



Appendix A:

THREE INITIATIVES TO UNDERPIN LASTING EDUCATION REFORM IN AUSTRALIA

Briefing paper prepared by:

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BACKGROUND

A working party of key stakeholders across jurisdictions led by state and federal education ministers have developed a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan with the aim of increasing the number of people entering and remaining in the profession. At the same time, the Productivity Commission is reviewing the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) to be agreed upon in 2023.

In this critical policy context, the Australian Government has committed to expanding Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR), as endorsed by the Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) Review Expert Panel.

QTR, which is backed by evidence from gold standard randomised controlled trials, has demonstrated positive effects on teaching quality, teacher morale and efficacy, and student achievement - with stronger results in disadvantaged areas, signaling the potential of QTR in narrowing equity gaps.

Three initiatives to underpin lasting education reform in Australia

To enhance the impact of the expansion of QTR, we see two related opportunities for the government to enact meaningful, system-wide and long-lasting reform in education, as depicted in Figure 1.

Each of these three government actions could play a significant role in advancing the reform agenda. Together, they form a rigorous, coherent approach to addressing the teacher shortage crisis and simultaneously raising student achievement in line with national policy goals. Greatest impact would be realised with genuine system-wide support and collaboration across state, federal and sectoral jurisdictions.

POLICY LANDSCAPE	Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration	
	National School Reform Agreement National Teacher Workforce Action Plan Quality Initial Teacher Education Review	
GOVERNMENT ACTION	Committed policy initiative:	Recommended policy initiatives:
	1. QTR expansion	2. ITE Centre for Excellence 3. National Teacher and Leader Development Strategy

Figure 1: Proposed initiatives in the context of current policy landscape.

Enacting the above three initiatives would deliver whole of system reform across all phases of the teaching career lifecycle, as depicted in Figure 2.



Figure 2: AITSL’s phases of the teaching career lifecycle: <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teachingfutures>. Definitions of each of the phases can be found below in Attachment 1.

Table 1 provides a preliminary outline of how the three initiatives would support education reform in Australia across the career phases, addressing urgent government objectives to:

- raise the status of the profession;
- reform initial teacher education;
- improve retention in ITE and the teaching workforce;
- support teacher and student wellbeing; and
- lift student achievement.

While we have plenty of evidence on which to draw for elaborating the functioning of QTR, the specific functioning of the other two reform initiatives would be refined as they are developed in collaboration with key stakeholders.

PHASE	EXPANSION OF QUALITY TEACHING ROUNDS	QITE CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE	NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR TEACHER AND SCHOOL LEADER DEVELOPMENT
ATTRACT	Presents teaching as intellectually challenging and rewarding work.	Investigate ITE selection processes, including motivations and characteristics of students.	Develop national approach to teacher recruitment.
PREPARE	Strengthens ITE program quality and coherence.	Implement and evaluate reforms in ITE (including QTR and micro-credentials).	Strengthen mechanisms for ensuring ITE program quality.
PLACE	Builds graduate confidence and preparedness for diverse teaching contexts.	Evaluate graduate preparedness for teaching in diverse contexts.	Strengthen mechanisms for placement across jurisdictions.
INDUCT	Supports high quality teaching practice in collaborative professional cultures.	Evaluate mechanisms to support induction (including QTR and micro-credentials).	Guarantee induction supports and conditions.
DEVELOP	Improves student achievement, teaching quality, teacher morale and school culture.	Evaluate professional development (including QTR and micro-credentials).	Build capacity in teaching and leadership.
RECOGNISE	Supports teacher accreditation and promotion.	Investigate accreditation and promotion systems.	Expand national system for recognising teachers including clear leadership pathways.
RETAIN	Increases job satisfaction and wellbeing.	Investigate teacher retention.	Expand national system for retaining teachers and school leaders.

Table 1: Impact of the three policy initiatives at each phase of the teaching lifecycle

The University of Newcastle's Teachers and Teaching Research Centre is uniquely positioned to lead the delivery of the education reform outcomes sought by federal and state governments. Our experience managing large-scale, longitudinal programmatic research, including Australia's largest randomised controlled trial in education, paired with substantial experience in translation and commercialisation of educational research on a national scale, is unparalleled in the country.

