

Opening Statement

Senate Estimates, 7 November 2024

Thank you, Chair. Noting this is my first time appearing before the Committee, I would like to take this chance to offer a brief opening statement, if that suits the Committee.

My appointment as CEO of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership – AITSL – is the culmination of almost a decade of leading strategies and approaches to improve education outcomes for children and young people; which is my passion.

Over that time, I've had the pleasure of visiting hundreds of classrooms, speaking with children and young people about their learning, and meeting the passionate teachers and school principals making a difference in the lives of their learners.

Through this experience, I have gained an appreciation for both how rewarding and fulfilling a career in the teaching profession can be, and also for the particular challenges our teachers and principals face in this rapidly changing world. There can be no question that every person who puts their hand up to improve learner outcomes deserves our appreciation and respect.

Almost two weeks ago, on Friday 25 October, Australia celebrated World Teachers' Day – and it was heartwarming to see the outpouring of gratitude for the teaching profession by parents, students, polities, sporting clubs and celebrities.

The stories shared online by so many showcased the passion, expertise and knowledge of those who have the greatest impact on the learning lives of students right across Australia – our teachers and leaders.

It was the end of my first week at AITSL, and it reinforced for me just how important AITSL's work is.

At AITSL, we come to work *every day* to build esteem for our teachers and school leaders – and to advance initiatives and reforms that will build the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the profession; increasing teachers' impact on student learning, and in a way that makes the job a little bit easier.

Whether it's by ensuring that every Graduate teacher is best prepared for the realities of the classroom, developing tools and resources to support teachers and leaders in their everyday practice, or providing national frameworks that support their professional recognition and growth, the work of AITSL is so important – and it's a privilege to play my part in it.

I look forward to working closely with our teachers and school leaders, the Commonwealth, our partners in the states and territories – and the wide range of stakeholders involved in our school and early childhood education systems – to support Australia's teachers to have the maximum impact on the learning lives of our children and young people, and know that these efforts are valued.

Thank you for indulging me, and I welcome your questions.

439 words, approx. 2 min 45 sec.