Status of the teaching profession

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
Contents

Members .................................................................................................................................................. v
Terms of Reference ................................................................................................................................. vii
List of Recommendations .................................................................................................................... ix

The Report

1 Discussion ......................................................................................................................................... 1
   Conduct of the previous inquiry ........................................................................................................ 1
   Summary of issues arising ................................................................................................................ 2

Appendix A. Submissions .................................................................................................................... 5
Appendix B. Public Hearings ................................................................................................................ 9
Appendix C. Summary of Issues Arising from Public Hearings ......................................................... 11
Members

46th Parliament

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Deputy Chair

Ms Lisa Chesters MP

Members

Ms Angie Bell MP

Mr Andrew Hastie MP

Ms Celia Hammond MP

Ms Ged Kearney MP

Hon Barnaby Joyce MP

Ms Joanne Ryan MP

Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP (from 1.08.2019)

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45th Parliament

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Deputy Chair
Ms Susan Lamb MP

Members
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Mr Trevor Evans MP
Mr Jason Falinski MP
Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Mr Ken O'Dowd MP
Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP
Mrs Ann Sudmalis MP
Mr Andrew Wallace MP
Terms of Reference

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training will inquire into and report on the status of the teaching profession, considering opportunities to improve outcomes in a range of areas including:

1. Increasing the attractiveness of the profession for teachers and principals, including workplace conditions, and career and leadership structures.

2. Provision of appropriate support platforms for teachers, including human and IT resources.

3. Identifying ways in which the burden of out-of-hours, at-home work can be reduced.

4. Investigating ways to increase retention rates for the teaching profession, and avoid ‘burn out’ among early-career teachers.
List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

1.9 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider the summary document published by the Committee in April 2019 (Appendix C of this report), so that the Committee can advise inquiry stakeholders as to how their views are being incorporated into policy approaches and solutions.
1. Discussion

1.1 While this report is published in the 46th Parliament, the views represented are those which were endorsed by members of the Committee in the previous Parliament. Members of the Committee in the current Parliament do not necessarily share the views, however feel very strongly that the work of the previous committee, and the commitment demonstrated by the stakeholders and participants in the inquiry of the last Parliament, deserve to be acknowledged.

1.2 The Committee in the current Parliament therefore makes a single recommendation, following a brief review of the work of the Committee during the inquiry. All the records of the inquiry, including submissions received and transcripts of public hearings, remain on the webpage from the Committee during the 45th Parliament.¹

Conduct of the previous inquiry

1.3 The inquiry commenced towards the end of the 45th Parliament. It was the fourth substantial inquiry conducted by the Committee during that Parliament, and a final report was not presented before the prorogation of the Parliament prior to the May 2019 general election.

1.4 The Committee received 90 submissions and public hearings were held in six locations, in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Lists of submissions received, and locations for hearings, are included in Appendices A and B to this report. The Committee was

¹ As noted on the inquiry home page, the inquiry ‘lapsed’ at the end of the 45th Parliament, but links remain active and records therefore remain accessible: <https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Employment_Education_and_Training/TeachingProfession>, viewed on 16 October 2019.
particularly interested in hearing from witnesses with teaching experience, and thanks those who took the time to contribute to the inquiry. Key matters arising from the public hearings were canvassed and subsequently published in April 2019 as a summary of issues, which is included as Appendix C to this report.

Summary of issues arising

1.5 In the April 2019 document, the Committee identified key themes on which evidence had been collected through the inquiry process. Many of these were initially raised in written submissions, and further investigated during public hearings. The Committee had a strong preference to gather information in ‘round table’ discussions, where input could be thematic and inclusive. Witnesses were able to join a dynamic group discussion, and themes and issues could be explored by several individuals or representatives of organisations concurrently rather than consecutively. To that end, the views and observations of the Committee in its final document are reflective of broad stakeholder interests and their commonly-expressed opinions and experiences.

