national online assessment system by ESA that can be used to deliver a range of school and system level assessments.

Through this initiative, the potential to deliver national testing programs online is also being explored with ACARA undertaking detailed research on the measurement and assessment effects of online testing and examining technical and delivery considerations with school authorities.

The Australian Curriculum Connect project is supporting implementation of the Australian Curriculum by helping teachers to easily find and use relevant digital teaching and learning resources. A component of the Australian Curriculum Connect project includes enhancements to the national portal, the Schools Online Teaching and Learning Environment (Scootle).

Scootle allows teachers to search, filter or browse for digital learning resources, including multimedia objects and interactive activities, which are aligned to individual elements of the Australian Curriculum.

Scootle is a national portal developed and operated by ESA. Scootle enables teachers to more effectively search online for resources to support their teaching and learning programs by

providing access to a shared national pool of more than 15 000 digital teaching and learning resources. Over one third of these resources are aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

More than 82 000 teachers have registered for Scootle and to date they have created 213 699 learning paths and 6143 collaborative activities utilising the digital curriculum resources available through the network (June 2012).

In addition to this, the Australian Government in partnership with the states and territories has established Teach Learn Share, a national online database that gathers, organises and disseminates information about effective evidence based literacy and numeracy strategies and approaches. The Teach Learn Share database publishes strategies that have met nationally agreed standards of evidence and are presented in a way which is readily searched, sorted and downloaded for use by school communities. To date 31 strategies are available and this number is expected to grow throughout 2012.

Finally, the delivery of the Australian Curriculum within an online environment enables it to be dynamic and more easily updated compared to traditional hard copy curricula. This will help in ensuring the curriculum is at all times providing students with a high quality and relevant education that enables them to participate effectively in future study and employment.

Term of Reference Four: Factors influencing the selection, training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system

As mentioned in Term of Reference One, the Australian Government is committed to improving the quality of teaching and school leadership in Australian schools because it recognises that teachers, along with school leaders, are the primary in-school driver to improving student outcomes.¹³

Recognising that the workforce arrangements for school teachers and leaders are the direct responsibility of state and territory government and non-government education authorities, the Australian Government has been working with them through the TQNP to promote nationally consistent and robust approaches and national teaching standards. Through the TQNP the Australian Government and states and territories are implementing a number of national reforms that target critical points in the teacher 'lifecycle' relating to:

- attracting the best entrants to teaching, including mid-career entrants to the workforce and those returning to the profession;
- training them through a world-class pre-service education system;
- placing and supporting quality teachers and leaders in schools where they are needed most;
- developing their skills and knowledge throughout their careers; and
- retaining quality teachers and leaders in our schools and rewarding them for the value they bring to the classroom/student achievement.

The focus on these critical points reflects a range of issues and shared concerns about current workforce arrangements and the quality of the teaching workforce more broadly.

Influencing Factors

Attracting the best entrants to teaching

In a 2007 House of Representatives *Inquiry into Teacher Education*, the selection criteria for entry into teacher education courses was noted as a particular concern.¹⁴ This included whether the relatively low cut-offs, compared to other fields of study, determine if prospective teachers will be of sufficient academic quality, or whether other attributes considered important for teaching are also adequately taken into account.

There is also concern as to the teaching profession's low level of appeal as a career, and if its poor pay dispersion in comparison to other occupations, lead to potentially good or high quality candidates not considering teaching as a career. A 2006 synthesis of attitudinal research (prepared by the former Department of Education Science and Training) found that while

¹³ Hattie J, (2009), *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Rutledge.

¹⁴ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Education, *Top of the Class, Report on the Inquiry into Teacher Education*, 2007. At <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/evt/teachereduc/report/fullreport.pdf>

teacher remuneration, conditions and workload are not significant factors for those who actually enter teaching (they do so mainly for intrinsic factors such as wanting to teach and work with children and to make a difference), they are important factors for those who decide not to pursue teaching.¹⁵

Teacher training

There is concern about the variable quality of initial teacher education. The OECD Teaching and Learning Survey (*TALIS 2008*)¹⁶ found that the principals for over a third of Australian teachers considered that lack of pedagogical preparation of their teachers hindered student instruction to some extent or a lot.

The *Inquiry into Teacher Education* acknowledged that Australian teachers achieve excellent learning outcomes in schools and that teacher education courses must share some part of the credit for this, but it is important to continue to strengthen all the components that contribute to quality schooling, including teacher education.

Retaining quality teachers

There has been ongoing concern with teacher shortages, and ensuring that schools have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers, for at least the past decade. A number of national reports produced for the former Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) during this period found that while there has been no overall (aggregate) shortage of teachers, there have been ongoing shortages in certain subject areas, particularly mathematics and science, as well as more broadly in rural and remote areas.¹⁷

Shortages of qualified teachers can potentially undermine the quality of student instruction, as identified by Australian principals in *TALIS 2008*. The Staff in Australia's Schools Survey (SiAS) 2010 found that six per cent of primary principals and nine per cent of secondary principals reported major difficulty in suitably filling staff vacancies during the past 12 months.¹⁸

Recognising and rewarding great teachers

It is generally accepted across the education community that the retention and recognition of quality teachers and school leaders needs to be improved. The Grattan Institute reports that in respect to Australian teachers:¹⁹

- 91 per cent felt that the most effective teachers in their schools did not receive the greatest recognition;

¹⁵ Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) *Attitudes to teaching as a career – a synthesis of attitudinal research*, (2006). At <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/ronlyres/150309C9-CDCE-46D3-9D76-00C8C14F2125/10732/SynthesisofDESTattitudinalResearchTeaching.pdf>

¹⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Creating effective teaching and learning environments - first results from TALIS*, Paris, 2009.

