

# High Achieving Teachers Program evaluation

Final report

# Introduction

The Australian Government Department of Education commissioned dandolopartners to evaluate the High Achieving Teachers Program.

The Australian Government Department of Education (the Department) commissioned dandolopartners (dandolo) to evaluate the implementation and impact of the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) Program.

## HAT Program

The HAT Program objective is to support the growth of alternative, employment-based pathways into teaching as a mechanism for improving access to quality teaching and education for all Australian students, regardless of their location.

The program funds two different employment-based pathways that recruit university graduates and place them in secondary schools while they complete an initial teacher education course, with a view to becoming fully-qualified teachers:

- Teach for Australia’s (TFA) Leadership Development Program (LDP)
- La Trobe University’s (La Trobe) Nexus program (Nexus)

## Interim report and Program evaluation

The Department asked dandolo to provide an early interim report on the HAT Program. The report found that the program was meeting its stated objective, despite limitations relating to data availability and the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector.

Since then, there have been significant developments in teacher workforce policy at both the federal and state level, including that:

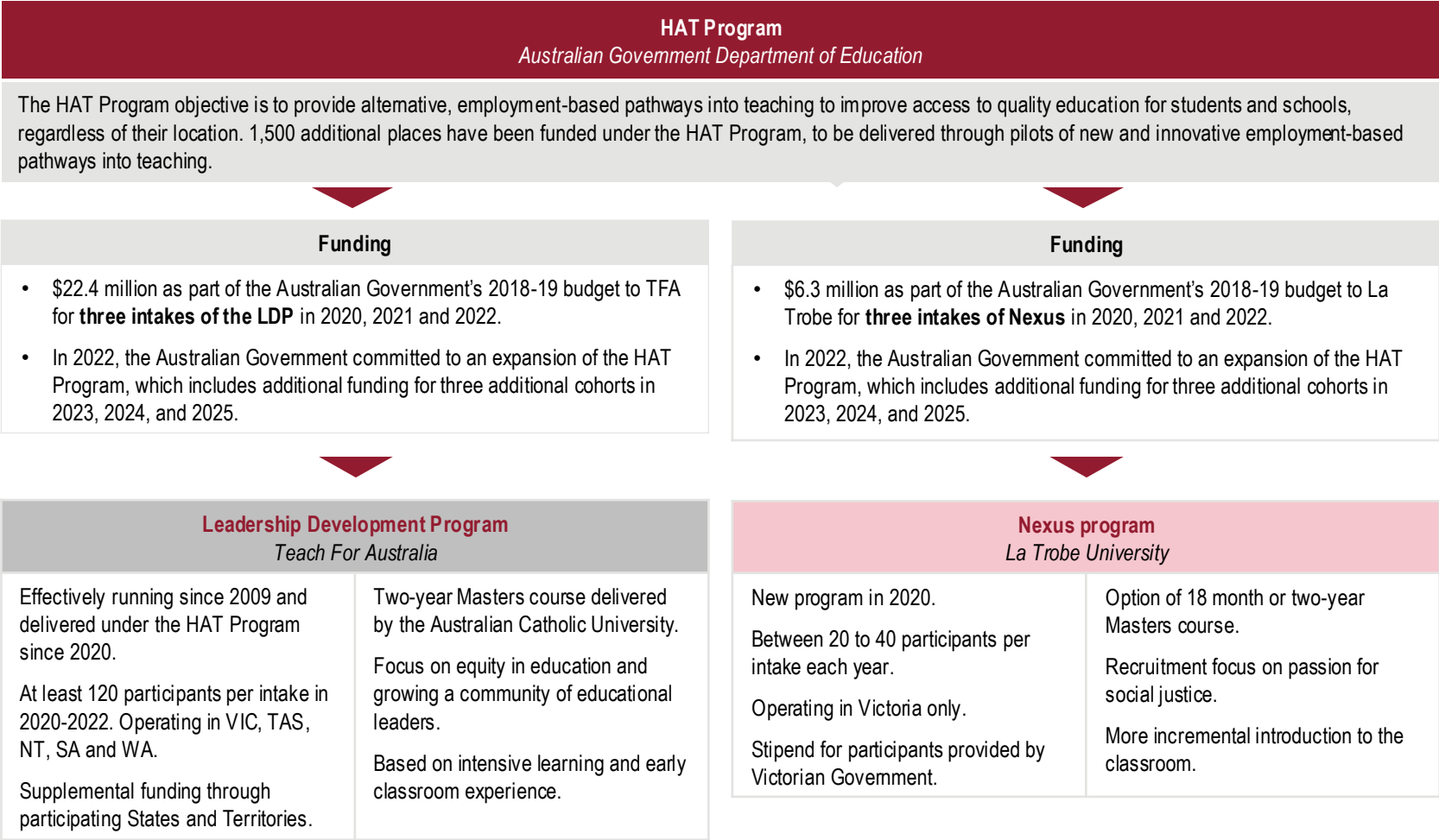
1. Employment-based pathways into teaching continue to proliferate in Australia; and
2. Education Ministers have announced – under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – 1,500 additional places funded under the HAT Program, to be delivered through pilots of new and innovative employment-based pathways into teaching.

The substantive evaluation ran from October 2021 to mid-2023, with a focus on the 2020, 2021 and 2022 LDP and Nexus cohorts. We engaged with LDP and Nexus stakeholders as well as state and territory education departments to inform this report. We also analysed data provided by TFA and La Trobe. Our evaluation framework is contained in Appendix 1 and a summary of our methodology is contained in Appendix 2.

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# Overview of the HAT Program

The HAT Program currently provides funding to TFA and La Trobe University to support alternative, employment-based pathways into teaching.



# Our approach

We undertook extensive quantitative and qualitative fieldwork and analysis over a two-year period to inform the evaluation.

## The purpose of this evaluation is to...

Understand the implementation and impact of the HAT Program and provide advice on how it can be effective and impactful in the future. We considered

- To what extent the LDP and Nexus are achieving the HAT Program objective
- Each program's distinctive strengths, challenges and impact

## To do this we have considered the following questions...

### 1. Program inputs

How were participants attracted / recruited? Were appropriate schools selected?

### 2. Participant journey

Are program elements during a participants' journey fit-for-purpose and effective?

### 3. Outputs

What has been delivered as a result of the programs?

### 4. Outcomes

What is the impact of the programs on students, schools and the education system?

## Our approach has included the following activities...

### Wave 1

#### Collect and analyse data

We submitted data requests to La Trobe and TFA, which largely covered program information and quantitative data.

#### Stakeholder consultation

- Participant online forums
- Interviews with jurisdictions
- Interviews with La Trobe and TFA

#### Interim report

An indicative view of the HAT Program and the programs that sit under it

See **Appendix 1 and 2** for a more detailed methodology of our fieldwork and data sources, alongside data limitations

#### Independent research

- Deep dives of programs
- Desktop literature review
- Research instruments and ethics approval

### Wave 2

#### Collect and analyse data

Additional data from La Trobe and TFA, with a focus on 2020-2022 cohorts

#### Extensive stakeholder consultation

- Participant online forums
- Interviews with jurisdictions
- Interviews with La Trobe and TFA
- School case studies
- Alumni interviews

Findings provided to the Australian Government

August 2021 – September 2021

2022

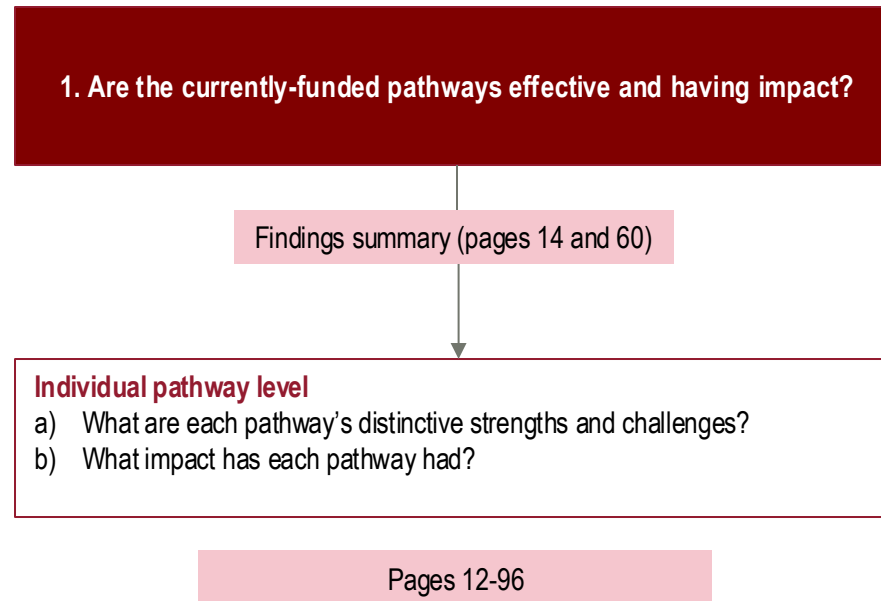
January 2023 – May 2023

June 2023

# 1. Executive summary

# Focus of this final report

This final report examines whether the HAT Program has achieved its objective and makes recommendations on what to do next.



# Assessment against HAT Program objective

The HAT Program has largely achieved its objective over the 2020-2022 period.

## Breakdown of HAT Program objective



**Support the growth of alternative, employment-based pathways into the teaching profession...**



**...as a mechanism for improving access to quality teaching and education...**



**...for all Australian students, regardless of location.**

## Assessment based on available evidence

- The HAT Program is supporting TFA to grow the LDP in several jurisdictions as an employment-based pathway into teaching.
- The program has also enabled the establishment of the Nexus program, which serves as an alternative model that introduces participants to the classroom more incrementally.

- LDP and Nexus participants become high-quality teachers in the classroom who start from a lower base compared to graduate teachers but develop rapidly over the course of their respective pathways.
- Participants also bring distinctive value to schools, depending on each individual pathway's target participant cohort and programmatic structure.

- The HAT Program is currently delivering for students in secondary schools across five jurisdictions in Australia.
- Almost all LDP and Nexus participants are placed in disadvantaged schools, and most are placed in regional and remote schools, however retention in these areas remains a challenge.

# High level findings – LDP

The LDP is having a positive impact on students, schools and the education system, underpinned by strong recruitment and support processes and effective adaptation of Masters of Teaching content. The model does create some workload challenges, and retention in rural / disadvantaged schools is mixed.



**The LDP is having a significant impact on students, schools and the education system**

We are confident that the LDP is contributing to producing teachers that are having positive impacts on **students** both academically and socio-emotionally, in large part due to the robust data that TFA collects.

**Schools** see many benefits:

- Immediate teaching capacity
- High-quality teachers with specialised skills
- Development of the leadership pipeline

At the **system level**, LDP captures a cohort that would otherwise not consider teaching and plays a role in representing the value of alternative pathways and influencing future design for other organisations.



**LDP effectively adapts and supplements its Masters of Education teaching content**

The program-specific content in the LDP is instrumental in teachers' preparation because it:

- Frontloads content that is directly applicable to the classroom, and
- Includes content beyond the traditional Masters that participants and schools find useful, such as trauma-informed teaching practices, practical behaviour management techniques, and additional cultural sensitivity training.

In this respect, the LDP doesn't just alter *how* teacher education is delivered, but also supplements *what* is being delivered.



**Recruitment and support are the most important and effective programmatic elements**

TFA effectively **attracts and recruits** participants who satisfy three valuable criteria:

- Have a strong passion for equity in education
- Have high potential to become effective teachers
- Would not have considered teaching otherwise

The benefits of the LDP's recruitment approach ripple throughout the program, from high completion rates to impact on schools.

The LDP's robust support creates a 'safety net' for participants and reduces burden on schools. However, the effectiveness and quality of each support varies, particularly the LDP's mentors.



**Participants tend to remain in education long-term, but retention in teaching in target schools is a challenge**

Graduates stay in **teaching roles** at rates comparable to traditional ITE pathways, and assume leadership roles in schools at a significantly higher rate.

Retention in **target schools** is a challenge. There is an immediate sharp decline after graduation and despite being placed in regional and disadvantaged schools, over time rates fall back to the Australian average.

Retention in broader **education** is very strong, with over 80% of all graduates since inception in the education space (e.g. not-for-profits, Education Department roles).



**The workload is very intense and some participants struggle significantly**

The workload of the program is very high by design, as participants must undertake concurrent fulltime teaching and a Masters of Education.

All participants acknowledge that it is intense, but some struggle more than others, usually because:

- They are high achievers who strive for academic results
- They are young parents with familial commitments

Although TFA is constantly seeking ways to mitigate workload, it remains an issue and can impact participants' wellbeing and mental health and there are limitations to the support the LDP can offer for this issue. **This is a critical risk for the LDP.**



# High level findings – Nexus program

Nexus's unique 'scaffolded' approach to employment-based learning and explicit focus on social justice are key strengths of the program. Early indicators suggest that Nexus participants are making a positive impact on schools.