1.6 Because the Committee did not conclude its report, specific recommendations were not made to Government. In acknowledgement of the work of all who participated in the inquiry, the Committee is keen to receive a response from Government to the views raised during its inquiry.

1.7 One of the key themes that arose was the workload of teachers and support staff, and the Committee then and now appreciates the significant additional time and effort involved in participating in an inquiry. Rather than re-visit all the information generated through its previous inquiry, the Committee agreed that a government response be sought to the discussion paper as a whole document. In this way, stakeholders will be able to know more about how their views and concerns might be dealt with at a policy level.

1.8 Key points outlined in the discussion paper include broad acknowledgement of evidence of a deficit model, and that while the status of teaching remains high in communities, the social status of teaching has suffered greatly. There was a widespread acceptance of the need to afford higher levels of recognition and respect to the profession. Observations were grouped under the following headings:

- Teacher Selection
- Induction and Mentoring
- Specialist Support
DISCUSSION

- Teaching, Education and Student Data
- Professional Development and Leadership
- Early Childhood Teaching
- Rural and Regional Teachers
- Collaboration and Professional Learning Communities
- Teacher Welfare

**Recommendation 1**

1.9 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider the summary document published by the Committee in April 2019 (Appendix C of this report), so that the Committee can advise inquiry stakeholders as to how their views are being incorporated into policy approaches and solutions.

Mr Andrew Laming MP
Chair
23 October 2019
A. Submissions

1. Name Withheld
2. Mr David Allen
   2.1 Supplementary to submission 2
3. Name Withheld
4. Name Withheld
5. Confidential
6. Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE)
7. Mr Peter Govan
8. Dr David Gurr
9. HSPA
10. School of Education - University of Sunshine Coast
11. The Professional Teachers’ Council NSW
12. Gowrie SA
13. University of Queensland School of Education
14. Mr Francis Ventura
15. Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA)
16. Dr Colin Harrison
17. Early Childhood Teacher Education Council
18. Chief Scientist
19. Independent Schools Queensland
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization/Individual</th>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Australian Parents Council</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>University of Adelaide</td>
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<td>Deakin University</td>
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<td>The Mathematical Association of New South Wales</td>
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<td>Faculty of Education, QUT</td>
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<td>Science &amp; Technology Australia</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Dr Lawrence Ingvarson</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
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<td>Queensland Council of Deans of Education</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Associate Professor Susan McGrath-Champ</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Dr Rachel Wilson</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Australian Education Union</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>The Front Project</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>College of Education Psychology and Social Work, Flinders University</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Department of Educational Studies Macquarie University</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute</td>
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<td>36.1</td>
<td>Supplementary to submission 36</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Ms Lucie McCrory</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Mr David Towson</td>
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<td>Catholic Education Melbourne</td>
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<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales</td>
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<td>Griffith University</td>
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<td>Australian Children’s Education &amp; Care Quality Authority</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Mrs Nina Kelly</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Australian Catholic University</td>
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48 Country Education Partnership
48.1 Supplementary to submission 48
49 Consult Australia
50 Alphacruces
51 Smart Education Australia PTY LTD
52 Catholic School Parents Australia
53 Professor Sue Bennett
54 Independent Schools Council of Australia
55 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
56 The Mathematical Association of Western Australia Inc. (MAWA)
57 Australian Special Education Principals Association
58 RMIT University
59 Teach For Australia
60 Australian Science teachers Association
61 Institute for Learning Sciences & Teacher Education, Australian Catholic University (ACU)
62 Australian Professional Teachers Association
63 Queensland Teachers’ Union of Employees
64 Queensland College of Teachers
65 Confidential
66 National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf
67 Dr Adam Kerezsy
68 The Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA)
69 Social Ventures Australia
70 NT Department of Education
71 Name Withheld
72 Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT)
72.1 Supplementary to submission 72
73 Australian Literacy Educators’ Association
Mr Andrew Oliver
Angela Gibbs
Australian Council of Deans of Education
University of Melbourne
Grattan Institute
NSW Department of Education
79.1 Supplementary to submission 79
Mr Michael Bateman
Ms Clare King
Mr Paul Johnson
Independent Education Union of Australia
Dyslexia Victoria Support
84.1 Supplementary to submission 84
Ms Sasha Sullivan
Mr John Buchanan
Ms Angela Parfitt
Ms Elizabeth Diacos
Name Withheld
Ms Barbara Preston
B. Public Hearings

