



Submission to the Australian Government's Economic Reform Roundtable

TEACHERS AND TEACHING RESEARCH CENTRE
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**TEACHERS
& TEACHING**
RESEARCH CENTRE

By improving the quality of teaching in schools, Quality Teaching Rounds produces better outcomes for all students, increasing their life chances and contributing to enhanced Australian productivity in both the near and long term.

Quality Teaching Rounds is a low-cost and highly scalable program. It involves as few as two teachers per school participating in a two-day workshop and then running in-school Rounds using a train-the-trainer model (refined to avoid message dilution and ensure quality) that can ripple through a school without additional external input.

A series of rigorous randomised controlled trials have demonstrated that Quality Teaching Rounds improves teaching quality and student achievement in mathematics and reading¹. These results are unique globally in education research. No other intervention has been so thoroughly tested in Australia or amassed such a comprehensive body of evidence.

In 2020, Deloitte Access Economics produced a cost-benefit analysis which found an uplift of between \$40 and \$150 in gross state profit for every dollar invested². Current research is also showing Quality Teaching Rounds has a positive effect on teacher retention for both early career and experienced teachers.

An investment of \$150 million over three years would enable all teachers in Australia to participate in Quality Teaching Rounds to underpin a major uplift in our national productivity. By comparison, recent state government investments of \$250m³ and \$1.2b⁴ over two and four years respectively on small group tutoring were found to have minimal impact on learning.

This proposal aligns with pillar 3, *Building a skilled and adaptable workforce*, of the Australian Government's productivity agenda. Quality Teaching Rounds is a specific and practical solution, already rigorously tested and highly valued by Australian teachers. By improving student achievement, Quality Teaching Rounds contributes to long term educational attainment and employability outcomes, with indirect impacts in improved wellbeing and civic participation. These effects make this proposal both fiscally responsible and in the national interest.

Recommendation: invest \$150 million over three years to scale Quality Teaching Rounds nationally, delivering immediate benefits to teacher retention, teaching quality and student achievement and, over the medium-term, delivering budget savings and boosting Australia's productivity.

¹ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., & Patfield, S. (2023). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools 2018–2023: Final report to the Paul Ramsay Foundation*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, The University of Newcastle. <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1493345>

² Deloitte Access Economics. (2020). Quality Teaching Rounds – Cost benefit analysis. Report to the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre. <https://qtacademy.edu.au/a-deloitte-access-economics-cost-benefit-analysis/>

³ CESE (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation) (2023) COVID Intensive Learning Support Program – Phase 3 evaluation, NSW Department of Education. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/educational-data/cese/2023-covid-ilsp-phase3-evaluation-report.pdf>

⁴ VAGO (Victorian Auditor-General's Office) (2024) Effectiveness of the Tutor Learning Initiative, Victorian Parliament. <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/effectiveness-tutor-learning-initiative>

Why this works – an evidence-backed model for improving teaching

One of the key factors supporting personal productivity is the quality of the education our young people receive. Quickly lifting the quality of teaching through Quality Teaching Rounds supports Australian students to achieve their educational goals, opening up greater opportunities to make a positive contribution to the country. Teachers need just one four-day engagement in school-based Rounds to experience the benefits. Quantitative measures show improvements are sustained over more than six months⁵ and in qualitative data teachers report they will never teach the same again⁶.

Quality Teaching Rounds also lifts productivity by improving teacher efficacy, morale and wellbeing, ultimately helping to retain talent in the teaching profession and supporting the pipeline of teachers from initial teacher education through to school leadership.

Quality Teaching Rounds combines an evidence-based pedagogical framework – the Quality Teaching (QT) Model – with powerful professional development processes that guide teachers to embed the elements of the model in their practice.

The QT Model, with its three dimensions of Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance, addresses the complexity of teaching while delivering a clear conceptual and practical guide for teachers' pedagogical work. It does so without being overly prescriptive which enables local contextualisation.