## The unique 'scaffolded' introduction to classroom teaching is a strength of Nexus

Nexus adopts a 'scaffolded approach', whereby participants begin in education support and gradually build up to fulltime teaching in their second year of placement. This is Nexus's key value-add in this ecosystem, and benefits include:

- Participants can balance their teaching and academic workloads compared to more intensive models
- It provides a unique option in the ITE pathway landscape
- It's attractive to a broad cohort (and some feel it has strong potential to be adapted for mainstream pathways)
- Schools see teaching and non-teaching benefits



## Nexus holistically addresses the needs of regional and hard-to-staff schools

While some programs or education initiatives aim to address equity issues largely through participant placement, Nexus deeply embeds target school needs in every part of its design:

- Involving principals in the recruitment process
- Building 'hubs' or clusters of participants in local areas to build communities and improve retention
- Targeted recruitment of participants from regional / rural / low SES areas, and aiming to match them in areas they know



## The explicit focus on social justice is a key strength and distinctive feature

Nexus's focus on social justice underpins most aspects of the program:

- It's more reflective of contemporary approaches to teaching
- It's reflected in participants' pedagogy as they tend to view education through a more holistic lens that is underpinned by a trauma-informed and culturally competent approach to teaching
- Regional and disadvantaged schools recognise the impact and value it, as often students in these contexts have complex needs beyond academia



## Nexus's modest size is an influential factor for its strength and success

Nexus's small size enables it to:

- Be agile and swiftly respond to evolving or contextual needs and implement changes quickly
- Provide central support from program leaders, better guaranteeing support for participants (see page 80)
- Have a single academic and delivery organisation, which means that they can make changes to adapt curriculum more easily and quickly
- Reach a smaller number of schools, which means that existing schools have deeper partnerships with Nexus leaders



## While it's too early to tell the effectiveness or impact, indicators are positive

Nexus is three years old, with the oldest cohort having less than two years of graduate teaching experience. Despite this, there are indications that participants are effective and the program is having a positive impact:

- Principals are confident teachers and school leadership are recognising the distinct value that Nexus teachers bring, especially trauma-informed practices
- Schools value subject area expertise and the enthusiasm that participants bring

Further evaluation should be conducted to understand impact and effectiveness.

# Improvements to current pathways – LDP (1/2)

As the Australian Government has allocated further places to the LDP, we recommend iterative improvements to ensure that this pathway maximises impact on the supply and quality of teachers in Australia.

Considerations for TFA	Rationale
Continue to invest in outreach opportunities as part of TFA's recruitment strategy to attract more First Nations participants into the LDP.	Like the broader teacher workforce, the LDP currently faces challenges in attracting and recruiting diverse cohorts such as First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse applicants. This is a specific challenge for the LDP due to the demographics of schools the program targets.
Include survey questions for school mentors to determine if intensives have prepared participants to enter the classroom.	Although we have heard from participants and alumni that intensives are effective in preparing them for the classroom, we do not know whether mentors think they are effective. As experienced teachers who work closely with TFA participants, mentors are a useful stakeholder to understand the effectiveness of intensives and what classroom preparedness can look like.
Investigate the causes behind a high turnover rate of Teaching and Learning Advisors (TLAs) and identify the causes of poor retention.	We have heard from several participants and alumni that the relationship with their TLA can be inconsistent due to frequent changes in the role, which can negatively impact the support they receive.
Provide more formal structures for schools when choosing classroom mentors. For example: a vetting process to ensure that expectations between the school and the mentor are aligned and a job description.	A number of participants have expressed that the quality of the classroom mentors they receive can vary depending on whether the school has had a formal recruitment process or not.* Several mentors have commented that they often do not go through a selection process but were assigned the role by the Principal, and that the expectations of the role can be unclear.
Continue to improve the recently-introduced mentor training program.	The quality of mentors can vary heavily and depends on the individual capability of each mentor. A training program helps to alleviate this issue and ensures quality control of mentors.
ACU and TFA should review the role of the academic mentor and have regard to the issues associated with the role as outlined in the evaluation.	Some participants and alumni reflected that they do not typically find the academic mentors very useful, and they are less likely to engage with them than they do with other mentors.

\* A formal recruitment process refers to a mentor undergoing a formal application and interview process

## Improvements to current pathways – LDP (2/2)

As the Australian Government has allocated further places to the LDP, we recommend iterative improvements to ensure that this pathway maximises impact on the supply and quality of teachers in Australia.

Considerations for TFA	Rationale
Create formal mechanisms for all mentors to work together and create a shared plan for the participant to better support them based on their expertise / skills.	The three mentors currently operate independently with little joint communication about the participant. This lack of integration and communication between them can result in participants receiving mixed advice and / or direction on their teaching practice and goals.
Create formal feedback mechanisms for individual mentor effectiveness.	There is currently no formal feedback mechanisms for participants to give individual feedback on mentors and how they can improve their practice.
Provide best practice resources / guidance for schools on induction and school specific support to all schools. This will ensure that all schools see the benefit of integrating their support systems for LDP participants.	Many schools require support to host an LDP participant effectively, such as setting expectations of the LDP and resources on mentoring. Strengthening supports will positively impact participants' transitions into teaching.
Continue to work with ACU and partner schools to manage the workload issue. TFA should continue its efforts to better integrate the ACU Masters to the LDP context to balance the academic and practical aspects of the program. For example, ensuring university assessments are not due at the same time as the school reporting period.	The combination of full-time study and work can result in participants having an intense workload, more than what may be intended (see page 30 for more detail). This poses a risk to the wellbeing of participants who may find the program challenging. Participants who struggle with the workload are more likely to struggle with their mental health, experience burnout, and are at risk of leaving the program or the teaching profession upon graduation.
<p>We acknowledge TFA has initiatives in place in providing positive mental health promotion to participants (e.g., workshops on resilience and discussions on mental health). TFA should consider expanding its mental health promotion initiatives to early intervention and cohort specific mental health support. Examples can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A system of identifying participants who may require more wellbeing support</li> <li>• The creation of a mental health strategy / policy</li> <li>• An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for participants that is provided by TFA</li> </ul>	

# Improvements to current pathways – Nexus program

As the Australian Government has allocated further places to the Nexus program, we recommend iterative improvements to ensure that this pathway maximises impact on the supply and quality of teachers in Australia.

Considerations for La Trobe	Rationale
Set clearer expectations and remit for the school for the education support role, and better communicate them.	Some participants and principals reflected that they were unsure of what reasonable expectations were of participants during the education support role, given its purpose of transitioning participants to paraprofessional roles.
Continue exploring options for accelerating participants to undertake teaching capacity if the participants, school, and La Trobe agree that it is reasonable to do so. We acknowledge the complexity of this issue and that there may be regulatory and contractual limitations to what changes La Trobe can make.	Some participants expressed that they felt frustration and restriction that they couldn't engage in teaching practice even though they and their mentor felt that they were ready to do so. Exploring an alternative option could also be an attractive feature for the program.
<p>Improve data collection either through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procuring a dedicated data team at La Trobe, or</li> <li>• Outsourcing data collection and analysis</li> </ul> <p>We acknowledge that La Trobe is currently exploring ways to do this.</p>	While Nexus is new and data isn't as available, the current approach to data collection (particularly around participant and principal feedback) could be improved to better understand and communicate the value and impact of the program and draw insights to inform program evolution.
Develop resources for a wider school staff audience on the purpose, structure, and what to expect working with a Nexus participant.	Nexus has a unique programmatic structure and most teachers will be unfamiliar with such a model. Although principals of partner schools are often aware of its unique nature, the broader staff are often not. More information could help staff better understand how best to engage with the program and what to expect from participants.
Continue its efforts to extend the reach of Nexus and attract more applicants through a more proactive recruitment process, particularly in target areas. We acknowledge that Nexus has recently hired a Marketing staff member to improve recruitment efforts.	Nexus currently gets 150 applicants in Victoria per year. We know that there is a wider pool of eligible candidates that Nexus can tap into.
Continue to cultivate local 'hubs' of Nexus communities.	We've seen strong outcomes when local areas or groups of schools have strong connections with the program (largely because they don't need to overcome the 'teething issues' that new schools face). This should be continued to maximise impact.

# Evaluation findings



## 2. Teach for Australia's Leadership Development Program

# Summary of findings

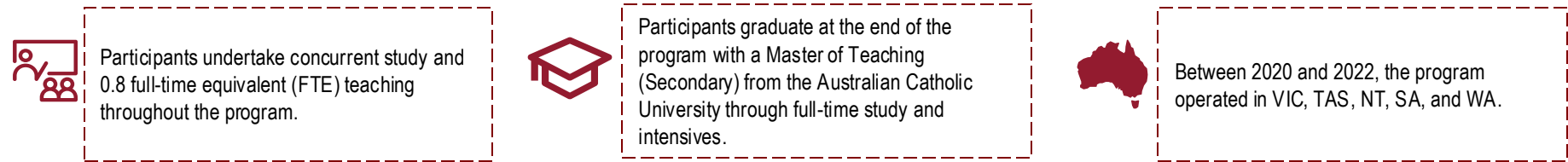
Section	TFA's Leadership Development Program	Page
Attraction and recruitment of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LDP has a reputation as a prestigious program and attracts high-achieving applicants from a range of educational and career backgrounds.</li> <li>Applicants tend to be in the early stages of their career, from metro areas, and have a background in humanities and STEM.</li> <li>TFA has a rigorous selection and recruitment process that sets the LDP program apart from other alternative pathways to teaching, but the recruitment process contributes to the challenge of recruiting target cohorts.</li> </ul>	17-22
Target schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LDP participants are placed in target schools that meet the objectives of both the LDP and HAT Program.</li> </ul>	23-24
Pre-placement learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practical content is delivered through intensives that take place prior to placement. Participants consider the intensives valuable and fit-for-purpose.</li> </ul>	28
Work-integrated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The key feature of the LDP that makes it effective, attractive, and distinctive is the integrated employment and learning. This is also what contributes to the challenging workload.</li> <li>Participants report intense workload pressure. TFA is responsive to feedback and has redeveloped the Masters curriculum to integrate the academic requirements into the program, though some participants still significantly struggle with managing the workload.</li> </ul>	29-31
Support for participants and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TFA provides a wrap-around support system for participants that is used as intended.</li> <li>Schools have access to LDP school mentor training which, when used, is highly valued.</li> <li>School mentors play a critical support role, which is most effective when integrated into a broader school mentorship system.</li> </ul>	32-35
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LDP graduates tend to establish careers in education.</li> <li>There are indicators that LDP alumni remain in teaching roles more than graduates of other ITE pathways.</li> <li>However, LDP alumni typically move from placement schools to teaching roles in metropolitan areas soon after completing the program.</li> <li>The LDP completion rate is slightly higher than the average postgraduate ITE completion rate in Australia.</li> </ul>	37-43
Participant effectiveness*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants tend to require more support than graduate teachers in their first 6-12 months due to lack of teaching experience and high workload but by the second year, are at least as effective as a typical graduate.</li> </ul>	44-48
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools tend to participate in the program to gain subject area expertise and address workforce shortages but also value the high level of enthusiasm and dedication to teaching that is typical of LDP participants.</li> <li>On a broader system level, the LDP plays a small but important role in meeting teacher supply challenges.</li> </ul>	49-58

\* Note that teacher effectiveness is notoriously difficult to define and measure. The results of this analysis provide insights into student perceptions of LDP teachers compared to other teachers, and this does play a role in understanding the effectiveness and impact of LDP teachers. However, this should be appreciated as a contributing element to understanding their effectiveness – it does not tell the 'whole story'.

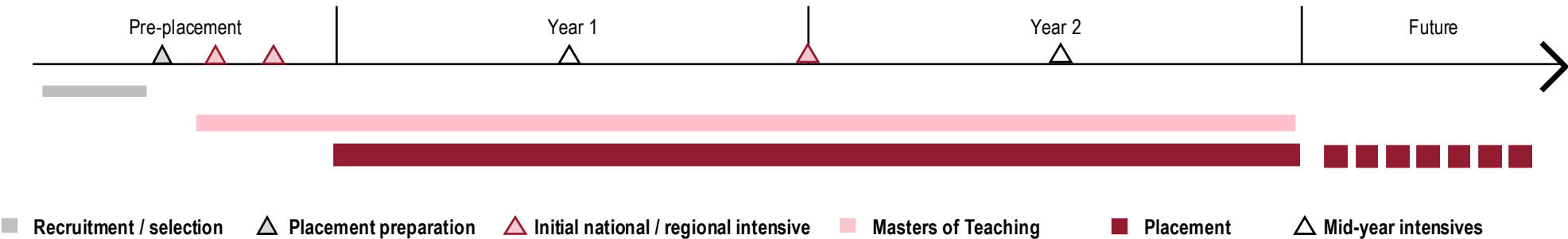
# Leadership Development Program delivered by TFA

The LDP is an employment-based pathway to teaching that aims to fight educational inequity by developing and placing high achievers in remote and disadvantaged schools across Australia.