Monday, 4 March 2019
Brisbane and Bokarina, QLD

Tuesday, 5 March 2019
Sydney, NSW

Wednesday, 6 March 2019
Melbourne, VIC

Thursday, 7 March 2019
Adelaide, SA

Friday, 8 March 2019
Rockhampton, QLD

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1 The program and transcripts for each hearing can be found on the inquiry webpage at, <http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Employment_Education_and_Training/TeachingProfession/Public_Hearings> viewed on 16 October 2019.
C. Summary of Issues Arising from Public Hearings

The following pages contain a paper published by the Committee in the 45th Parliament, *Summary of issues arising from public hearings.*
Inquiry into Status of the Teaching Profession

Summary of issues arising from public hearings

Introduction

The inquiry to date has received 90 submissions and public hearings were held in six locations. The Committee was particularly interested in hearing from witnesses with teaching experience, and thanks those who took the time to contribute to the inquiry. Key issues arising from the public hearings are briefly canvassed below, and may assist in any future or further investigation.

1. Promotion of teaching and education, particularly in the media, by community leaders and politicians. Evidence of a deficit model.

2. Status of occupation remains high within communities however the social status of teaching has suffered greatly.

3. Need for higher levels of recognition of and respect for the profession.

Teacher Selection

4. Concern with the model for tertiary entry scores to teaching degrees:
   - international research which suggests entry benchmarks
   - individualised selection.

5. ATAR/OP reliability as an indication of who will be a good teacher.

6. Measures of graduate quality and need for confidence in measures.

7. The necessity for prerequisites such as Mathematics and English for initial teacher training. Some considered this to be essential while others argued that it makes little difference to teacher quality.

8. In the main, education courses in a university teaching degree are all mandatory. There are no electives. Many felt that this was risk averse and compliance driven.

9. The duration of the graduate degree programs of two years with a suggestion of a reduction to one year. It was suggested that the second year should integrate placement, study and a salary.

Induction and Mentoring

10. Teacher preparedness at the end of their degree for the nature of their work. What does it mean to be ready to be a teacher? Suggestion that first year teachers may benefit from a reduced load and more time with an experienced mentor.
11. The concept of providing a notional salary to all internships.

12. In accepting barriers exist there is an opportunity to develop incentives for schools to increase willingness and capacity to accept preservice teachers on placements, to increase options and diversity in training experiences available.

13. Proper induction and mentoring programs within schools are vital to better support teachers in their environments. Mentoring programs need to be fostered, funded and given time to happen. This may include stronger partnerships between universities and systems where students are starting to be inducted into the profession in their final year, through to their first three years of teaching.

**Specialist Support**

14. An increase of funding to schools to help manage the social, behavioural and health related issues of students would allow teachers to be freed up to teach. Teachers increasingly picking up roles that used to be parental roles, and are expected to solve problems that are beyond their training.

15. The value of specialist qualifications to provide a better service to students where mainstream teachers are asked to be everything to everyone. It was reported up to 40 per cent of students in some classes will have some kind of special need or learning difficulty. Rapidly there is generalising of special education, and a lack of qualified specialists. Similarly, it was suggested that teacher training include evidence-based reading instruction to screen and help children with learning difficulties.

16. Increased funding would provide for more administration staff within schools. A cut to red tape requirements would result in teachers being released from time spent in compliance, risk assessment and satisfying bureaucracies. There was a further desire to find ways to automate some of the clerical tasks which consume the time of teachers.