The QT Model is proudly agnostic about particular teaching strategies, predicated on the belief that teachers are the best judges of the teaching practices that will be most effective for their context, their class, their students. Rather, the QT Model focuses on the underlying quality of pedagogy regardless of the strategies used. In this way, the Model and Rounds treat teaching holistically, respect teacher professionalism, and recognise the complexities of Australian classrooms.

Quality Teaching Rounds brings together teachers with a range of experience levels, from any grade or subject area, to learn from each other and improve their pedagogy, engaging in a rigorously tested process of peer observation, independent analysis of teaching and group discussion.

Quality Teaching Rounds has been trialled and successfully implemented in primary and secondary schools and in a range of specialist contexts, including: small, rural, and remote schools, and large metropolitan schools; highly disadvantaged schools and wealthy independent schools; schools for specific purposes, hospital schools, environmental education and distance education centres. It has also demonstrated success supporting early career teachers, experienced teachers, casual relief teachers, pre-service teachers, and teachers in vocational and higher education settings⁷.

Impact on student achievement

Quality Teaching Rounds was first evaluated under randomised controlled trial conditions in 2014/15 which established direct causation for its ability to improve teaching quality and teacher morale⁸.

⁵ Gore, J., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., Ellis, H., & Lubans, D. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007>

⁶ Gore, J., & Rickards, B. (2020). Rejuvenating experienced teachers through Quality Teaching Rounds professional development. *Educational Change*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-020-09386-z>

⁷ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., & Patfield, S. (2023). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools 2018–2023: Final report to the Paul Ramsay Foundation*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, The University of Newcastle. <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1493345>

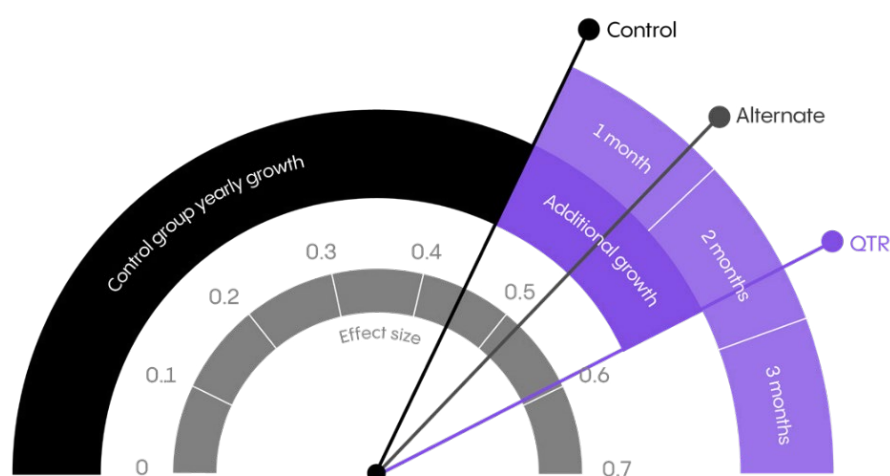
⁸ Gore, J., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., Ellis, H., & Lubans, D. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007>

Based on these promising findings, in 2018, the Paul Ramsay Foundation provided \$17.2m to rigorously evaluate Quality Teaching Rounds' impact on student outcomes, scale the program, and create a long-term sustainable business model to continue the roll-out after the funding period.

In 2020, the University of Newcastle launched the non-profit Quality Teaching Academy social enterprise to address scale and sustainability. Since 2018, more than 5,500 teachers Australia-wide have participated in a Quality Teaching Rounds workshop, positively benefiting at least 1.3 million students – a number that grows exponentially year on year.

Three of four PRF-funded randomised controlled trials demonstrated clear impact of Quality Teaching Rounds on student achievement in mathematics and reading⁹ (Figure 1). Education research is notoriously messy due to the complex nature of classroom settings, making these results rare on a global scale. Rarer still, the trials demonstrated the efficacy of this pedagogy-focused intervention¹⁰ in improving student achievement rather than relying on PD interventions focussed specifically on mathematics or reading instruction.

Figure 1: Impact of Quality Teaching Rounds on mathematics (2019 RCT)¹¹.



