



# **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR QUALITY TEACHING IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS**

## **NEW JURISDICTIONS FINAL REPORT**

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# Project Overview

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The New Jurisdictions program of work focused on expanding Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) professional development to two new education systems within Australia where there had been little, or no, direct prior engagement with the QT Model or QTR. After initial consultation with several state and territory educational jurisdictions across Australia, the Queensland Department of Education and the Victorian Department of Education and Training agreed to support the project.

The scaling process and associated research occurred in two phases:

- An initial pilot study to demonstrate the applicability of QTR in systems new to the concepts and processes of QTR; and,
- A randomised controlled trial, conducted by an independent evaluation team in each state, to examine the effects of QTR on student and teacher outcomes.

Given the key focus on scaling QTR, workshop delivery shifted from Laureate Professor Jenny Gore for the pilot studies to the QTR Advisers for the RCTs.

A brief overview of each component and the resultant findings are provided in this report.

Overall, the New Jurisdictions program of research demonstrated:

- Clear evidence of the relevance of QTR and the QT Model in these new jurisdictions;
- Overwhelmingly positive responses from teachers and principals about the impact of QTR on professional practice, professional relationships, understanding of good pedagogy, and how to discuss and analyse pedagogy;
- Perceptions of clear alignment between QTR and both school- and state-level initiatives, conveyed by participating teachers, principals, and stakeholder representatives;
- Impact of QTR on student outcomes, with the 2022 Queensland RCT finding a statistically significant increase in reading comprehension achievement (PAT-R) for students with teachers in the QTR group compared to students in the control group (effect size,  $d = 0.21$  difference). This effect is equivalent to 3 months' additional growth in the QTR group.
- Major challenges in conducting research in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple natural disasters, which might have contributed to the null effects of QTR on student outcomes in the 2021 Queensland RCT and 2022 Victorian RCT. The success of these RCTs was also impacted by the mandated opt-in consent process for students/parents in both Queensland and Victoria, which resulted in a smaller student sample than achieved in previous QTR-related research in New South Wales.

# Queensland Pilot Study

In 2020, ten Queensland government schools (seven primary and three secondary) were recruited to take part in a pilot study of QTR (refer to Figure 1 for school locations) in order to examine the translatability of QTR. Insights from participating teachers and principals were gleaned through a mixed-methods research design consisting of surveys ( $n = 42$ ), focus groups, and interviews ( $n = 20$ ).