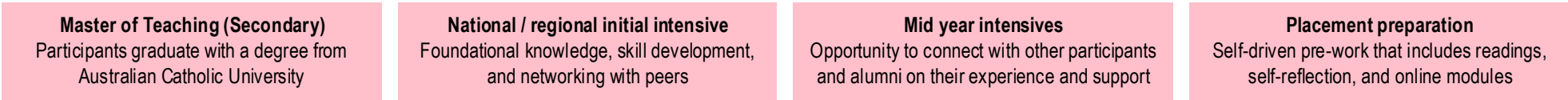
Participants become teachers in their respective fields through concurrent study and paid placements



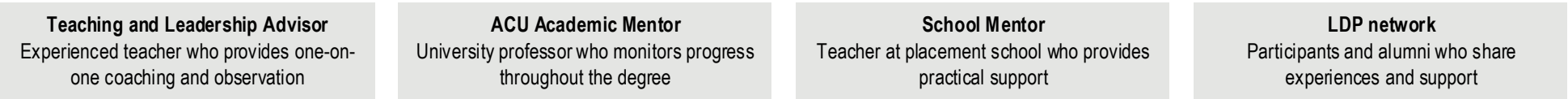
The LDP is a two-year program, with initial study and support beginning the October prior to the first teaching year



The program consists of four academic components....



...and mentoring and peer support



Sources: <https://teachforaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/LDP-Brochure-digital.pdf>





## 2.1 LDP attraction and recruitment

# Attraction to the LDP

LDP attracts high-achieving applicants from a range of educational and career backgrounds, many of whom are early in their career. Participants are attracted to the reputation of LDP as a rigorous program, its mission to tackle educational inequity, and the opportunity to get into the classroom faster.



## How applicants hear about the LDP

Applicants hear about the LDP through:

- Networks
- Advertising
- The presence of TFA in universities through networking and recruitment events
- Career days

Applicants who are attracted to the LDP are typically aware of LDP as a prestigious pathway into teaching before they apply. This is due to TFA's strong brand presence in universities, driven by their recruitment campaign.

*"I knew the TFA brand before I applied through University and that it was a prestigious thing to do."*

- LDP Alumni



## Why applicants are attracted to the LDP

Applicants are attracted to the LDP for the following reasons:

- **Applicants view LDP as a prestigious pathway into teaching.** Applicants are high achievers who typically have not considered teaching, citing a lack of prestige within the profession. However, the LDP combats this, with applicants viewing the pathway as challenging and reputable.

*"I felt a complete lack of purpose in my previous role and knew that I'd make more of an impact doing something like TFA."*

- LDP Alumni

- **Applicants feel a strong alignment to TFA's vision and mission.** With applicants being purpose-driven, many say they resonate deeply with TFA's mission to tackle educational inequities. Applicants feel that they can develop as educational leaders and contribute to making an impact in school communities that need it the most.

*"Coming from policy, I wanted to have more on the ground impact, get stuck in, and get paid."*

- LDP Alumni

- **The LDP is seen as a more attractive pathway to teaching in comparison to traditional pathways.** Applicants value how the program can get them into the classroom faster and that they can earn an income while they study, something that traditional pathways don't offer.

# LDP applicants

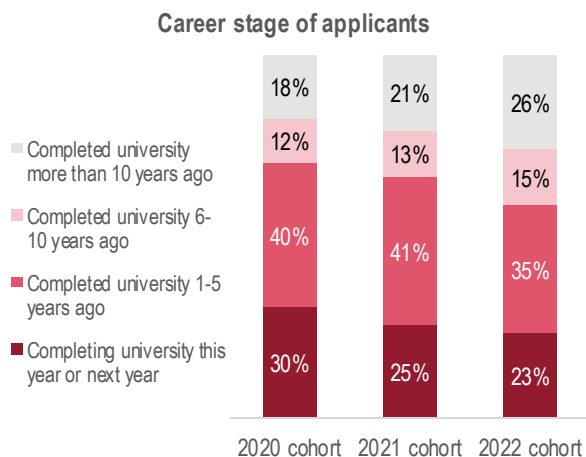
Almost half of LDP applicants are in the early stages of their career...

## Nearly half of LDP applicants are recent university graduates.<sup>1</sup>

- About a quarter of applicants are still completing university at the time of application.
- This trend is broadly consistent over 2020-2022, although the proportion of applicants who make up this cohort has decreased from 53% to 38%.

## The proportion of career professional applicants<sup>2</sup> has increased throughout 2020-2022.

- Career professional applicants made up 41% of applicants in the 2022 cohort, a rise from the 30% of mid-career applicants in the 2020 pool.
- About a third of applicants in the 2022 cohort completed university more than 10 years ago.



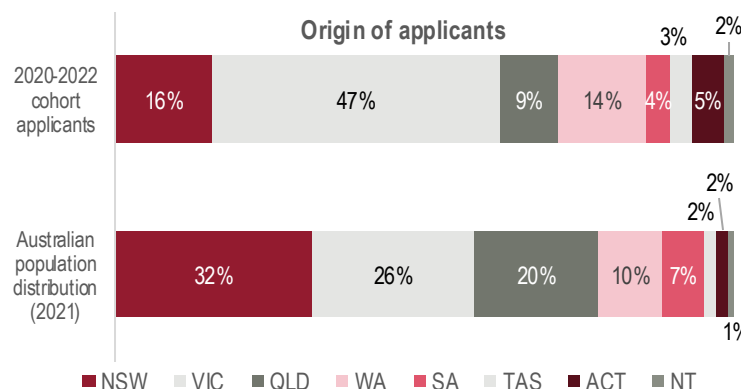
... largely originate from Victoria and from metro areas...

## Applicants from regional / remote origins make up a small proportion of the applicant pool.

- 17% of applicants from the 2022 cohort came from regional / remote areas.

## Three quarters of applicants originate from Victoria, New South Wales, and Western Australia.

- Almost half of all applicants originate from Victoria. — This is a trend that is consistent throughout 2020-2022.
- 16% of applicants originate from NSW, while 14% of applicants originate from Western Australia.
- Only 9% of applicants come from South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory.



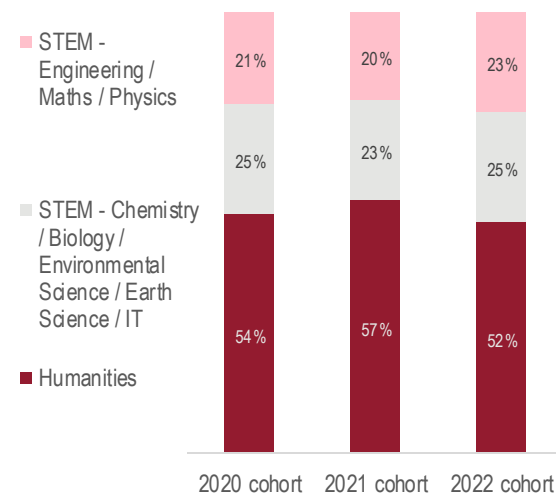
... and are split between having a background in humanities or in STEM.

## About half of LDP applicants have a STEM related degree

Throughout 2020-2022:

- ~25% of LDP applicants have a degree in chemistry, biology, or environmental science.
- ~20% of LDP applicants have a degree in engineering, maths, or physics.
- ~50% of LDP applicants have a degree in arts, languages, or business.

## Degree specialisation of applicant



Source: TFA applicant data 2020-2022 cohort

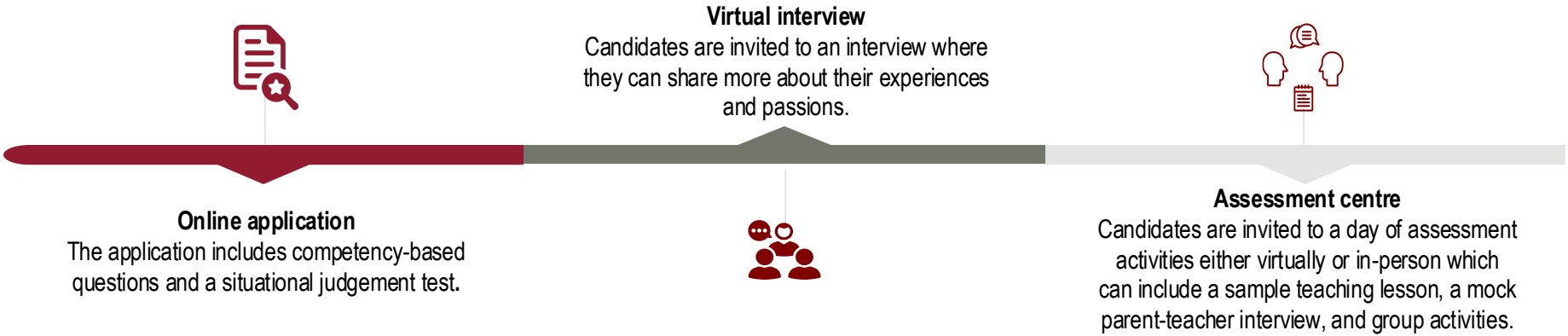
<sup>1</sup>Recent university graduates refer to applicants who will be completing university the year that they are applying to the program, or the year after

<sup>2</sup>For the purposes of this slide, career professional applicants refer to applicants who have completed university 6+ years ago at the time of their application

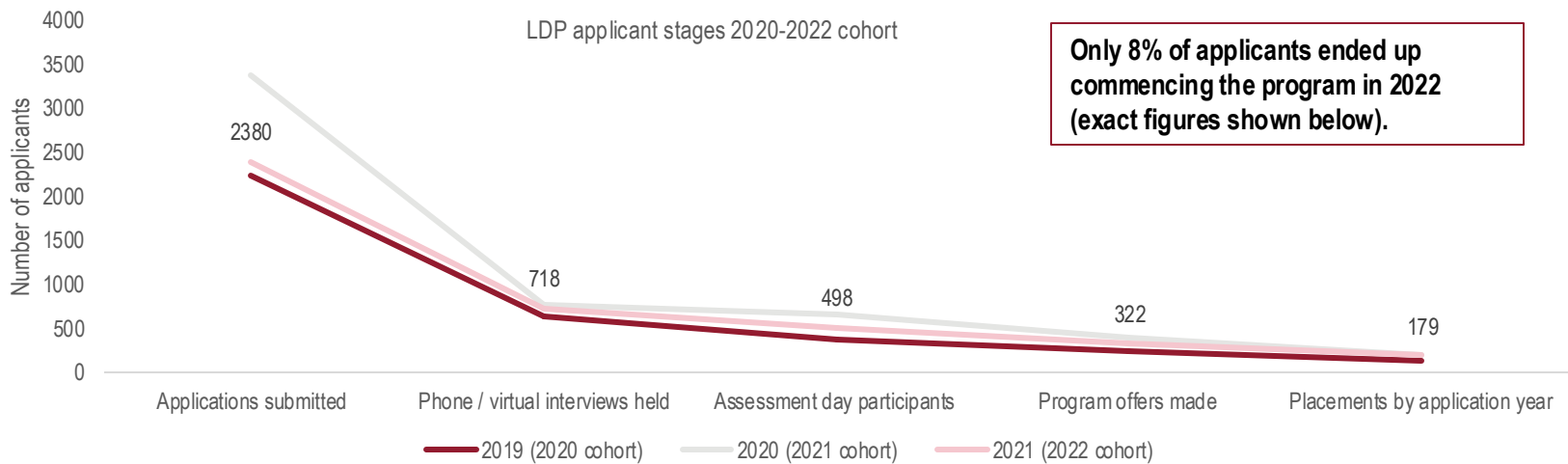
# Selecting participants

The LDP's selection process is highly competitive.

The LDP has a three-stage selection process that assesses a range of skills-based competencies\*.



Less than 10% of prospective applicants are successfully placed in the selection process.



\*Skill based competencies are 8 key attributes: 1. Commitment to vision and mission, 2. Learning and self-evaluation, 3. Problem solving, 4. Humility, respect, and empathy, 5. Communication and influencing, 6. Leadership and contribution, 7. Planning and organisation, 8. Resilience  
Source: TFA applicant data 2020-2022 cohort

# Rigorous recruitment and selection process

The LDP's recruitment and selection is a point of difference in the alternative pathway into teaching landscape due to its 'graduate recruitment style' approach<sup>1</sup>. It selects high-performing candidates by focusing on skill-based competencies and is a valued element to the program by schools and jurisdictions.



