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House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
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Parliament House
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Re: Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA)

*Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Employment, Education and Training inquiry and report on the status of the
teaching profession.*

Thank you for providing the opportunity for us to make a submission to the above inquiry and report.

Teachers are highly skilled professionals who play an essential role in society and it is important that they enjoy the status commensurate with this.

We believe this inquiry is a significant step in acquiring a better understanding of the factors affecting the teaching workforce in Australia and hope that it will assist decisions makers to establish appropriate career pathways, and create valuable support at all career stages, for the profession.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important work.

Yours sincerely

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Convener
ATRA

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SUBMISSION ON THE STATUS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities

Introduction

1. This is a submission on behalf of the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA). ATRA is an association established by the teacher registration and accreditation authorities of each of the states and territories of Australia and includes New Zealand. It was established to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between the Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions in the regulation of the teaching profession. It was formally recognised by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in May 2005.
 2. Teachers are highly skilled professionals who can have a significant impact on learner achievement (Hattie, 2009; OECD, 2005). A thorough understanding of teachers and their profession is crucial to enable appropriate frameworks to be established that provide career pathways and support to all teachers to maximise their impact.
 3. This submission will focus on two of the Terms of Reference:
 - (1) *Increasing the attractiveness of the profession for teachers and principals, including workplace conditions, and career and leadership structures.*
 - (4) *Investigating ways to increase retention rates for the teaching profession, and avoid 'burn out' among early-career teachers.*
- (1) Increasing the attractiveness of the profession for teachers and principals, including workplace conditions, and career and leadership structures.**

National Registration Framework

4. Like other professions, teachers are highly qualified professionals and need to be regarded as such. To this end, in 2011, a national framework for teacher registration in Australia was developed, underpinned by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers ('the Teacher Standards') that were agreed by all State and Territory Education Ministers.
5. The Teacher Standards were developed to provide a foundation to support teachers and school leaders, school systems, regulators, education authorities and governments alike. They guide and strengthen the quality of teaching, while also providing a framework for career progression and ongoing high quality professional learning. As with professional standards in other professions, the Teacher Standards provide a quality benchmark (AITSL, 2018).
6. Australian teachers want to be part of a high status profession that values excellence and has the confidence of the community. They also want to be valued for their commitment to growing their expertise and increasing their impact on the learning of the children and

young people in their care (Bahr N., Graham A., Ferreira J., Lloyd M., & Waters R., 2018; Wyatt-Smith C., Wang J., Alexander C., Du Plessis A., Hand K. & Colbert P., 2017).

7. Consistent approaches to teacher registration provide a vehicle for the Teacher Standards to be met. Teacher registration supports the ongoing professionalisation of the teacher workforce and safeguards the quality of the Australian teaching profession (AITSL, 2018).
8. The expert panel of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) National Review of Teacher Registration (2018) adopted a set of working principles of effective regulation based on the work of Armytage in her review of the Victoria Institute of Teaching (2017). These include:
 - i. Learner outcomes centred: the focus is on ensuring the registration system ensures a foundational level of teaching quality by all practitioners based on the level of Teacher Standards and supports.
 - ii. Focused on 'public interest' and 'child protection': have a sophisticated understanding of 'public interest' and have advisory mechanisms in place to inform/respond accordingly.
 - iii. Visible and respected by the profession: teachers, schools and principals understand the function and objectives of the organisation and can see the value of the work undertaken.
 - iv. Risk-based: Responsive in identifying, assessing and responding to risk, prioritising and targeting resources toward specific groups or behaviours that pose the greatest risk to the regulator's outcomes.
 - v. Intelligence-led: Actively gather and analyse incoming intelligence and leverage data in order to develop a sophisticated understanding of risk, inform decision-making and effectively reduce risks of harm.
 - vi. Proportionate: Each of the requirements of registration is proportionate to the risk or harm they are intended to address.
 - vii. Transparent: The purpose and requirements for teacher registration are clear and transparent supporting teachers in their development and maintenance of professional knowledge, practice and engagement as well as an increased public confidence in the profession.
 - viii. Consistent: Regulatory decisions will be predictable, meaning that, to the best extent possible, regulators provide similar responses in similar circumstances, following clear processes.