These studies involved more than 10,000 students 1,400 teachers and 250 schools in three Australian states. Crucially, the results were stronger in disadvantaged settings, signalling the potential for this approach to narrow longstanding equity gaps.

Impact on teacher and job satisfaction

A national expansion of Quality Teaching Rounds is currently being funded by the Australian Government as part of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan to improve retention and job satisfaction of teachers¹².

⁹ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., & Patfield, S. (2023). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools 2018–2023: Final report to the Paul Ramsay Foundation*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, The University of Newcastle. <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1493345>

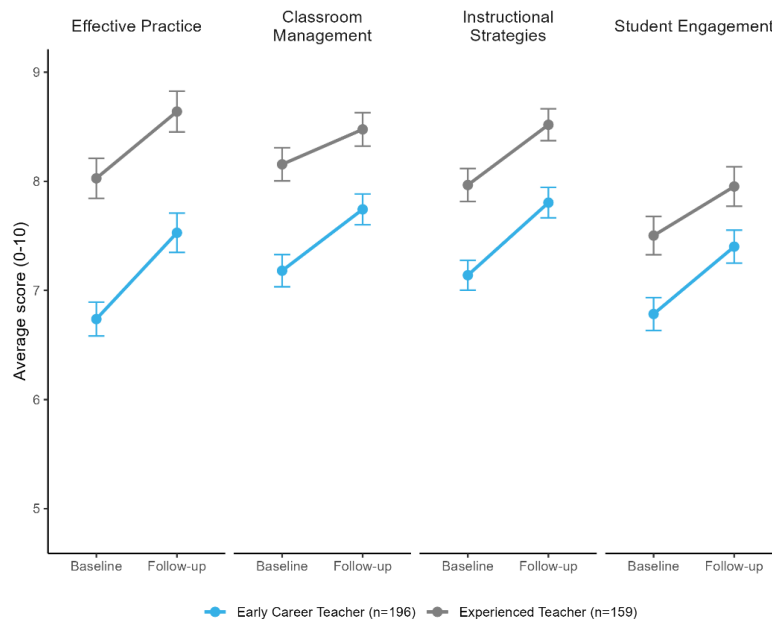
¹⁰ Gore, J., & Rosser, B. (2020). Beyond content-focused professional development: Powerful professional learning across grades and subjects. *Professional Development in Education* <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1725904>

¹¹ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., Harris, J., & Prieto-Rodriguez, E. (2021). Improving student achievement through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103297>

¹² Clare, J. (2023). Expansion of Quality Teaching Rounds program. *Ministers' Media Centre*. <https://ministers.education.gov.au/clare/expansion-quality-teaching-rounds-program>

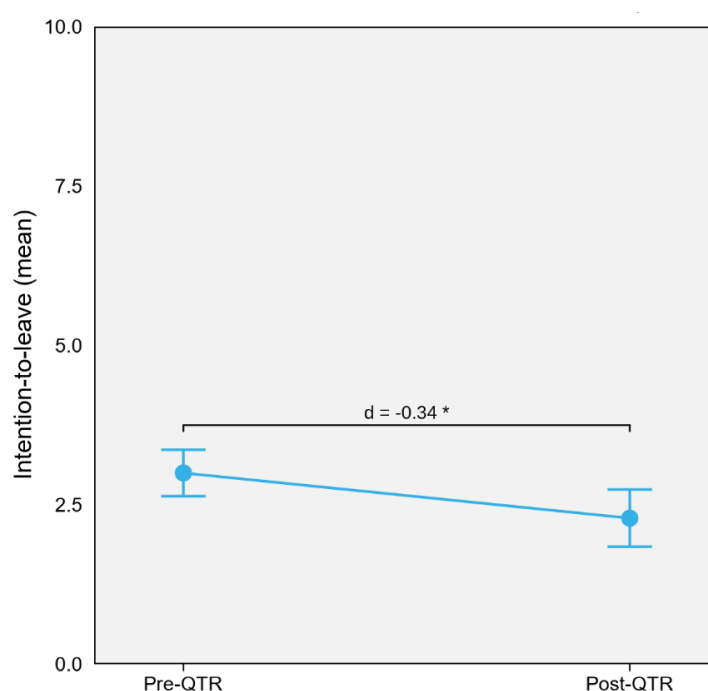
Findings to date in this *Strengthening Induction through Quality Teaching Rounds* project show that teacher participation has reduced burnout and improved wellbeing and professional community. It has increased teacher efficacy in general (effective practice), and in the specific domains of classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Impact of Quality Teaching Rounds on teacher efficacy by years of experience



