

POSITION PAPER 3: TEACHER EDUCATION

In February 2014, Commonwealth Education Minister, Christopher Pyne, announced a review of Teacher Education in Australia. The resulting Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group called for submissions addressing the following questions relating to teacher education:

1. What characteristics should be fostered and developed in graduate teachers through their initial teacher education?
2. What teaching practices should be developed in graduate teachers through their initial teacher education?
3. What level of integration should there be between initial teacher education providers and schools?
4. What balance is needed between understanding what is taught and how it is taught?

Whilst cognisant of the review questions, the AA AE views on teacher education are a somewhat more generic response as expressed in the points below:

The AA AE:

- supports the premise that Teaching is a profession and that the professional learning of teachers is a career-long endeavour. The teaching profession requires well-educated, highly knowledgeable and skilled practitioners with advanced capacity to build effective relationships, think critically and make informed decisions for improved student learning based on research and evidence.
- advocates the use of the nomenclature of Teacher Education, not training as we believe the language of teacher training does not best represent what it means to be a professional.
- recognises that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) bridges the years from entry to completion of an accredited Teacher Education program (either undergraduate or postgraduate) and is an important component of the life-long continuum of learning to be a teacher. ITE should focus on developing reflective practitioners who can create innovative, engaging and relevant strategies that cater for diverse students' needs.
- advocates that pre-service teachers be engaged with a diverse range of classrooms, schools and communities as active, collaborative and participatory learners who can contribute much to a school. Pre-service teachers are not 'apprentices' to a master teacher.
- supports policies that continue to attract quality graduates into the teaching profession and contributes to increasing the status and attractiveness of teaching as a highly respected, valued and rewarding professional career.
- believes all teachers, be they pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and teacher educators, need to know about and be able to apply the recent advances in research and scholarly practice in their classrooms to improve student learning.
- advocates for effective partnerships and collaboration between school communities and teacher education providers, focusing on powerful action research projects that can maximise the learning outcomes of all students. These partnerships need to be appropriately supported and resourced.
- supports the development of effective pedagogies for teacher education, acknowledging the considered balance between the theory of learning and teaching and practical knowledge and skills in practising learning and teaching.

- supports The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as a framework that contributes to professional learning in our teaching profession at all stages, from entry, ITE coursework, professional experience, graduation, induction and towards proficiency, highly accomplished and lead.
- recognises the need to develop, foster and support a diverse and inclusive teacher and teacher education workforce to better meet the learning needs of all students.
- supports the view that in teacher education there needs to be a balance and desirable interaction between theoretical understanding, content knowledge and teaching practice so as to develop teachers who are prepared and confident to teach curriculum broadly for global context and in particular the Australian Curriculum as it has been designed to be taught.
- considers its member associations have an important role to play in ongoing teacher education and in supporting the mentoring of pre-service teachers in developing content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

Statement of AAEE position

The AAEE and its member associations stand ready to support the work of universities, jurisdictions and schools across Australia in providing learning and opportunities to develop high quality teachers, focused on quality learning and education experiences for the young people of Australia. The AAEE also supports the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as a strategy to support teacher education and ongoing teacher quality as long as they are supported with quality professional learning and used as a guide for teacher education and development and not as performance monitoring indicators of individual teachers by jurisdictions, regulatory bodies, schools and other institutions.

The AAEE strongly urges the Commonwealth Government to continue its efforts to support quality Teacher Education in Australia as indicated in Minister Pyne's press release on the Teacher Education Review when he said that all Australian students

" ... need access to high-quality teachers and teaching. A quality teacher in every classroom is the biggest equity issue in Australian education. Effective teaching is the best means we have of overcoming the effects of disadvantage for young Australians."

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