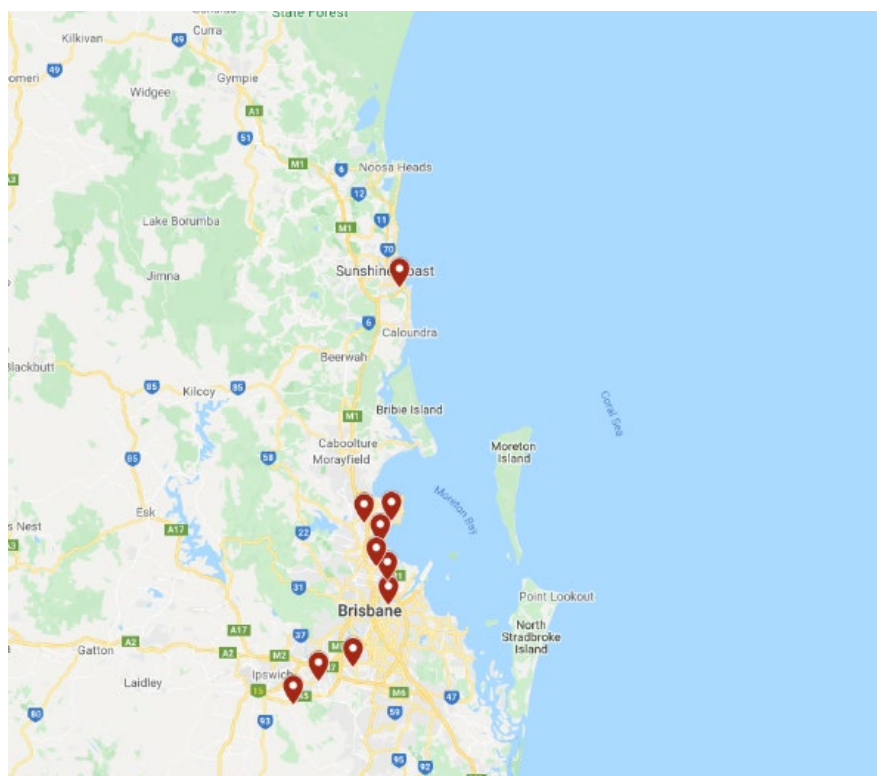


Figure 1. Queensland pilot study – school locations

## Major findings:

- Teachers saw the QTR workshop as a valuable professional learning experience which prepared them for implementing QTR in their school.
- Early impressions of QTR (after one or two Rounds) were extremely positive, with teachers identifying that QTR provided a tool for analysis and feedback, a conduit for professional dialogue, a mechanism for collaboration, and a platform for continuous improvement.
- At the completion of Rounds, teachers reported that QTR was a powerful form of professional development, their teaching practice had changed as a result of QTR, and their students benefited from their participation in QTR.
- While not directly attributable to QTR (given the study design), comparison of baseline and post-intervention survey data showed an increase in morale among participants, slightly

greater efficacy in relation to their teaching, a decrease in work-related stress, a noticeable increase in their sense of coping, and a slight increase in emotional engagement in teaching.

- Implementation fidelity was high when conducting QTR, with a similar fidelity score recorded for both researcher-observed and self-reported measures.
- Participants reported that they were highly likely to recommend QTR to their colleagues and most expressed a strong level of interest in the ongoing implementation of QTR in their schools.
- Teachers identified clear alignment between QTR and both school-level and state-level initiatives. Participants commented that QTR fits alongside a number of key focus areas (including workforce capability, well-being, student outcomes, and school improvement) and that QTR could enrich existing structures and plans.

I think historically in Queensland, we are afraid to give teachers specific feedback. I think we've been encouraged to make observational statements that they can draw their own conclusions from, and I think whilst that's very useful for a highly reflective person who's got a wealth of knowledge that they can deploy and go, "Oh cool, so you think that, which means this, which means I have to do this to fix it," it's fine. But for the majority, I think it's a bit navel-gazing, and I think this is not that. By assigning a code it brings a richness to that discussion that really pinpoints, "Oh, so where did you see 'most'? Why do you think 'some'? Was it substantive?" It gives that richness to it that then removes doubt. I think that's the strength of it.

*Sylvia, Teacher, Hakea State Secondary College*

I think the teachers were feeling refreshed. I think even one of the teachers who hasn't been teaching that long, she was kind of saying things like, "Oh, I get it now, I really understand what I haven't been doing," and I thought, "Well, that's great to hear," because, I mean, she's already quite a high performing teacher, but she's looking deeper into her own pedagogy.

*Melita, Principal, Wynyabbie State School*

I think – number one – it's allowed them to have a voice. It's allowed them to show what they can do, share with their colleagues – that's been very, very important. I think having their colleagues acknowledge them, that's been extremely valuable.

*Pavla, Principal, Callistemon State School*

# Queensland Randomised Controlled Trial

In 2021, the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) at The University of Queensland was commissioned to conduct an independent RCT to examine the effects of QTR on student and teacher outcomes in Queensland primary schools (referred to as 'state schools' in Queensland). This trial was run as a split-cohort design, with 56 schools taking part in 2021 (Figure 2, blue marker – Cohort 1) and 42 schools taking part in 2022 (Figure 2, orange marker – Cohort 2). Data were collected through Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading and Mathematics (PAT-R and PAT-M), teacher surveys, and student surveys. Data collection and analysis were completed by ISSR.