**TFA takes a 'graduate recruitment' style approach within the education space that focuses on skill-based competencies and alignment with TFA's mission.**

The selection process focuses on assessing a candidate based on:

- **Their commitment to TFA's mission and vision.** TFA looks for people who have a clear understanding of the objectives of the LDP and how it is different to a traditional teaching pathway. They also look for candidates who have an in-depth understanding of the issues related to educational inequity in Australia, and a passion to serve the communities they will be placed in.
- **Skill-based competencies.** TFA assesses candidates on skill-based competencies that contribute to being an effective teacher. Example competencies include problem solving, planning & organisation, communication & influencing, and learning & self evaluation.
- **Leadership potential.** TFA looks for people with a diverse range of leadership experience who can be leaders in their schools.
- **Resilience.** The LDP structure can be difficult, so TFA actively recruits for applicants who are able to embrace change and have the capacity to overcome challenge.

The length and rigor of the recruitment process is unique, with no other ITE provider undertaking a comparable process to the LDP.



**The recruitment process is effective in selecting people who have the best chances of success in the program.**

The recruitment process results in participants who typically have the following qualities:

- **Hard working and passionate.** Principals are of the view that LDP participants have a strong work ethic, and a genuine passion for teaching and solving inequities within the education system.
- **Ability to make a difference in their schools.** Participants are typically driven and are motivated to be change makers in their schools.
- **Leadership.** Participants have the qualities to become a leader in the school.
- **High level of emotional intelligence.** Participants are curious about others, self-aware and empathetic.
- **Resilience.** Participants are typically resilient when met with challenges.

Beyond selecting suitable candidates, there are other benefits to the rigorous recruitment process:

- The low acceptance rate has added a level of prestige to the program, which is an attractive feature for applicants.
- Principals, school staff, and jurisdiction education departments have a high level of confidence that participants will be effective teachers given the process and the low acceptance rate.

*"All of the LDP participants I have seen have the capabilities to be a 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher and leader in my school. They are motivated to have a positive influence in the school community and make a difference, regardless of the context." – Principal, VIC*



**This approach is fit-for-purpose given the intensity of the program and its mission towards making an impact in the school community.**

This approach is fit-for-purpose for the following reasons:

- **The LDP's objective is to get high-quality teachers through an accelerated program.** The process is time intensive and challenging, to increase the likelihood of finding candidates who can succeed with the demands of the program such as:
  - Candidates who show they are open to the challenge of going straight into the classroom – balancing this workload with a Masters.
  - Candidates who are adaptable and more likely to transition to new environments, particularly for those having to relocate to rural or remote locations for their placement schools.
- **The process focuses on finding candidates who align with TFA's mission and vision.**
  - The recruitment process involves questioning a candidate's motivation to join the program, what their passions are, and what they are looking to achieve. TFA looks for people who have a clear understanding of LDP's mission and a shared goal of being a changemaker and a leader in their community.

*"TFA's screening process is competitive and very successful in getting quality candidates"*  
– Jurisdiction representative, SA

Source: Case study and jurisdiction interviews

<sup>1</sup> A graduate recruitment style approach is commonly used for recruiting graduates in competitive industries such as professional services (e.g., law, finance, consulting). The process typically involves multiple rounds of activities that assesses an applicant's competency. Examples of activities include psychometric testing, situational interviews and skill-based exercises on assessment days.

# Successful LDP participants

There are three broad profiles that characterise the varied backgrounds and motivations of those participating in the program.



## Participant profile #1

*Young participants who have recently completed an undergraduate degree*

### Background

- In their early to mid-20s, recently graduated with an undergraduate degree.
- Ambitious high-achiever in university who performed well academically, is passionate about social issues and was involved in extra-curriculars and leadership activities.

### Motivations for participating:

- They may not have a clear direction of where they should take their career next and have considered teaching as a fallback option.
- See LDP as a prestigious opportunity where they can make a difference in their careers. They previously did not consider teaching through a traditional pathway as they did not see it as a prestigious career, even though they recognise the value of the profession.



## Participant profile #2

*Participants at an early stage of their career who want to have a more impactful career*

### Background

- In their mid to late 20s
- Have had 2-3 years of work experience.
- Have a passion for education and have had some contact with student engagement or working with young people (e.g., tutoring, camp leader).

### Motivations for participating:

- Want to pivot to the education sector to have a more impactful career.
- Would like to retrain as efficiently as possible without losing too much income. LDP is appealing because:
  - They are exposed to teaching faster.
  - They are able to earn an income as they study.



## Participant profile #3

*Participants who are mid-career changers with work experience and personal commitments*

### Background

- Aged 30+
- Have had 5+ years of work experience in a successful career.
- Typically have a family and dependents.
- Have significant financial commitments (e.g. mortgage).

### Motivations for participating:

- Want to have a more impactful career and / or have an interest in working with young people.
- Interested in having leadership roles within schools.
- See the LDP as an opportunity to retrain quickly while still being able to earn an income and keep up with their commitments (e.g. supporting a family, paying their mortgage). They would not consider the traditional pathway to teaching due to the length of the course and the lack of paid employment opportunities.



### Successful LDP applicants tend to have the shared characteristics of being:

- High-achieving and interested in being a leader
- Highly resilient
- Motivated to make a difference through education

These shared characteristics are more likely to result in participants who can keep up with the demands of the program and perform well in their placement schools.

# Attraction and recruitment challenges

A trade-off of the recruitment process is that the LDP has challenges recruiting some diverse cohorts that share the lived experience of the school communities they are placed in.

**TFA aims to maximise the diversity of participants who have key skill-based competencies to thrive in the classroom. TFA has some success in recruiting certain diverse cohorts.**

TFA has successfully recruited for diverse participants in the following ways:

- **Gender.** There is a 50/50 split between men and women in the program.
- **Age.** A broad range of ages are represented, from 19-24 to 40+.
- **Qualifications.** Participants come from various educational and professional backgrounds.

**Like the broader teacher workforce, TFA currently faces challenges in attracting and recruiting certain cohorts such as First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) applicants.**

Very few people who self-identify as First Nations apply, and of those who do apply, even fewer reach the placement stage (see graph below).

This is an industry wide challenge, with only 2% of teachers in Australia identifying as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander (ABS, 2016).<sup>1</sup>

**This represents a specific challenge for TFA due to the demographics of LDP target placements schools, which means there are currently few participants likely to share the lived experience of their school communities.**

TFA does provide First Nations cultural competency training that was consistently seen as high-quality by participants. However, some former participants felt that a lack of shared lived experience means there may still be some barriers between participants and the communities they are placed in.

The LDP targets schools in regional / remote areas that tend to have a higher concentration of First Nations and / or CALD students. A lack of shared lived experience means some participants may not be suitable to the school community because of a lack of cultural awareness and / or competency.

It can also impact the retention of participants in target schools – the less understanding a participant has of the cultural context, the more difficult it is to understand the needs of the students, which can impact how long they stay in the school.<sup>3</sup>

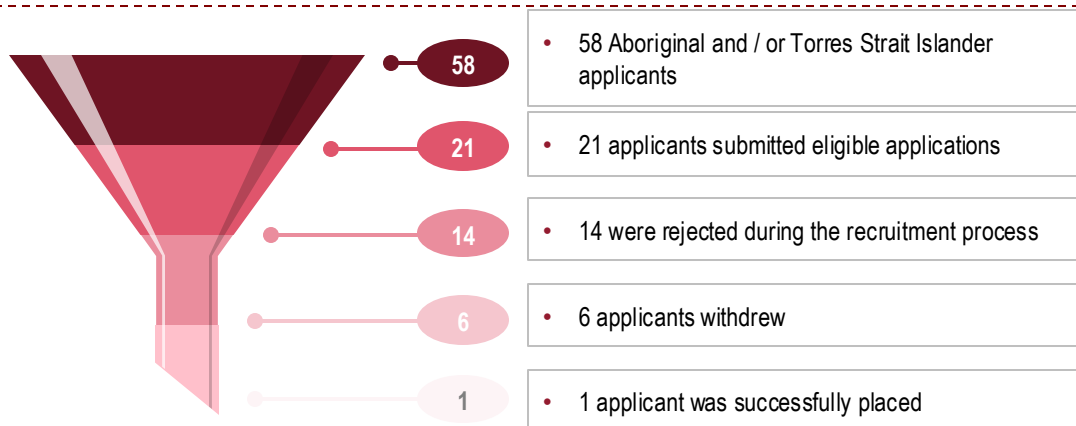
**In response to this challenge, TFA continues to make targeted efforts to attract and recruit for diverse applicants (e.g., First Nations recruitment strategy) with some positive improvements in the 2023 cohort.**

- There are 2 participants who self-identify as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander, representing 1% of the 2023 cohort.
- The 2023 cohort includes participants from 46 different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

## Consideration for TFA:

- Continue to invest in outreach opportunities as part of TFA's recruitment strategy to attract more First Nations participants into the LDP.

## Applicants who identify as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander between 2020-2022<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> TFA Applicant survey 2018-2022

<sup>2</sup> There are also systemic issues that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment that are outside of TFA's control, such as barriers to undergraduate enrolment and completion, which are necessary eligibility requirements.

<sup>3</sup> AITSL, 2021. *Spotlight: The impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.*

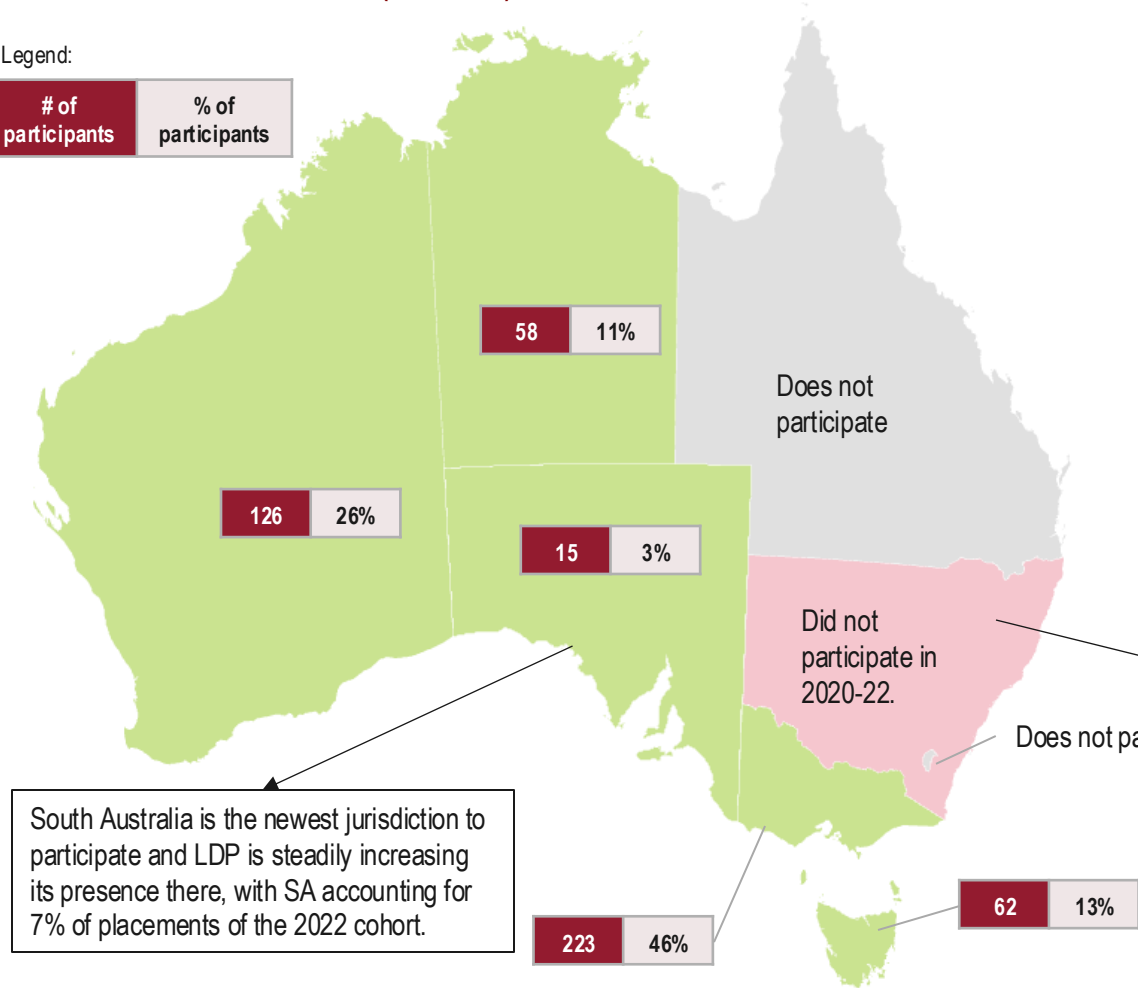
# Participant distribution

Participants work across five jurisdictions, but most current placements are in WA and VIC.