Recommendation 1:

*As with other professions, teachers need to be recognised as highly trained and qualified professionals. To achieve this, **teacher registration** needs to be strongly supported and reinforced to safeguard the quality and ongoing professionalisation of the teacher workforce. Registration needs to ensure that every teacher:*

- *has graduated from an Australian initial teacher education (ITE) program that meets the ITE accreditation standards and procedures (AITSL, 2015), or who holds a comparable international teaching qualification;*
- *who gains full registration meets the national benchmark of the 'proficient' career stage of the Teacher Standards;*

- *is deemed 'suitable to teach' and jurisdictions investigate allegations that registrants do not meet the standards and take appropriate action.*

The Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy

9. Currently, there is a lack of informed national data around the teaching profession in Australia. A detailed perspective of the national teacher workforce will provide decision-makers with information that allow them to create policies that will strengthen and support the profession.
10. As individuals enter and exit the teaching profession and progress through their career, it is vital to know:
 - teacher demographics in each state;
 - career pathways taken;
 - selection and retention rates;
 - sector and year levels taught;
 - reasons teachers leave the profession;
 - demands and challenges of the profession;
 - expectations of the profession;
 - satisfaction levels of teachers; and
 - the public perception of the profession.
11. Currently we do not have accurate data on the number of full, part time and casual staff in Australian schools. The Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) strategy has commenced gathering data nationally that will allow further insight into the opportunities and challenges that teachers face and how these can be addressed to better support the profession (AITSL, 2018).
12. Ironically, although a high percentage of teachers are women, there is a disproportionately low number who are promoted to leadership roles (Bahr, N, et al, 2018). But once again there is no accurate national data set on the proportion of school principals who are female or indigenous, nor is it possible to monitor diversity markers in the national teaching workforce and how this may impact on the learning experience of our diverse student population (AITSL, 2018).
13. The demand for early childhood teachers (ECT) has grown dramatically over the last five years, particularly with the introduction of the National Law (2010) and the specific legislative requirements of each state and territory. Once again there is no accurate national data set that identifies the supply and demand of ECT.
14. Although currently there is no single reliable collation of national teacher workforce data, a number of New Zealand and Australian research reports have examined the status of teaching in these countries. Based on their study of teaching in New Zealand, Hall and Langton (2006) claim that teaching is not seen as a high status profession. Status has three primary drivers – power, money and fame - and traditionally teaching does not provide these. However, teaching is viewed as a respected, valuable and honourable profession and ranks highly in what the public might call 'esteem'.

15. Australasian studies have also examined the reasons individuals select teaching as a career. A teaching career has the ability to offer diversity and opportunity. The Queensland study, *Why choose teaching?* cites the following as key reasons for attraction to teaching:
- influence on future generations;
 - the importance of the role in society;
 - job security;
 - strong career progression/advancement;
 - influence of teachers
 - leadership opportunities across a broad range of pathways;
 - subject specialisations;
 - career diversity (Wyatt-Smith et al, 2017).
16. Family, friends and peer groups also have a large influence on a person's decision to become a teacher and this should be taken into account in the promotion of the profession.
17. Building on the Queensland studies, particularly in identifying the key reasons for attracting high calibre applicants to teaching, a more detailed and evidence-based profile of the Australian teaching workforce is required.

Recommendation 2:

*That the implementation of the **Australian Teacher Workforce Data strategy** is given a high priority by all States and Territories to enable more effective national workforce planning based on a greater understanding of the demographics and career trajectories of Australian teachers.*

(4) Investigating ways to increase retention rates for the teaching profession, and avoid 'burn out' among early-career teachers.

18. More research is needed into the reasons and career stage teachers leave the profession. Estimates of attrition through the first five years of a teaching career are highly uncertain and range from eight per cent to 50 percent. Many of these statistics appear to have originated from UK or US studies (AITSL, 2016).
19. Once again there are important policy questions relating to early career teacher attrition, but there is limited data available in Australia to shed light on these questions. There is a strong case for more comprehensive and better linked data collections to provide a basis for future research and policy development.
20. The *Perceptions of the Status of Teachers and Teaching* report cites the following as both barriers to entry to the profession as well as reasons for leaving the profession:
- student behaviour
 - physical risks –false accusations against male teachers
 - pay
 - heavy workloads

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- lack of support
 - lack of status
 - negative media
21. In conjunction with investigating ways to retain teachers in the profession and avoid early career burnout, close consideration must also be given to the recruitment of teachers together with adequate early career support.
22. This includes exploring strategies to ensure that ITE programs recruit the most suitable and ideal number of candidates. The McKinsey Report, *How the World's Best-Performing Systems Come out on Top* details how top-performing school systems limit the number of places in ITE courses which in turn creates competition for places, raises the status of teaching, limits the number of graduates competing for jobs and in turn assists teaching to become a first and not a last choice.
23. It is also vital that all graduate teachers receive quality induction and mentoring upon entering the workforce. To improve support for newly qualified teachers, Scotland introduced the Teacher Induction Scheme in 2002 which provides newly qualified teachers year-long induction and mentoring and gives them the opportunity to work in a classroom while building on their existing skills. The National Review of Teacher Registration Report (2018) noted the critical importance of high quality induction and mentoring of newly qualified teachers and this is the focus of the report's first key recommendation. One of the first priorities of any successful education system is to attract and recruit sufficient high quality applicants.
24. The McKinsey Report on *How the World's Best-Performing Systems Come out on Top* observed that:
- ...in the world's top-performing school systems, high standards are set for entry into teacher education, the number of places in teacher education programs is limited to the number of graduates required, students compete for entry, and the status of teaching is high. In contrast, low-performing systems often set low standards for entry and train more teachers than they require, resulting in limited competition and low status (Barber & Mourshed, 2007).*
25. Currently there is a lack of statistical evidence that addresses the challenge laid by the McKinsey Report.
- How many teachers do we need to enrol in ITE programs and in what fields and scopes of practice?
 - How many graduates can we employ in our current and future education system?
 - How do we provide high quality mentoring and induction of newly qualified teachers?