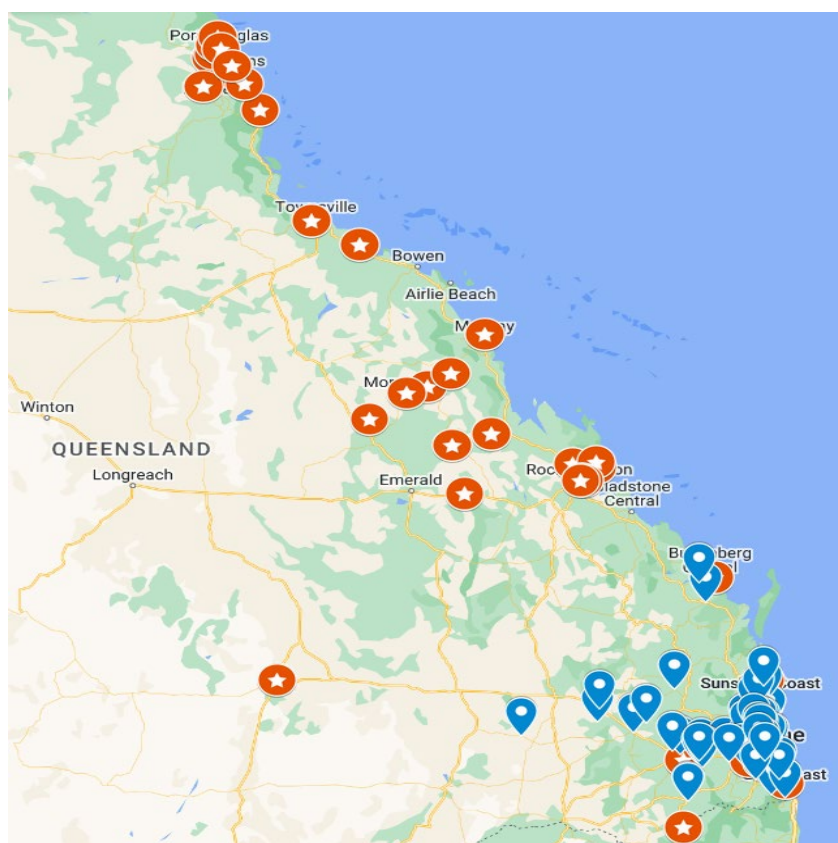


Figure 2. Queensland RCT – school locations

Major findings:

- In 2022, students with teachers in the QTR group displayed a statistically significant increase in reading comprehension achievement (PAT-R) compared to students in the control group (effect size=+0.21 difference). This is equivalent to 3 months' additional growth in the QTR group. No statistically significant results were found for mathematics achievement.
- In 2021, no statistically significant results were found in student outcomes, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In 2022, we observed a significant drop in morale and recognition among the control group teachers but did not see this drop among teachers engaged in QTR. We observed virtually no change in teacher efficacy and school connectedness across QTR or control group teachers.
- In 2021, measures of appraisal, teaching efficacy (general and engagement) and school connectedness declined for teachers in both the QTR and control group. In a positive sign, however, the QTR group displayed more positive outcomes (i.e., less decline) on all measures.

# Victorian Pilot Study

In 2021, ten Victorian government schools (four primary and six secondary) were recruited to take part in a pilot study of QTR (refer to Figure 3 for school locations) in order to examine the translatability of QTR. Insights from participating teachers and principals ( $n = 40$ ) were gleaned through a mixed-methods research design consisting of surveys ( $n = 40$ ), focus groups and interviews ( $n = 20$ ).