## Placement distribution of the LDP (2020-2022)

Legend:

# of participants	% of participants
-------------------	-------------------



Almost three quarters of LDP participants are placed in WA or Vic.



Adjusting for number of target schools in a jurisdiction, the LDP's presence is largest in NT, which has the highest ratio of participants placed to number of government high / combined schools in disadvantaged areas.



Except for South Australia's recent increased participation in the LDP, this distribution across jurisdictions is relatively consistent across each of the three cohorts (2020-2022).

South Australia is the newest jurisdiction to participate and LDP is steadily increasing its presence there, with SA accounting for 7% of placements of the 2022 cohort.

From 2023, some schools are participating in the LDP under the HAT Program.

Source: LDP school placement data provided by TFA.



# Demographics of target schools

LDP participants are placed in disadvantaged schools across Australia and nearly half teach STEM-related subject areas, satisfying key objectives of both the LDP and HAT Program.

 **The majority of LDP participants are in regional or remote schools.**

Between 2020 and 2022, 66% of LDP participants were placed in regional or remote schools, more than double the proportion of all teachers across Australia in 2022 (29%).

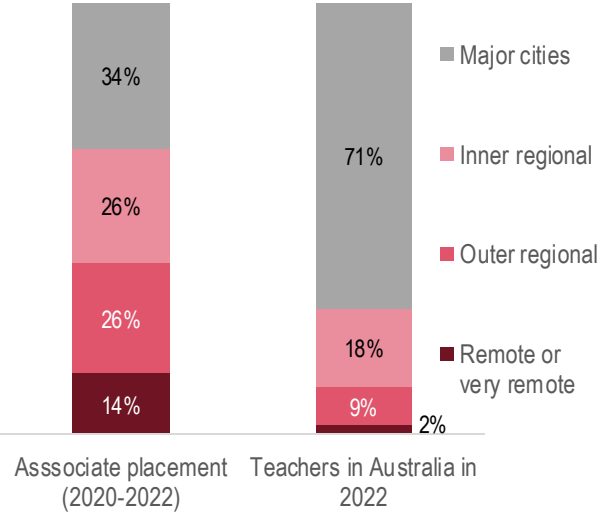
 **LDP participants are placed in the most disadvantaged schools across Australia.**

Nearly all LDP placements between 2020 and 2022 have been in the bottom two Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) quartiles\* (below the median score of 1000). Over a third are in the bottom quartile, which represents schools in the lowest socio-economic areas.

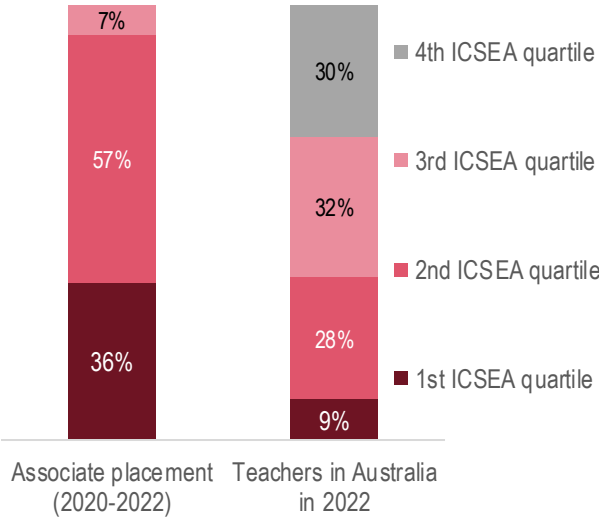
 **About half of LDP participants are placed in STEM-related subject areas**

45% of participants teach in an area relating to science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

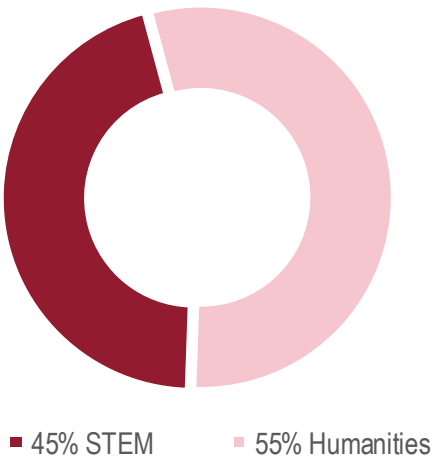
Geolocations of participant placements



ICSEA of participant placement schools



Participant subject areas (2020-2022)



\*The Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) provides an indication of the socio-educational backgrounds of students. ICSEA enables comparisons between a selected school and all students with a similar background, (ACARA, 2022).  
Source: TFA participant survey

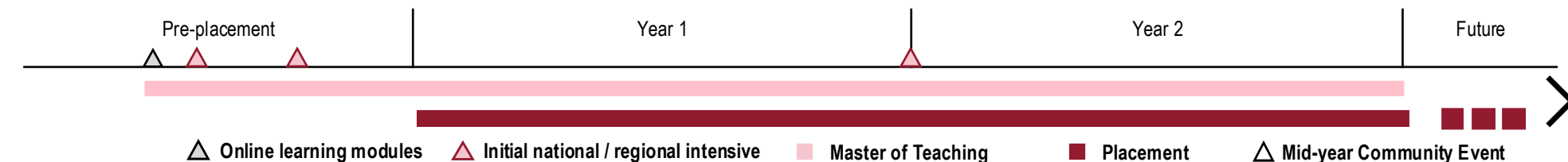


## 2.2 LDP components

# Learning components

Participants commence a Master of Teaching in an intensive format before entering the classroom. The Masters units continue throughout the teaching placement, with additional intensive units delivered during the semester break.

Study begins in the October prior to the first teaching year



## Pre-placement

### Online learning modules

26 hours of self-driven pre-work completed in late October. Includes readings and self-reflection.

### National / regional initial intensive:

Units delivered in a blended mode during initial intensive include:

- Promoting positive behaviour
- Effective teaching and learning
- Educational foundations for teaching
- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and knowledges within Australia today

### Professional practice

10-day school practicum on site in a school prior to commencing placement.

### Regional intensive

Units delivered in person.

## Year 1

### Year 1 Masters

Units include:

- Promoting positive behaviour
- Effective teaching and learning
- Educational foundations for teaching
- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and knowledges within Australia today

## Mid-year

- Catering for diverse learners
- Secondary literacy
- Curriculum pedagogy
- Professional practice

## Year 2

### Year 2 Masters

Units include:

- Curriculum pedagogy
- Evidence based teaching
- Culturally responsive teaching and leadership
- Leading change in education
- Professional practice

# The Master of Teaching program

TFA makes frequent efforts to improve the integration of the Masters program to improve relevance and applicability. The content is now more fit-for-purpose, but we heard from stakeholders that workload is still an issue. TFA is consistently exploring ways to address this, but assessing these changes falls outside the scope of our evaluation.

**We have heard of historical issues with the Masters program.**

**In response to this feedback, TFA has updated the content that is delivered...**

**...and this has impacted the program in the following ways.**

Participants commented that the content of the Masters had been heavily theory-based with old pedagogy that is not relevant to their teaching practice.

Participants said that the Masters had a high volume of coursework that included stringent assessment criteria and tight, inflexible deadlines.

*"The workload and structure of the University work-load was not reasonable. There were overlapping units with the reporting period and huge pressure on participants to achieve well."*

- LDP Alumni (2021)



**TFA has addressed these concerns by including the following changes to the program:**

- Online, self-paced modules of prior readings and self-reflection to be completed before initial intensive.
- Redeveloping the Masters with ACU to include units that cover practical content and contemporary academic theory in an intensive format, prior to teaching placement. Units include:
  - Effective teaching and learning
  - Educational foundations for teaching
  - Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and knowledges within Australia today
  - Promoting positive behaviour
- Shifting assessment load from 20% to 25% during intensive period.
- Accrediting the current Masters for the 2021 cohort.

*"I think the disparity of how much I was learning in the classroom and doing the Masters felt too abstract."*

- LDP Alumni (2018)

**Providing more relevant content for participants**

The content that is delivered during the initial intensive is designed to better prepare participants for the classroom. This component is seen as highly valuable by both participants and principals.

**Mitigating some of the workload**

More assessments are front-loaded in intensives so that there are fewer assessments for participants while they are teaching in the classroom. However, workload remains a significant issue.



**TFA and ACU are currently exploring this issue further by:**

- Exploring how to reduce the study load from the Masters component.
- Exploring how to reduce the effort that is required to plan lessons.
- Working with schools to optimise a participant's teaching load.

# Intensives

Intensives are designed to provide participants with contemporary pedagogy, tailored to better prepare them for the classroom.

Intensives are designed to fast-track participants to prepare them and give them the foundations for entering the classroom by:

- **Delivering academic units with a focus on the practical aspects of teaching.** These include units focusing on contemporary pedagogy on behaviour and classroom management and effective teaching practices.
- **Providing units relating to building cultural competency.** The intensives include a unit on how participants can create a culturally safe environment in the classroom.

The intensives also provide an opportunity for participants to connect with their peers from within their cohort and with alumni.

- **Intensives are an opportunity to foster a sense of belonging within the cohort.** The intensives are a residential program where participants can organically establish relationships with one another. This is particularly helpful for later down the track when they can seek support from peers as they progress through the program.

*“The intensive allowed me to practice classroom management techniques in person with other participants which was amazing and very different to practicing it via Zoom, I feel much more prepared now.”*

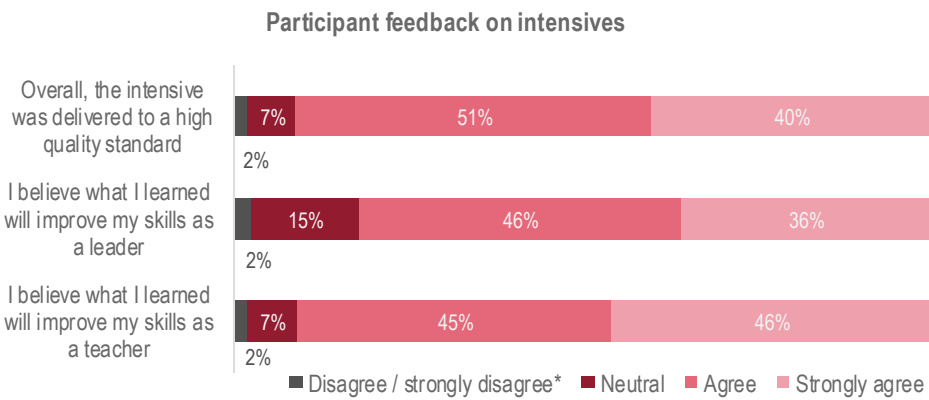
- Participant (2022 cohort)

Adapting content through the structure of intensives is fit-for-purpose and effective in preparing participants for the classroom. It is a point of difference of the program that traditional pathways do not offer.

Participants find the intensives highly engaging and find that they positively contribute to feeling prepared to teach in the classroom. For example:

- **Participants agree that they are equipped with useful knowledge that is directly applicable to the classroom.** They find that the content around classroom management and other teaching administrative tasks is relevant and can be applied immediately.
- **90% of participants view the content of the intensives as high quality.** Participants have consistently commented that the curriculum of the intensives is of a high standard which positively contributes to their skills as a teacher.

Front loading participants with practical knowledge prior to commencing their training allows them to enter the classroom with the foundational knowledge and skills quicker. This is a key point of difference and value for the LDP compared to traditional pathways.



## Consideration for TFA:

Include survey questions for school mentors to determine if intensives have prepared participants to enter classroom, as an additional data point.

# Employment-based component

Participants are placed immediately in the classroom at 0.8 FTE, allowing them to apply their learnings immediately and address the supply challenges of schools faster.

**The accelerated structure of the employment-based component of the program is a highly appealing feature of the program for both participants and schools:**



## For participants:

- They can immediately apply their theoretical learnings in the classroom. Participants have commented that they value 'learning by doing' and that they can learn how to become teachers faster.
- They can earn a full salary while they learn. Participants' salaries are broadly comparable to other graduate teachers and increase with experience and progression. They are also more likely to be offered higher salaries upon graduation given the two years of experience they have in the classroom upon completing the program.
- Being in the classroom quicker means that they can develop relationships with the school more effectively. Participants are at their placement school from day 1, enabling them to integrate into their school community faster.



## For schools:

Schools can address their teacher supply issues faster. The employment-based component of the program allows schools to get new teachers quickly. Schools are also very likely to get a participant to teach in the subject areas they need it the most.

However, schools do note that participants typically need more support during their first weeks compared to traditional pathways.

However, the success of participants to effectively transition into teaching through this acceleration is variable depending on the level of support they receive within the school.

**The success of participants to effectively transition into the classroom can be highly variable depending on a range of factors:**

- **The level of preparedness that the school has in hosting participants.** This is dependent on the school's familiarity and understanding of the program.
- **The level of support that they receive from the school.** Examples of school support can include:
  - An induction process to the school
  - A 'buddy'
  - An effective school mentor

This is highly dependent on the capacity of the school. See page 35 for more information.