26. Scotland has provided one answer to this challenge. The unique feature of the Scottish system is the provision of a paid year-long placement in a mainstream school for all graduate teachers qualifying from Scottish universities to support them achieve fully registered teacher status after one year of successful employment. The Teacher Induction Scheme was introduced in 2002 and is managed and administered by the General Teaching Council of Scotland. It provides professional induction and mentoring for newly qualified teachers who are required to maintain a teaching workload of 0.7 over this period of employment. This allows the balance of time to be devoted to the intensive induction and mentoring of the new graduate. Prior to the introduction of the scheme, newly qualified teachers were 'provisionally registered' for the equivalent of two years full time.
27. Levels of support for newly qualified teachers varied hugely under the previous system, and some teachers completed their probation through short-term appointments in a range of different schools. Short-term supply contracts often lasted for just one or two days, with no support or preparation time. Apart from those who gained permanent or long-term temporary work, probationers were often being exposed to a disparate range of experiences in different schools and different local authorities. The 2000 McCrone Report witheringly described this way of gaining full registration as 'little short of scandalous' (Donaldson, 2011, p.36).
- "The guaranteed induction year is one of the strengths of the current system in Scotland. Teachers on the induction year have a chance to put into practice what they have learned and to build on their existing skills. There is time built in to allow them to reflect on their experiences. Having students and probationers in schools forces those schools to consider their practices"* (Donaldson, 2011, p.38).
28. These international examples promote limiting the number of teacher graduates to the number required in the professional context in which they will be employed. However this depends on the capture of reliable national data and being able to mitigate a wide range of variables. Factors driving attrition appear to be multiple and include unstable patterns of employment, heavy workload and the increasing complexity of teachers' work. These supply and demand models are more than simple statistical exercises.
29. That said, there needs to be a greater alignment of recruitment and employment information sensitive to the demands of the local and national contexts to maximise the resourcing of high quality ITE programs.
30. The Scottish example also reinforces that to improve the retention of early career teachers, there needs to be high quality induction and mentoring of graduates in at least the first year of their teaching.
31. In Victoria, a provision was made in the Government schools' agreement that:
- ...the work allocated to classroom teachers in their first 12 months of teaching should recognise the need for those teachers to perform all of their required duties within a reasonable timeframe and to participate in the necessary induction and development activities designed to assist these teachers in their first 12 months. Accordingly, within the*

resources available to the school, the scheduled duties of a classroom teacher in their first 12 months should be reduced by at least 5% over the school week consistent with the allocation of duties at the school determined in accordance with sub clauses (5) and (8). If a teacher is requested to act as mentor for a classroom teacher in their first 12 months the principal, as the Employer's representative, should ensure that this role can be undertaken having regard to the total work required of that teacher over the 38 hour week (p.23)

<https://www.aeuvic.asn.au/sites/default/files/Victorian%20Government%20Schools%20Agreement%202017.pdf>

32. To date there has been no detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of this measure to support the work of early career teachers. Such a review would be useful in determining whether such measures help retain early career teachers in Victorian government schools.
33. Other states have also introduced measures focused on providing effective induction and mentoring of newly qualified teachers. The first recommendation of the National Review of Teacher Registration reinforces that employers should build and strengthen the quality of induction for early career teachers. A national review of the effectiveness of the induction and mentoring of early career teachers should draw on the experience of states and territories in building the capacity and capability of this group of teachers and whether this has helped retain early career teachers in the profession.

Recommendation 3:

That there is careful alignment between the recruitment and selection of high quality ITE applicants to meet the demands of the local and national teaching workforce contexts and requirements. This alignment should be based on evidence-based policy development (based on the better linked data collection contemplated under the ATWD) that recognises the factors that drive attrition, (unstable patterns of employment, heavy workload and increased complexity of teachers' work) and builds on the factors that improve retention of early career teachers, (supportive school environments, the ability to find stable permanent employment and adequate pedagogical preparation). (This recommendation must align to the work of recommendation 2).

Recommendation 4:

That, teacher employers maintain responsibility and strengthen their role in providing early access for early career teachers to high quality induction and mentoring, to support their transition into the workplace and the profession.

Recommendation 5:

That there is a national review of the effectiveness of the induction and mentoring of early career teachers from which key recommendations can help build the capacity and capability of early career teachers.

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