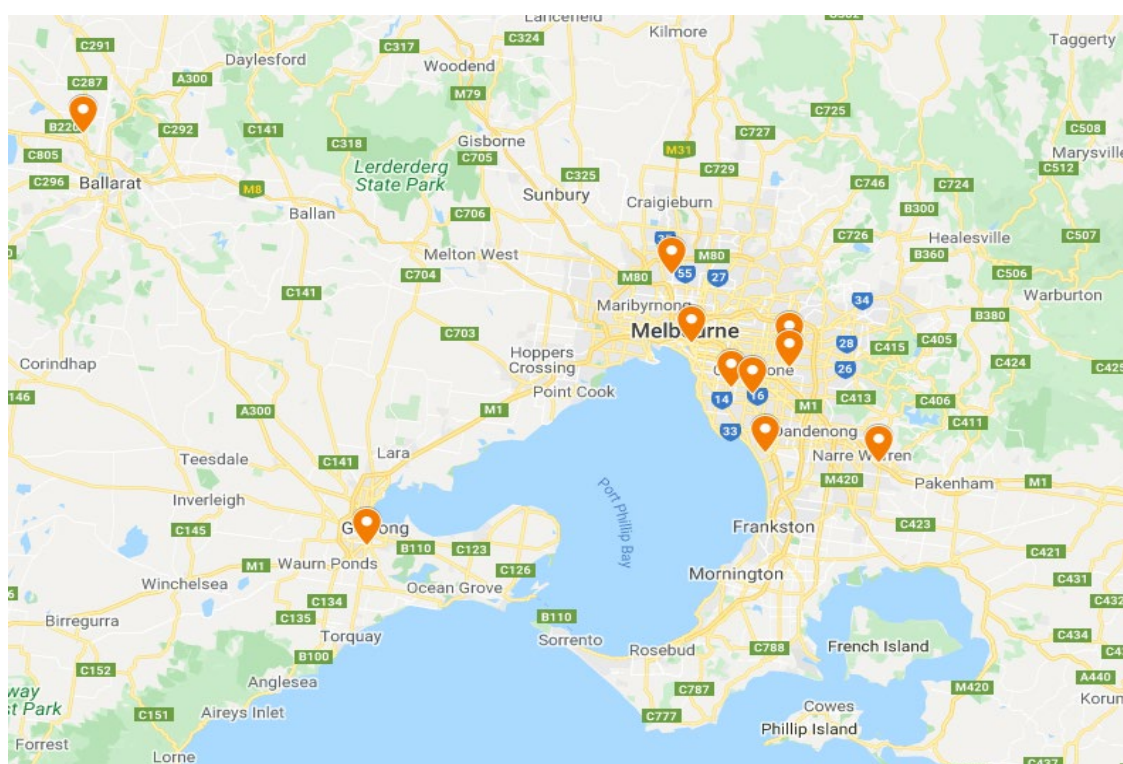


Figure 3. Victorian pilot study – school locations

## Major findings:

- The vast majority of participants reported QTR to be a powerful form of professional development and believed that their teaching practice changed as a result of participating in QTR;
- The vast majority of participants believed that their students benefited from their participation in QTR;
- Implementation fidelity was high when conducting QTR, with a similar fidelity score recorded for both researcher-observed and self-reported measures;



- Across the board, participants spoke very positively about their experiences of QTR, which was seen as generating rich, evidence-based conversations about practice and as a mechanism for creating new kinds of professional relationships with colleagues;
- Participation in QTR engendered many immediate benefits for participating teachers, including a shift in their thinking about practice, opportunities for meaningful analysis of their own and others' practice, deprivatisation of classrooms, affirmation and validation of current practice, and the establishment of shared concepts and language for understanding and discussing what constitutes quality teaching; and
- Participants identified clear alignment between QTR and both school- and state-level initiatives. Teachers and principals commented that QTR could be used either as a form of PD in its own right or as a mechanism to strengthen and support what is already happening in their schools. More broadly, teachers and principals felt that QTR would complement the Department of Education and Training's existing priorities and frameworks, adding value to what is currently being implemented in Victoria.

I found for me personally that it's really made me consider so many more aspects of my planning and how very small, tiny tweaks can actually have a huge impact. I think that that realisation and that in the back of my mind having the criteria there and becoming more and more familiar with it has really changed the way I think about what I do and how I deliver my lessons to my students.

*Charli, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School*

Long after the QTR process is done, I don't think I'll ever not think about these 18 elements to some level, as I go through my practice. Even now, when I start thinking about planning the next area or planning the next unit, I will run through the things in my head being like, 'how am I going to make sure that I'm inclusive? How am I going to make sure that I look at different cultural knowledge? Where can I draw on the kids' background knowledge?' I just find it's going to be beneficial and helpful long-term.