- **A participant's personal circumstances.** Some participants may find it harder to transition into a new school due to a range of personal reasons such as a lack of support network if they are moving into a new place, the level of resilience they may have during the transition period, and other life stressors.

## TFA tries to mitigate the variability of these factors by:

- Building relationships with participating schools and regularly communicating with them during the program to assist with any problems if they arise.
- Seeking feedback from participants on their experience at their placement school.
- Providing other forms of support (e.g. TLA and academic mentor).

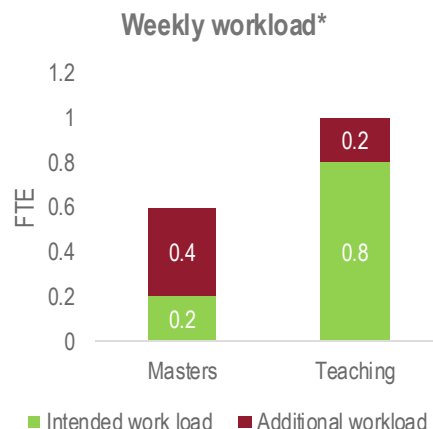
Although the LDP has mechanisms in place to help participants transition to the school more effectively, some of these factors are outside of the LDP's control. This can limit the benefit of support that the program provides.

# Impact of concurrent employment and learning (1/2)

The combination of 0.2 FTE study and 0.8 FTE work can result in participants having an intense workload in practice, more than what it is intended.



The program is designed for participants to spend 4 days in the classroom (0.8 FTE) and 1 day of study release to work towards their Masters. However, we have heard from participants that the actual workload can be much more than that, with many participants citing that their weekly workload can range between 50-70 hours.



\* The additional workload FTE figure is based on an estimated range and represents the maximum amount of time participants could spend on their Masters and / or teaching load based on stakeholder interviews

The discrepancy between the intended and actual workload can be due to the following reasons:

## Masters

- **High volume of assignments.** Participants feel that they are required to constantly complete work for assessments.
- **A difficult assignment rubric.** Participants have said that they typically spend a long time trying to fit their assignment answers to the rubric which can often be arduous.

A lot of participants also want to do well in their Masters which contributes to them spending a longer time on their course work.

## Teaching

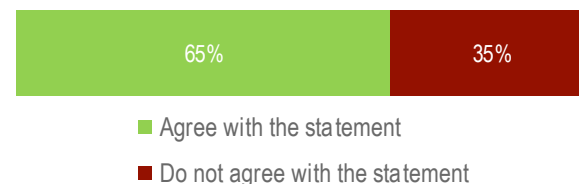
- **The first year of teaching is an adjustment.** Participants tend to spend more time working in their first year as they adjust to the role e.g., having to create lesson plans from scratch, marking and reporting for the first time.
- **There are additional tasks to teaching that take up time.** Examples include doing administrative tasks, reporting, and receiving mentoring / professional development.

This can be extremely challenging for some participants and negatively impact on their personal and professional life.

**Over a third of participants surveyed do not feel that they are coping with the workload of the program**

The workload can be difficult for a proportion of the cohort, many of whom have said that it has negatively impacted their wellbeing.

“Overall, I am coping with workload of the program as a whole”



The workload can manifest in the following ways:

- **Professionally.** Some participants report that they must work weekends and typically work before and after school to keep up with the program, which can influence their energy levels and ability to teach well in the classroom.
- **Personally.** Some participants report that they often neglect personal commitments such as social and family engagements.

*“I need more time. The time I put in my assessments is time taken away from planning and how to be a better teacher. It feels never ending at times.” – LDP participant*

There are significant risks for those that are struggling with the workload:

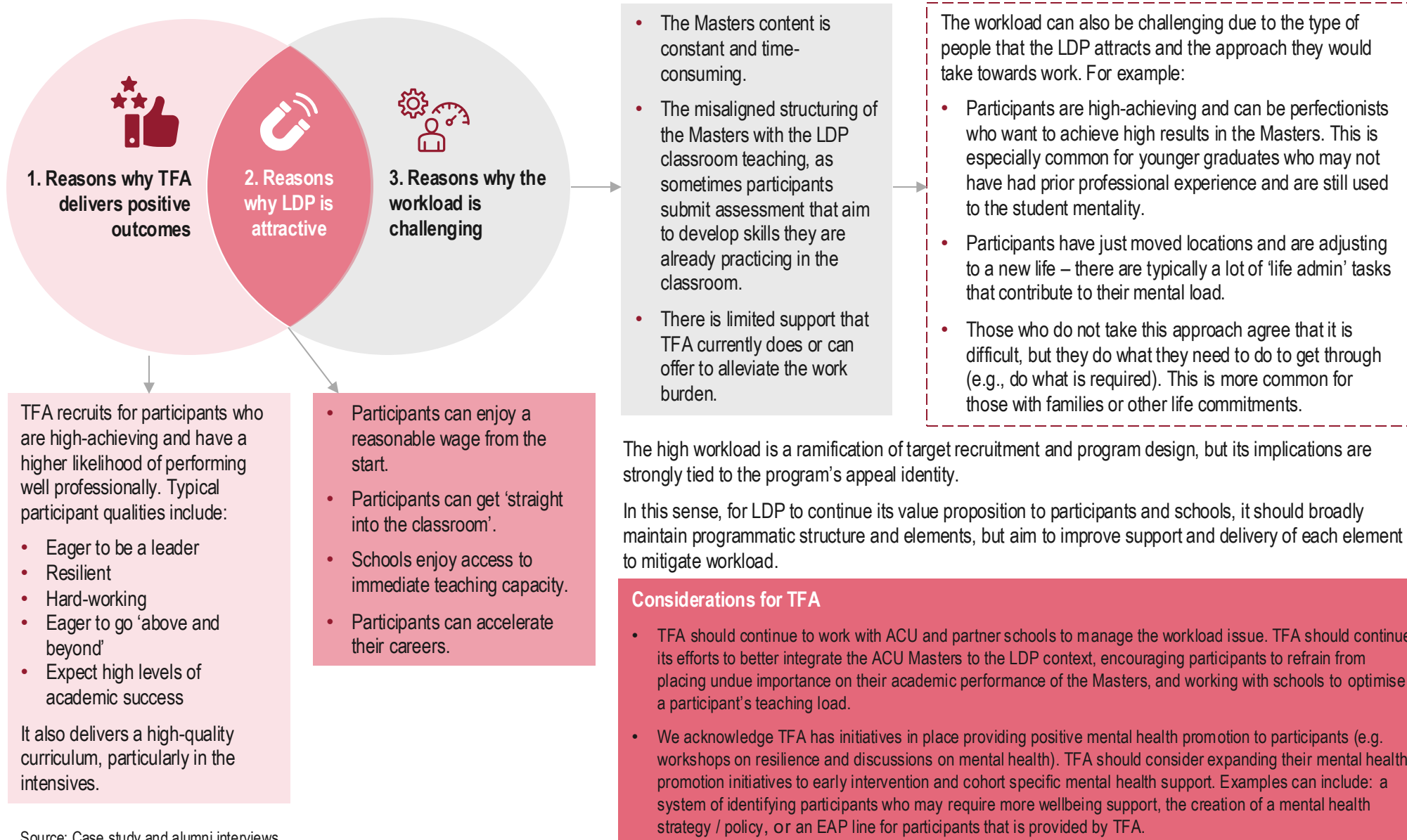
- **Health risks relating to wellbeing.** Participants who are struggling are at risk of overworking and being burnt out.
- **Teaching quality.** The teaching quality of participants can be impacted by their workload, with many citing that they often feel tired when they teach and have less energy to do a good job.
- **Retention.** Those who are struggling are at higher risk of not completing the program or leaving teaching in the short-term.



**This poses presents a risk to the mental health and wellbeing of participants that TFA should continue to recognise, address and manage.**

# Impact of concurrent employment and learning (2/2)

The workload is big, but the underlying factors to this are also reasons why the program is effective, attractive, and distinctive. Future efforts to mitigate workload should strive to maintain these attractive underlying qualities.





# Participant support (1/3)

TFA has designed holistic wraparound support for participants through a school mentor, academic mentor, and a teaching and learning advisor, which is more than what a typical ITE student receives.



## Teaching and Leadership Adviser (TLA)

### Who they are

TLA's are experienced teachers who might be past participants or have experience with the program – they are designed to be someone the participants can relate to.

### What support they provide

- One-on-one coaching
- Classroom observations
- Pastoral care and general wellbeing support
- Address questions or concerns regarding the LDP

### How they provide it

- Two touchpoints per term:
  - Live school visit
  - Video chat / call

### What they require to deliver this support

- Experience and expertise as a teacher
- Understanding of the LDP and TFA to empathise with the participant's experience



## School Mentor

### Who they are

An experienced teacher in the placement school with capacity to provide support, often with previous mentoring experience.

### What support they provide

- Feedback on teaching practice from observation
- Advice on school-based questions and strategies to manage workload
- General wellbeing support

### When they provide it

- During classroom observations
- Weekly sessions
- Ad-hoc support
- Reaching out with concerns or questions to other staff members on behalf of the participant

### What they require to deliver this support

- Capacity – enough hours per week to provide support
- Experience and expertise, both in the placement school and as a teacher generally



## Academic Mentor

### Who they are

An ACU academic who supervises participants' progress during the Masters and guides them to achieve the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

### What support they provide

- Guidance on coursework such as assessments and due dates
- Touchpoint for assessment extensions

### When they provide it

- Five visits in year 1 and one visit in year 2

### What they require to deliver this support

- Support and communication from TLA and placement school



## Peer Network

### Who they are

Peer LDP participants in the:

- Placement school
- Region
- Broader TFA network
- Peer teachers at their placement school

### What support they provide

- General wellbeing
- Reflective practice and general advice on practice

### When they provide it

- Ad-hoc

### What they require to deliver this support

- More than one participant at a school
- Strong relationships with each other

## Participant support (2/3)

Participants tend to find their mentors useful for support, though they typically gravitate towards either their TLA or school mentor for most of their support.

**TLAs:** participants can approach them about concerns about the school, strategies on balancing work, or other feedback or insights that would be more comfortably shared than with non-school staff e.g. venting. Participants also find it useful that TLAs have their own personal experience to draw on, having typically been past participants themselves.\*

**School mentors:** participants value the immediacy of support that school mentors can provide them such as first-hand feedback on teaching, and the ability to directly reach out to them as they are both at school.\* School mentors are also useful to provide reflective practice and provide wellbeing support.

**However, as the support they can provide overlaps, many participants gradually gravitate towards a TLA or school mentor for the bulk of their support.**

In most cases participants find classroom mentors and TLAs effective, but only if they have **all** of the following qualities:

- **Competency** – if they have the skillset and attitude to be a good mentor.
- **Capacity** – If they have sufficient time allocated and minimal competing priorities to observe participant teaching practice, deliver support, and prepare support materials.
- **Consistency** – If the same person is in the role for a significant amount of time during a participant's placement. Participants shared that even if they found a classroom mentor effective and had a good personal relationship, they still found it difficult to establish a good relationship if there was not stability in the role.

### Consideration for TFA:

Continuously improve the consistency, capability and capacity of TLAs and mentors. For example:

- Investigate the causes behind a high turnover rate of TLAs and identify the causes of poor retention.
- Provide more formal structures for schools when choosing classroom mentors. For example: a vetting process to ensure that expectations between the school and the mentor are aligned and a job description.
- Continue to improve the mentor training program.

However, participants do not typically find academic mentors useful.

Participants are less likely to engage with the academic mentor for the following reasons:

- Some don't know what the purpose of the academic mentor is and meet them out of obligation.
- Some say academic mentors rely too much on theory and are not able to give them classroom-relevant feedback.
  - They have not been classroom teachers for a long time / never have been.
  - They do not know the school context they are in and have less of an understanding of what advice will be useful for them.

Because participants don't typically engage with their academic mentor, they fail to build a relationship and are less likely to lean on them for support.

### Consideration for TFA:

ACU and TFA should review the role of the academic mentor and have regard of the issues associated with the role as outlined in the evaluation.

\*See Appendix 7 for a further breakdown of participant perceptions of support.