¹⁷ Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), *Demand and supply of primary and secondary school teachers in Australia*, (2001, 2003, 2004). At http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/publications_11582.html

¹⁸ McKenzie, P., *Staff in Australia's Schools 2010*, Australian Council for Educational Research, November 2011.

¹⁹ Grattan Institute, *What Teachers Want: Better Teacher Management*: Dr Ben Jensen, (2010). At http://www.grattan.edu.au/publications/033_report_what_teachers_want.pdf

- 92 per cent thought they would receive no recognition in their school if they improved the quality of their teaching; and
- 83 per cent of teachers report that the evaluation of their work has no impact on the likelihood of their career advancement.

The current pay systems available to teachers can fall short of rewarding individual effort and performance and can discourage the best teachers from remaining in the classroom. This means that many experienced teachers can be tempted to move to leadership positions to increase their earnings or leave teaching permanently rather than staying in the classroom where they can make the biggest difference to students.

Evidence from the OECD's 2012 *Education at a Glance* publication highlights the limited spread of pay available for many teachers. In Australia, a teacher at the top of the salary scale earns 1.39 times the salary of a teacher at the beginning of their career. This compares to the OECD average where a teacher at the top of the top of the scale earns 1.62 the salary of a teacher at the bottom of the scale.²⁰ However, it is worth noting that in Australia the average starting salary for a teacher at the beginning of their career is \$34 029, this is significantly higher than the OECD average of \$27 541.²¹

The OECD recommends that career paths for teachers based on competences and responsibilities be developed, rather than a promotion based on time served.²² The Australian Government's Rewards for Great Teachers initiative will help to improve teacher performance while providing an incentive to encourage quality teachers to remain in the classroom where they have the biggest impact on student achievement. Under this initiative, teachers who are accredited at the higher levels of accreditation will be eligible to receive a financial reward.

Developing and supporting the schools workforce

There is also concern about the variable quality of professional learning for teachers and school leaders and the impact this has on the ongoing development of the schools workforce. Issues reported by the *Inquiry into Teacher Education* included:

- a decline in the number of teachers interested in postgraduate study and in the amount of professional development undertaken;
- the ad-hoc nature of its provision and the need for a more coordinated approach so that it is better matched to the needs of particular schools and districts;
- the need to involve universities more and to recognise the role of professional associations as providers; and
- the difficulties in accessing on-going professional learning for teachers in rural and remote areas.

²⁰ OECD, *Education at a Glance 2012*, Paris, 2012.

²¹ OECD (2012).

²² OECD (2011), *Teachers matter: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers – pointers for policy development*, Paris 2012.

Survey data from *TALIS 2008* found that compared to other countries, Australian teachers had one of the highest participation rates in professional development, but had one of the lowest levels of intensity (i.e. average number of days undertaken). The results also indicated a degree of unmet demand for professional development, suggesting that teachers were interested in developing their skills but were not provided with the opportunities. The *TALIS 2008* found that just over half of Australian teachers wanted more professional development than they received.

These issues are currently being addressed through a series of major reforms and initiatives involving the Australian Government and states and territories. Details on these are provided in Term of Reference One.

Alternative Pathways into Teaching

Research has shown that one highly effective mechanism to improve the quality of teaching is to focus on initial teacher education and to increase the pool of potential teachers by increasing attraction, removing impediments to first becoming a teacher, and to find ways for people with industry experience in areas like mathematics and science, and a passion for teaching, to enter the profession.²³

To that end, the Australian Government facilitated the development of the employment based pathway, Teach for Australia, and subsequently initiated another, the Teach Next program.

These pathways into teaching have been designed to encourage new entrants by providing flexible approaches for prospective teachers to achieve professional qualifications.

Teach for Australia

In 2009, the Teach for Australia pathway was initiated, and the Teach for Australia organisation was contracted to provide national coordination of the program and to administer selection/recruitment and ongoing support for participants. The University of Melbourne was separately contracted to deliver the embedded initial teacher education program. The objectives for the program are to:

- attract high performing graduates from non-teaching backgrounds to diversify and improve the quality of the teacher workforce;
- retain them in schools for a minimum of two years; and
- forge linkages between government and business to increase corporate and philanthropic interest in education.

High-achieving university graduates are recruited nationally. Applicants are subject to a rigorous recruitment process and are selected on the basis of qualities and skills suitable to the teaching profession, and a genuine desire to reduce educational disadvantage.

²³ Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) Pay, Working Conditions and Teacher Quality, *The Future of Children*, Vol 17, No.1, Spring 2007

Selected applicants undertake six weeks of initial residential intensive education prior to commencing a two-year placement as an Associate in a disadvantaged secondary school.

Associates undertake a two-year employment based course involving continued study toward a qualification in teaching; a teaching role with a 0.8 FTE reduced load, and the support of an in-school teacher Mentor, a Clinical Specialist and a Training and Leadership Advisor.

The Associates' in-school experienced Mentor also undertakes accredited mentor training, conducted by the University of Melbourne.

Teach Next

Teach Next is an employment based pathway into teaching for skilled and experienced professionals who are seeking a career change into the teaching profession.

The objectives of the program are to provide an employment based teacher education program that links theory with practice and attracts high quality and skilled individuals to the teaching profession. The program focuses on addressing critical areas of teacher shortage in regional and hard-to-staff schools and aims to reduce the increasing number of classes staffed by teachers forced to teach outside their area of subject expertise.

Over a two year period, participants complete an accredited Postgraduate Diploma of Teaching while working in schools, beginning with an initial intensive training period of six weeks. Deakin University currently provides the training support to the Teach Next program. Training involves a number of intensive residentials, together with an online education component. During their school placement, participants are supported by a mentor and other experienced teachers. Mentors are trained by participating universities.