Quality Teaching Rounds is also having a positive effect on teacher retention. When asked to indicate their intention to leave the profession within the next six months on a scale from 0 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely), the average dropped significantly following participation in Quality Teaching Rounds (Figure 3). Importantly, all these positive effects are reported by both early career and more experienced teachers involved in the *Strengthening Induction* project.

Figure 3: Average intention to leave (n = 127 at baseline)



CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMING OUTCOMES AT CESSNOCK HIGH SCHOOL

Cessnock High School is one of the most disadvantaged schools in NSW. Almost 25 per cent of its students identify as Indigenous and more than 70 per cent of families are positioned in the bottom quartile for socio-economic advantage. Prior to 2020, Cessnock High faced numerous challenges, including low engagement, poor academic performance, and behavioural issues.

In 2020, the University of Newcastle's Teachers and Teaching Research Centre began a partnership with the school, co-designing a four-year Quality Teaching Action Plan centred on Quality Teaching Rounds. The results achieved at Cessnock High School have been remarkable.

In 2023, Cessnock High ranked first in the Hunter region and 11th among NSW public schools for improvement in Year 7-9 NAPLAN results. Cessnock students' HSC results also improved by more than 50 per cent in 2022 and 2023, and in 2024, Cessnock High ranked second in the state for most improved Band 4, 5, and 6 HSC results.

Student attendance and engagement has grown by triple the state average and negative behaviours significantly decreased. Despite major teacher shortages at the school and across the country, survey responses showed crucial improvements in teacher morale and efficacy, school belonging, and perceptions of their leadership team. The school has also built stronger ties with its community and has changed the sentiment about Cessnock High more broadly.

“We're not just trying to help kids through school here, we're trying to help the Cessnock community by producing kids who are capable of getting quality jobs, being able to operate as a community member, and adding to our community.”

“I want to be a teacher. The main reason is the teachers at this school. They've influenced me in a massive way.”

Peter Riley, principal

Charlotte White, student



Teacher Kelsey Kisina (centre) walks with Year 12 students Gabrielle and Charlotte

One initiative, broad impact.

This proposal presents the government with a unique solution to many of education's enduring challenges. As one initiative with broad impact, Quality Teaching Rounds can simultaneously improve student learning, keep great teachers in the classroom, and address long-standing equity concerns.

Australia is in the midst of a teacher shortage and retention crisis. Current estimated turnover costs exceed \$690m-\$1.2b annually in recruitment, training, and replacement^{13 14 15}. The budget savings on this measure alone makes this investment in Quality Teaching Rounds sound. At the same time, this investment will generate broader productivity benefits with improved academic achievement resulting in further educational attainment, greater probability of employment and increased future earnings, with indirect impacts on improved health outcomes and civic participation.

These positive benefits make this investment both fiscally responsible and in the national interest. Ultimately, it is students, families and communities who will benefit most through positive experiences of schooling that produce life-long returns.

Recommendation:

Invest \$150 million over three years to scale Quality Teaching Rounds nationally, delivering immediate benefits for teacher retention, teaching quality and student achievement and, over the medium-term, delivering budget savings and boosting Australia's productivity.

The most effective funding mechanism would be through the Better Fairer Schools Agreement, with the program tied to a National Reform Direction (i.e. 84.c.ii: *A strong and sustainable workforce*¹⁶) or as a standalone National Enabling Initiative. This approach has the dual benefits of utilising existing funding commitments and creates jurisdictional capacity for teachers to participate in the program.