Source: Case study and alumni interviews

# Participant support (3/3)

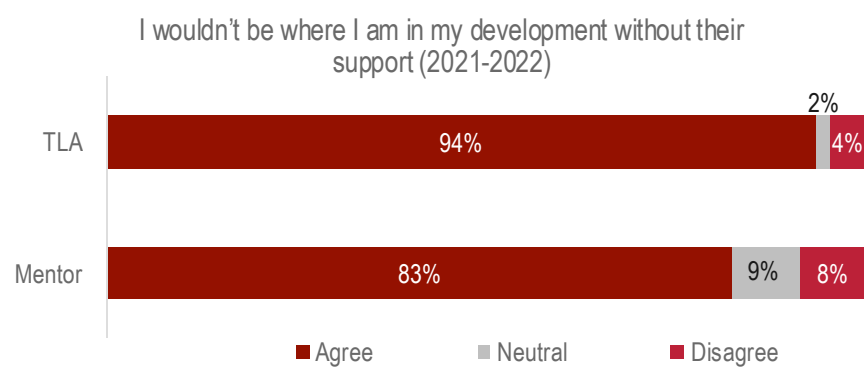
Having various mentors acts as a ‘safety net’ to better ensure participants have a range of people to draw on for support...

**TFA’s support mechanisms act as a ‘safety net’ for each other, as participants will lean on one of the mentors if they have less of a connection with the other or find one less effective.**

Overall, participants find the support they receive from their mentors highly beneficial.\* If a participant does not connect with or feel supported by one, they will go to the other and feel satisfied with the support.

There are some circumstances where a participant does not feel supported by any mentor. This is usually a result of inconsistent people filling each role, the lack of capability of those in the support roles, or they do not have the capacity to fulfill their support roles.

In these instances, participants will rely on informal supports more, like school peers and LDP peers, but the kind of the support they provide is not comparable to what they would receive from a good mentor, due to the experience they have. These instances are not common.



Source: Participants support survey data (2018-2022) and case study and alumni interviews  
\* This is typically more applicable to TLAs and/or school mentors. See previous page for commentary on the effectiveness of academic mentors.

...but the lack of integration and communication between the three mentors can result in participants receiving mixed feedback.

**The three mentors operate independently with little communication about the participant.**

The three mentors currently operate in silos. They do not communicate with one another – each one has their own view of the participant, their progress, and what their development goals should be. There is no collective view of the participants.

*“The academic mentor doesn’t typically get in contact. I feel that the relationship between all stakeholders is not highly communicative, often at the expense of our participants’ wellbeing.”*  
- School mentor

**As a result, participants often have conflicted advice and / or direction on their teaching practice and goals.**

Participants say that sometimes one mentor will give conflicting advice to one another, or that they set different goals for them that might contradict / not be as relevant for them than others.

This is difficult to mitigate with no formal mechanisms for individuals to provide feedback on mentors.

*“Support from 3 different people was hard because each one asked us to do goal setting. It felt like additional work because they didn’t contact each other.”*  
- LDP participant

**Consideration for TFA:**

- Create formal mechanisms for mentors where they can work together e.g., meetings to discuss the participant, a shared plan for the participant and how each of them can best support the participant based on their expertise / skills.
- Create formal feedback mechanisms for individual mentor effectiveness.

# Support for schools

Several schools require support to host an LDP participant at their school such as setting expectations of the LDP, guidance on effective induction processes, and resources on mentoring. Participants who are placed in schools that have a strong understanding of the LDP typically have a better induction process, which positively impacts their transition into teaching.

## Key factors for success

### Guidance around effective induction process for participants

- Schools that have an induction process find that it helps ‘break the back’ of the difficult first few weeks. In response to participant feedback, for example, a school developed a renewed school induction process, which both the school and later participants found valuable in developing non-classroom teaching skills.

### LDP literacy of school and leadership

- Understanding expectations of participants and communicating that to relevant school staff so they have an idea of the support they will need, the level of teaching independence and competency they can expect across time, and common strengths and barriers.

### Mentoring guidance

- Schools where TFA mentoring is embedded into broader school mentoring benefit from economies of scale.
  - Some schools have implemented a mentorship program that involves every new teacher, including LDP participants.
  - This is particularly effective for participants when there is more than one participant placed in the school.

## Impacts of effective support

- Participants transition into the school with less stress during the initial adjustment to classroom teaching.
- Participants gain familiarity with the school system quickly.
- Participants get to know staff and students better.
- It can contribute to higher retention of participants in schools during placement and of participants in schools once qualified.

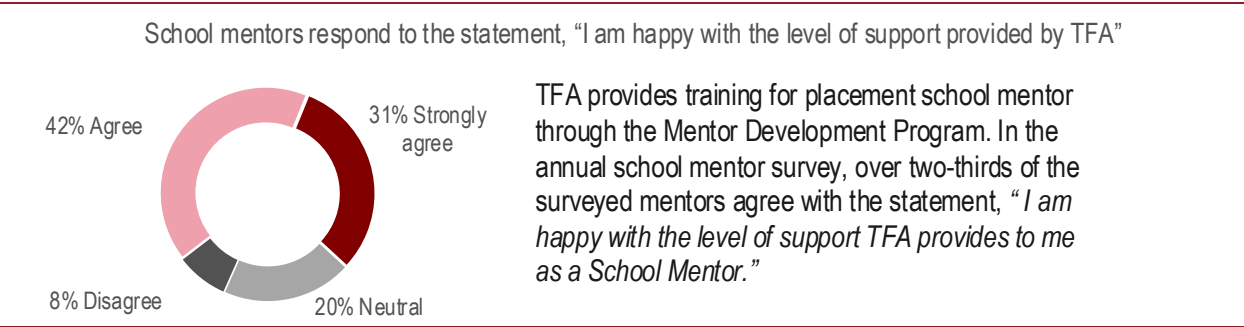
Consideration for TFA:

Best practice for schools on induction and school specific support should be communicated so all schools can see the benefit of integrating support systems.

For example:

*“[Ideally communicate] what expectations are by the end of the program, and real clarity on roles and responsibilities in terms of support. Could be through a phone convo, or one pager.”*

- Principal at a school new to LDP



Source: TFA Annual School Mentor survey (2020-2022)

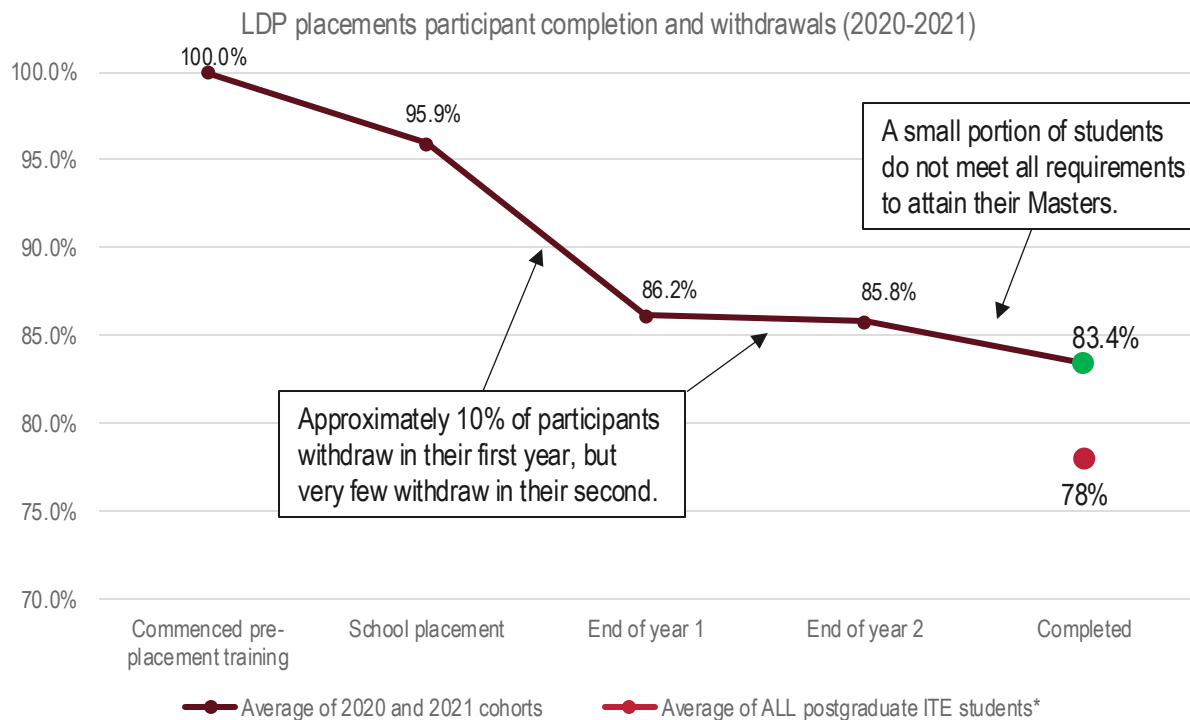
## 2.3 LDP completion and retention

# Participant completion

Despite workload challenges, participant completion is high, and is tracking consistent with – or higher than – average completions for postgraduate ITE courses in Australia.



LDP completions from 2020-2021 are tracking higher than the average completion rates for undergraduate (51%) and postgraduate (78%) ITE courses in Australia.\*



Most withdrawals occur in the early stages of the school placement, typically in the first few weeks. This 'front loading' of withdrawals is advantageous for:

- Participants, as they will know sooner if the program or teaching in general is unsuitable for them.
- Schools, as it minimises the time investment schools make in someone who does not end up teaching.

*"In TFA there's a big drop off at the start and then it's pretty much set – the risk is front loaded; the filtration process is at the beginning."*

- School principal



**Most common barriers to completion are:**

1. Participants feel unable to manage the workload.
2. Some placement school environments have challenges that participants find difficult to manage. This is most often challenging student behaviour.
3. Participants identify that teaching 'isn't for them'.

\*Source: LDP participant data. 2020 and 2021 were used as they are the years that the LDP was delivered under the HAT Program, and the 2022 cohort is yet to complete at time of writing. Completion rates of other ITE students are from 2019, which is the most recent data available. Data accessed at <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/ite-data-report-2019>. See Appendix 8 for more detailed breakdown.

# Participant retention – Summary

Participant retention in teaching and the education sector is high, with most alumni intending to remain in the teaching profession. However, the retention rate of teaching in disadvantaged and non-metropolitan schools is a challenge.

## Retention lens



### Retention in teaching profession

Page 40



### Retention in education

Page 41



### Retention in teaching in target schools

Pages 42-43

## Retention rates of LDP graduates

**There are indications that retention in teaching roles is higher for LDP** alumni than those in other pathways, but this is difficult to conclusively determine because of data limitations with broader teaching workforce. Positive indicators include:

- Principals' experience of various pathways
- Proxy data on intention to remain in teaching

While retention in teaching drops over time, it does so at a slower rate compared to all teachers, suggesting LDP participants are more likely to have longer teaching careers.

### LDP alumni tend to establish careers in education

Over 80% of LDP alumni stay in education 5+ years after graduating. This includes those in school-based teaching roles, and broader education roles, such as policy or working at an education not-for-profit.

- Over 70% of the initial cohort are still in education. This is promising, as programmatic improvements made since then will likely result in increased retention for more recent cohorts.

This is a key strength of the LDP in the context of its individual program objective. However, this does not align with the HAT Program objective more broadly.