*Ava, Teacher, Little Rock Girls' High School*

I see it as being a really wonderful way of enabling growth in professional practice, in actually how to become an even better teacher. I see it as helping people work together to embed their practice and understand and speak the same language. People just use different words for different things. [QTR] gives you the language to be able to compare notes and share observations. It's a really big enabler.

*Kamai, Principal, Fountain View Secondary College*

# Victorian Randomised Controlled Trial

In 2022, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned to conduct an independent RCT to examine the effects of QTR on student and teacher outcomes in Victorian secondary schools. Overall, 40 Victorian secondary schools across all sectors (government, Catholic, and independent<sup>1</sup>) were recruited to take part in the trial (Figure 4). Data were collected through Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading and Mathematics (PAT-R and PAT-M), teacher surveys, and student surveys. Data collection and analysis were completed by ACER.

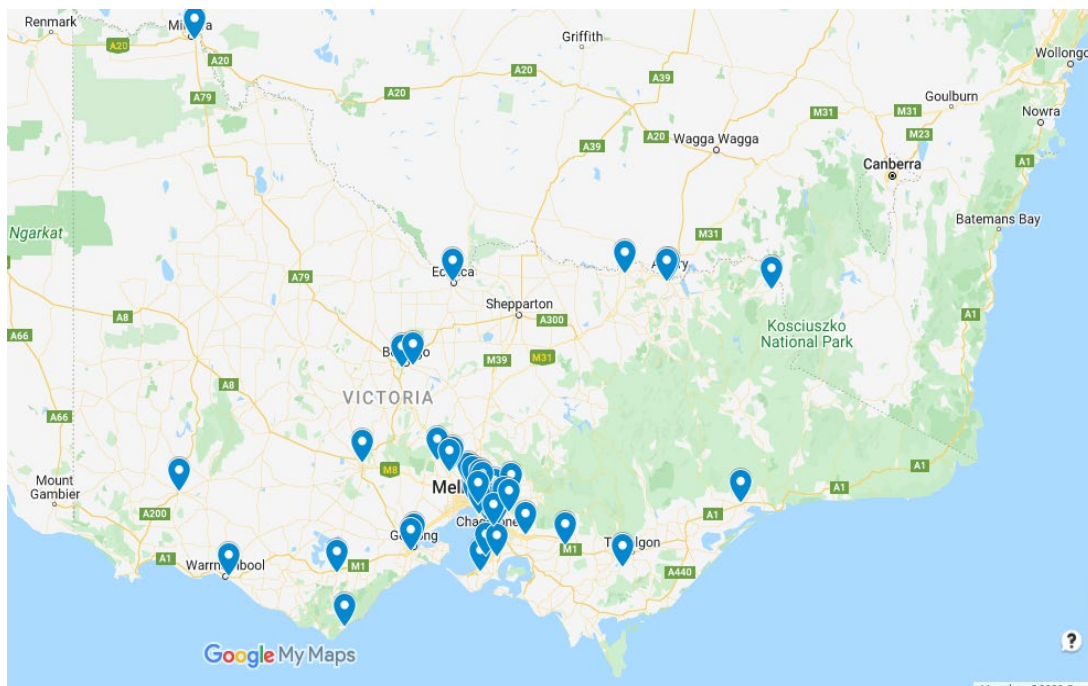


Figure 4. Victorian RCT – school locations

<sup>1</sup> While the study was originally only open to government schools, the decision was made to include Victorian Catholic and independent schools to increase the sample. All relevant approvals were secured.

Major findings:

- No statistically significant results were found for either student outcomes or teacher outcomes. This result was to be expected given the recruitment difficulties that left this study dramatically underpowered (i.e., approximately 100 schools and four times the students were needed to ensure a robust sample). Whilst much of the impact to recruitment and retention was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria, the mandated opt-in consent process for students/parents in Victoria also resulted in a lower-than-expected student sample (when compared to our NSW research), which affected the capacity of the project to deliver a meaningful result.