Capacity to deliver

The University of Newcastle's Teachers and Teaching Research Centre (TTRC) is led by Distinguished Laureate Professor Jenny Gore AM. Since 2013, the TTRC has been an Australian leader in high quality impactful educational research into initial teacher education, quality teaching, teacher development, school change, leadership, student aspirations, equity, and STEM education.

The TTRC established the Quality Teaching Academy in 2020 as part of the Paul Ramsay Foundation's \$17.2m *Building Capacity for Quality Teaching in Australian Schools* project. A non-profit social enterprise, the QT Academy is tasked with taking Quality Teaching Rounds to scale nationally and ensuring its ongoing sustainability.

Based on the compelling evidence of impact, in 2022, Quality Teaching Rounds received a bipartisan \$5m funding commitment to help retain teachers and improve teaching and learning outcomes. This project was funded in July 2023 as part of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan. In 2024, the

¹³ e61 Institute (2025). Who stays, who goes? A new look at teacher attrition using administrative data. <https://e61.in/who-stays-who-goes-a-new-look-at-teacher-attrition-using-administrative-data/>

¹⁴ Learning Policy Institute (2024). What's the cost of teacher turnover? <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/2024-whats-cost-teacher-turnover>

¹⁵ Gundlach, H. (2023). Dynamic career pathways may be the key to teacher retention. *Education Matters*. <https://educationmattersmag.com.au/the-key-to-teacher-retention>

¹⁶ Department of Education (2025). Heads of Agreement (Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025-2034). Australian Government. <https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/heads-agreement-better-and-fairer-schools-agreement-full-and-fair-funding-20252034>

Paul Ramsay Foundation provided a \$4.3m grant to replicate the Cessnock High School partnership model in 20 similarly highly disadvantaged government schools over three years. Current projects are underway to test and scale Quality Teaching Rounds to improve outcomes for Indigenous students and in Sweden, Germany, Indonesia, Scotland, Ireland, Japan, and Albania, with more interest in other parts of the world.

The QT Academy employs experienced teachers and school leaders who facilitate Quality Teaching Rounds workshops in every state and territory ensuring relevance and applicability with a Net Promoter Score of 62 over the past five years. This places the workshop in the top quartile of this measure, demonstrating sustained excellence.

The investment to scale:

- **Year 1-3:** \$150m establishment and initial rollout.
- **Year 4-6:** \$100m for national scaling.
- **Ongoing:** \$25m annually for ongoing scaling, quality assurance and innovation.

Cost-benefit analysis:

- **Break-even:** Achieved within two years through teacher retention savings alone (conservative estimate of \$90m a year in budget savings).
- **5-year ROI:** \$683m net benefit to budget.
- **20-year NPV:** \$2.4b - \$9.1b in economic value generation.

Budget sustainability:

- **Self-funding model:** Initial investment creates perpetual capability through train-the-trainer approach, where teachers drive ongoing participation in Rounds with new colleagues without further external input.
- **Scalable efficiency:** Per-teacher costs decrease as program scales. Teacher knowledge and skills developed, enabling them to take the approach from school to school as they move within, or across, education systems.

Cross-jurisdictional benefits:

- **Universal applicability:** Framework works across all education systems without requiring structural changes. Quality Teaching Rounds has been mapped to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the National School Improvement Tool, and other key education frameworks.
- **Reduced inequality:** Effects on student learning are greater in disadvantaged settings, addressing urban/rural and advantaged/disadvantaged gaps affecting all jurisdictions. QTR Digital was designed to specifically support teachers in small, rural and remote schools. A QTR Digital RCT demonstrated improvements in teaching quality, teacher efficacy and student reading achievement¹⁷.
- **Shared research base:** Collaborative evidence building benefits all states through knowledge sharing.
- **Public/private alignment:** Benefits government, Catholic, and independent schools equally.

¹⁷ Harris, J., Miller, D., Gore, J., & Holmes, M. (2022). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools: QTR Digital RCT final report*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, The University of Newcastle.
https://www.newcastle.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/909005/QTR-Digital-RCT-Report-with-ISBN.pdf