17. ‘Extreme’ issues around Language Other Than English teachers—in particular retention and quality of training. Language education needs to be taken seriously, and teachers need to be integrated in those schools. Also need to recontextualise new pedagogies that don’t treat languages as an add-on to the curriculum but bring them into what schools are already doing, using content and language integrated into learning.

**Teaching, Education and Student Data**

18. There is a lack of data on the types of unpaid work being undertaken at home. As a result there is a need to quantify, report and address the ‘invisible’ workload
that teachers are absorbing outside of school time. It is acknowledged that many
teachers spend many hours per week outside of working hours marking, planning,
contributing to individual learning plans, responding to parents, or meeting
administrative requirements. If principals and school administrations are not
aware of what is being done out of hours, then it isn’t possible to introduce
solutions.

19. *Datafication* of teaching was identified as a major issue. Professional judgement
of teachers is being marginalised by data. Compliance reporting is a major impost
on teachers’ time.

20. Lack of visibility on how the data is being used, and how it informs teaching
and education. Teachers would more readily accept the burden of the paperwork if
they could see what happens afterwards. There is also a lack of data on the
profession generally.

21. School and student data reporting systems have the same data being entered
across multiple systems. There was a desire to be more efficient in data reporting,
generally.

22. Similarly, ITC programs that assist teachers to automate the administrative
workload could be implemented throughout Australia. For example, some teachers
need to email parents to alert them that their child has not submitted an
assessment item. Some of this is automated across Australia.

**Professional Development and Leadership**

23. Supporting continuous professional learning and development will ensure
teachers are engaged as lifelong professional learners. Research methods to be
included in undergraduate teaching degrees.

24. Permanency allows teachers to pursue a career trajectory, and lifts their
self-esteem. Social, cultural and economic professional issues (including pay and
conditions) around career trajectory were identified. Highly Accomplished
Teachers and Lead Teachers Initiatives were cited.

25. Preparation of preservice principals to improve the quality of leadership by
training principals prior to their appointment. The gap in Australian education is
the identification, preparation and leadership training for people who can then
aspire to the job.

26. There was a strong sense that successful schools require teachers’ professional
autonomy, and building relationships among teachers, the community and
students. It is also about the quality of leadership and the culture of a school.
Early Childhood Teaching

27. Greater salary parity between early childhood teachers and school teachers is required.

28. Recognition of the vital importance of early childhood education (0-5 years) and the need to address the impact of lower pay rates for early childhood educators (long day care), likely to deter people from entering (or remaining in) this type of teaching.

Rural and Regional Teachers

29. Shortages of skilled specialist teachers may exist in regional areas.

30. Rural and regional universities are pivotal to attracting and retaining teachers in rural and regional areas. Suggestions include:

- Increasing opportunities for collaborating and a framework for clustering so that people within rural schools do not feel isolated;
- Strong relationships and connections with universities around preservice teachers going to rural schools;
- Recruitment, retention and developing some incentives so that people are encouraged to teach in rural areas;
- Raising the profile of educators in rural settings; and
- National recognition and mutual registration so that teachers can work across states.

Collaboration and Professional Learning Communities

31. Funding, structure and fostering of collaborative and professional learning communities (which include subject matter and leadership experts) during work time.

32. Team building around classrooms (involving support teachers, the classroom teacher and administrative support) is beneficial to both teaching and learning outcomes.

33. Models of co-teaching to enable teachers to share the teaching load and provide support to each other. Administrative staff could alleviate some of the current non-teaching burden faced by teachers.

34. The availability of part-time work is an emerging issue in the workforce, but is not currently accommodated in many school systems. Facilitation and support may help improve the culture of the profession.
35. Models of flexibility within schools, in areas such as school hours, school weeks and school terms, and the delivery of curriculum and customising content according to diversity in the classroom.

36. A good practice repository that both supports teaching research and helps schools share best practice.

Teacher Welfare

37. Teacher welfare is vital to ensuring teachers are retained and professionally supported.

Andrew Laming MP
Chair
4 April 2019