ELABORATION OF THE INITIATIVES

1. *Expanding Quality Teaching Rounds to improve induction*

The Australian Government has committed to expanding Quality Teaching Rounds, as endorsed by the QITE Review Expert Panel. QTR is backed by evidence from multiple gold standard randomised controlled trials demonstrating positive effects on student achievement, quality of teaching and teacher morale. Qualitative analysis also shows positive impact on school culture and collaboration among teachers, and on teachers' confidence and leadership.

QTR can support efforts to address teacher shortages throughout the teacher lifecycle, with specific impact on:

- Recruitment – QTR raises the status of teaching by framing teaching as intellectually stimulating and rewarding work;
- Initial teacher education – QTR ensures program coherence and quality by providing an agreed framework for high quality pedagogy and assisting graduates to integrate theory with the practical demands of teaching;
- Retention – QTR improves teacher morale and builds collegiality. By providing a framework for high quality pedagogy and a strong network of peers through the collaborative processes of QTR, teachers' confidence grows – including teachers in hard-to-staff, regional, rural and remote schools where early career teachers and teaching out of field are common.

Linking beginning teachers with more experienced colleagues through QTR helps build a shared vision of quality teaching, a strong sense of professionalism, and deep collaborative relationships among teachers in ways that are critical to better retention.

A focus on induction in disadvantaged and hard to staff schools would produce fast impact and be a powerful starting point for a series of related reforms.

2. *Delivering on the QITE Review recommendation for a Centre for Excellence*

Recommendation 14 of the *Next Steps: Report of the QITE Review* called for the creation of a Centre for Excellence in ITE to provide “a model for evidence-based ITE and for research into which elements of selecting ITE students, preparing them and supporting them once in the classroom best contribute to school students' learning”.

Our experience with large-scale programmatic research and research commercialisation makes the TTRC uniquely positioned to bring together partners from across higher education institutions to evaluate innovations in ITE as they relate to the entire teaching career lifecycle. This would include QITE Review initiatives (QTR and micro-credentials in explicit instruction, phonics, classroom management and cultural responsiveness) which the government has committed to develop and other priority initiatives and technologies.

This pilot Centre for Excellence would further develop the evidence base for these programs, establish a national framework for high quality pedagogy, and provide a seamless transition from ITE to induction and throughout all other teaching career phases. An expanded Centre for Excellence could roll out these initiatives across the ITE sector with ongoing evaluation and make an important contribution to the Australian Teacher Workforce Database, and other evaluation initiatives within the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

3. *Underpinning these initiatives with a national teacher and school leader development strategy*

With State Ministers collaborating on a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan and the Productivity Commission reviewing the NSRA, now is the time to create a national, unifying strategy to support teachers' progress throughout their careers.

A National Strategy for Teacher and School Leader Development could provide: (1) a unifying framework for understanding and ensuring quality teaching and improved student outcomes; and (2) a clear pathway from ITE to beginning teacher induction and ongoing teacher and leader development.

Packaged together and supported by a larger, long-term strategic vision for education in this country, these initiatives will stem the tide of teacher shortages, raise the value of the profession, and improve outcomes for students, teachers and schooling more broadly.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Definitions of phases of the teaching career lifecycle

- **Attract:** Incentives, perceptions, career pathways and motivators, initial teacher education program quality.
- **Prepare:** Initial teacher education program quality, leadership mentoring and preparation, industry partnerships, teacher registration.
- **Place:** Placement according to vacancies or skills needs, progression across or between schools.
- **Induct:** Early career teaching load, support, induction processes, mentoring, collaboration, professional identity and wellbeing.
- **Develop:** Professional learning, instructional coaching, reflection, career and leadership pathways, feedback and review.
- **Recognise:** Status of the profession, career pathways, recognition of expertise.
- **Retain:** Incentives, workplace experience, teacher and school leader wellbeing.

[AITSL \(2021\) Teaching Futures Background Paper, Education Services Australia.](#)