### Participants tend to move to more advantaged schools and closer to the city

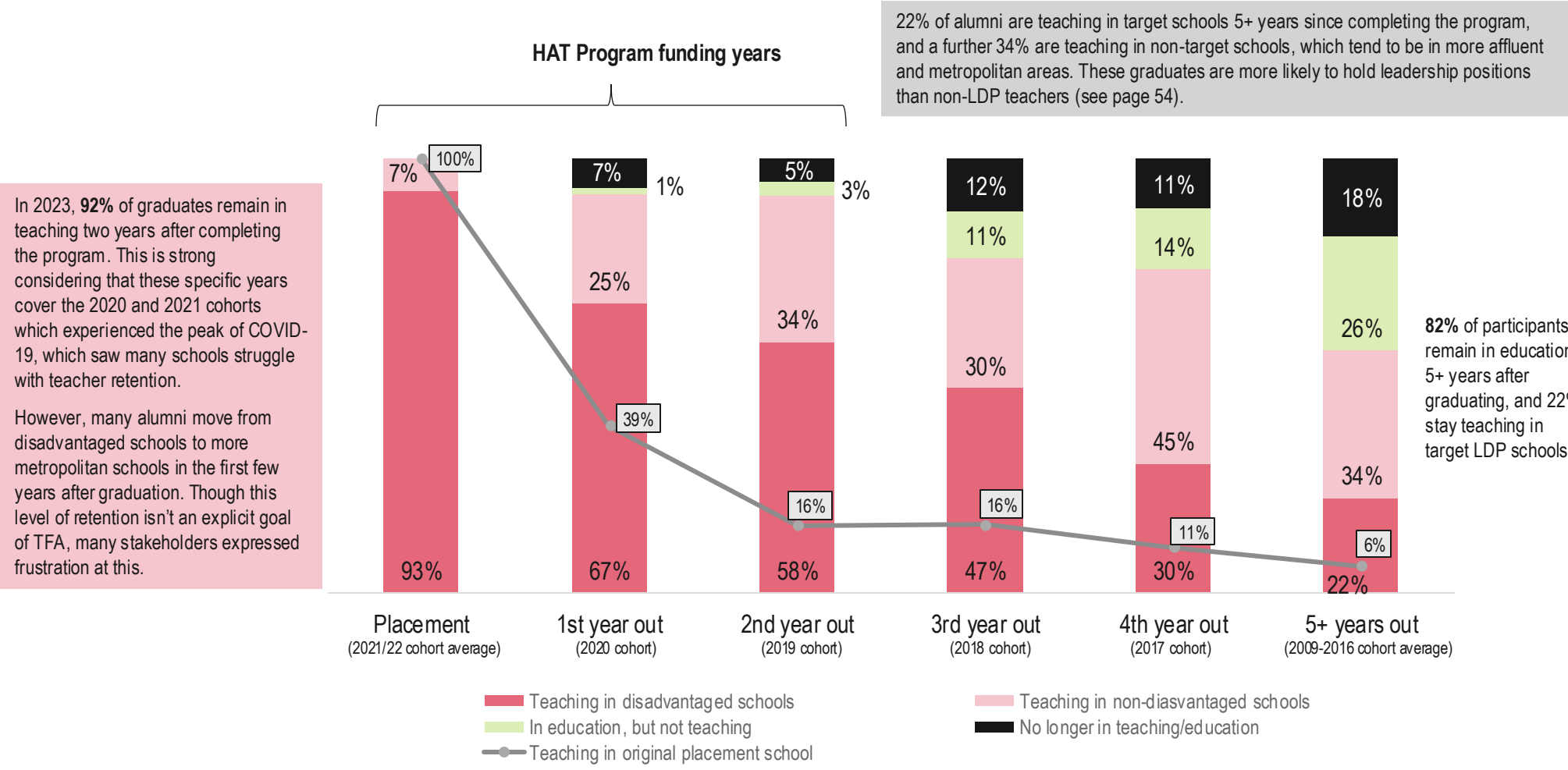
- Although LDP placement schools tend to be in disadvantaged and / or rural and regional areas, there is a sharp drop in teaching in the target areas by two years post-graduation (or four years of full-time placement when including teaching as a participant).
- By 5+ years since graduation, rates of teaching in these areas are basically the same as the average distribution of teachers across Australia.
- Retention in placement schools is significantly lower, though this isn't an explicit objective of the LDP or HAT Program.

Legend:

- Strength of LDP
- Challenge of LDP

# Overall retention

After participants graduate from the program, there is a sharp drop in retention in regional and disadvantaged schools that persists over time. However, retention in teaching and education more broadly for LDP alumni is high, and retention rates in this context have largely withstood the effects of COVID-19.



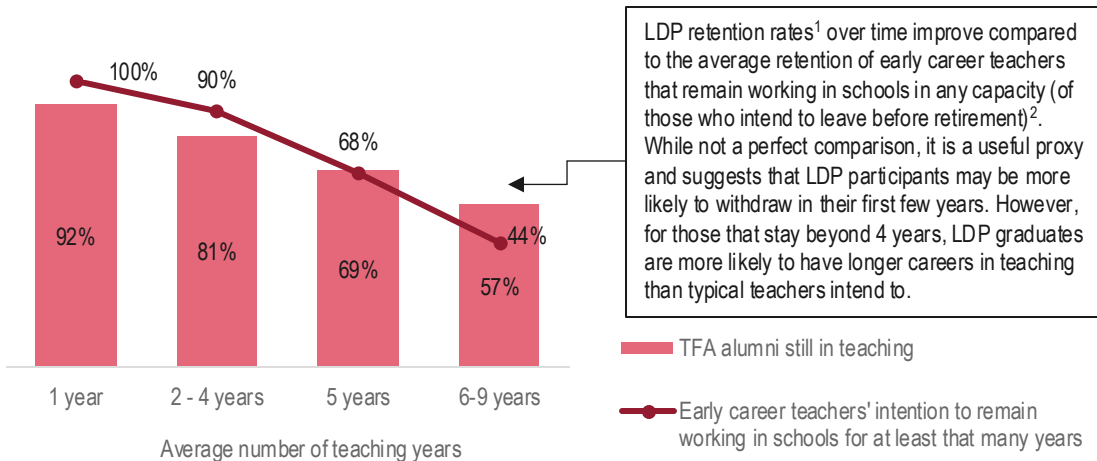
- Placement data is average of starting schools from 2020-2022 cohorts, 'Years out' are taken from 2023 alumni survey conducted by TFA, with 1<sup>st</sup> year out corresponding to 2021 cohort, 2<sup>nd</sup> year out corresponding to 2020 cohort, etc.. 5+ years out is the average of all cohorts pre-2018 (prior to the ACU delivery), which includes 2010-2017
- For a school to be considered disadvantaged, it has an ICSEA score of <1000 (which means it is in the bottom half of all schools)
- In this context, 'teaching' means working in a school, either as a teacher or as a principal / AP. 'In education' means still in the education space, but not working in a school. For example, in education consulting, at an education-related NFP, working for an Education Department, studying an education degree, etc.



# Retention in teaching

While difficult to estimate, LDP graduate retention in teaching is similar or slightly higher than that of mainstream pathway teachers.

**TFA alumni typically stay in teaching longer than other early career teachers in Australia after five years of teaching.**



Broader retention rates in teaching are difficult to accurately capture because:

- Historically, there has been no systematic recoding of this information.
- The effects of COVID-19 in recent years have seen recent retention drop compared to pre-COVID-19, meaning that relying on pre-COVID-19 studies isn't reflective of current trends.

The above data represents intended years of teaching as a proxy, which was captured in 2021. *Actual* retention rates of all non-LDP teachers are likely lower because:

- In the current teaching climate, most withdrawals from teaching are due to workload or burnout<sup>3</sup>, which can often emerge abruptly and are not planned or anticipated.
- Through our extensive consultation in this and other work, school principals consistently mention a high rate of early career teachers leaving the profession as a general trend.

**The most significant contributor to LDP retention in teaching is the program's recruitment strategy and process.**

**LDP participants share some retention barriers with all teachers (regardless of pathway)...**

- Workload (and taking on extra responsibilities)
- Pay
- Not a good culture fit
- Decides teaching is not for them

**The LDP also introduces some distinctive barriers...**

- LDP participants feel as though their starting salaries upon completion of the program could better reflect their experience in the classroom.
- They are placed in schools with historically difficult behaviours and students which increases their likelihood of burnout.
- They face an intense and sometimes confronting period as they are immediately placed in a full-time teaching role.
- The Masters adds a significant additional workload.

**But impacts of these do not outweigh the program's recruitment features, which result in solid retention overall.**

- Strong and well-communicated mission statement that attracts and recruits participants who are education and impact focused.
- The participant cohort typically has more life experience and are more confident in their decision to transition to teaching.

Retention in teaching is comparable between LDP and traditional pathways. It could be considered higher when comparing 'starting points' of teaching given that LDP participants begin delivering teaching capacity two years before becoming graduate teachers. However, given that graduates assume leadership roles more often than the general teaching workforce, there is a smaller proportion of LDP alumni in classroom teaching roles (See page 54).

<sup>1</sup>TFA 2023 alumni survey

<sup>2</sup>Australian Teacher Workforce Data Teacher Survey 2021. Note: Teachers who responded 'unsure' were not used for the purpose of this analysis. We acknowledge it is unlikely that 100% of teachers intend to stay at least an additional year, but '1 year' was the shortest option that respondents could provide (other than unsure).

<sup>3</sup>Of teachers who are considering leaving, 70% cite issues with workload which is the most common reason according to the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Teacher Survey 2021.

# Retention in education

Retention of participants in the education sector is high. Those who leave the teaching profession tend to stay in broader education or education adjacent roles. Participants view LDP as a catalyst for pursuing an education sector role.

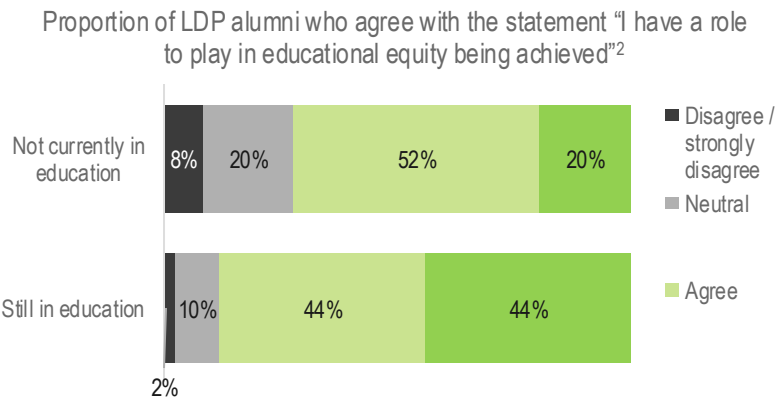
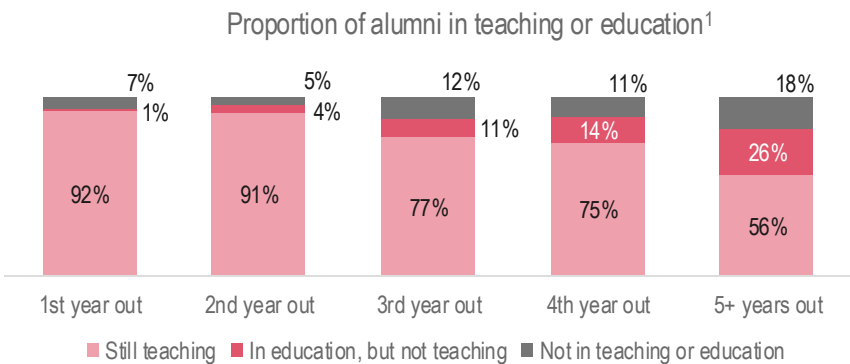
**Most participants are still in education, even after 5 years.** Example roles include:

- Education consulting
- Working for Australian or jurisdictional education departments
- Developing or running a non-school education program, such as an outdoor education program in the Northern Territory

The three most significant contributors to high retention in education according to TFA alumni are:

- The **rigorous recruitment process**, which selects people who have a passion for change. Over 70% of participants are no longer in a teaching role any still believe or strongly believe they have a role to play in education more broadly.
- The **accelerated model**, which is highly attractive to participants wanting to switch to education. LDP is often seen by participants as a catalysing factor for those who have wanted to pursue education but have previously felt a high barrier to entering due to the course length. The program ‘speeds up’ their journey to education and allows them to be in the classroom faster.
- The **experience of being placed in regional and disadvantaged locations**, which exposes participants to the diverse needs of students in lower socioeconomic areas and inspires many to address these issues.

Participants’ experience of the program itself is less of a factor in retention. Even those who faced challenges with their LDP program, still intend to stay in education.



<sup>1</sup>Analysis of 2023 TFA alumni survey

<sup>2</sup>2023 TFA alumni survey

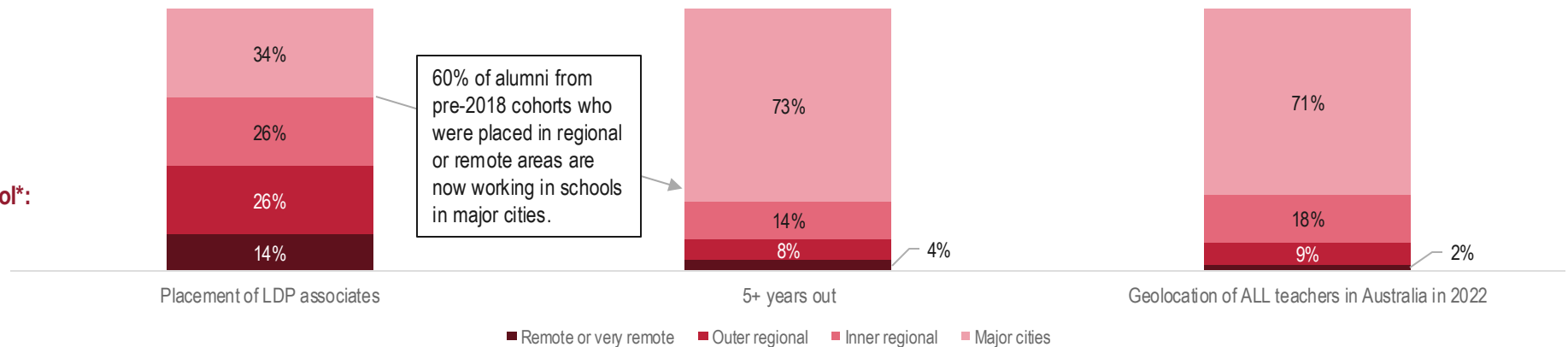
# Retention in target schools

Although participants are placed in regional and disadvantaged areas and successfully reach target schools...

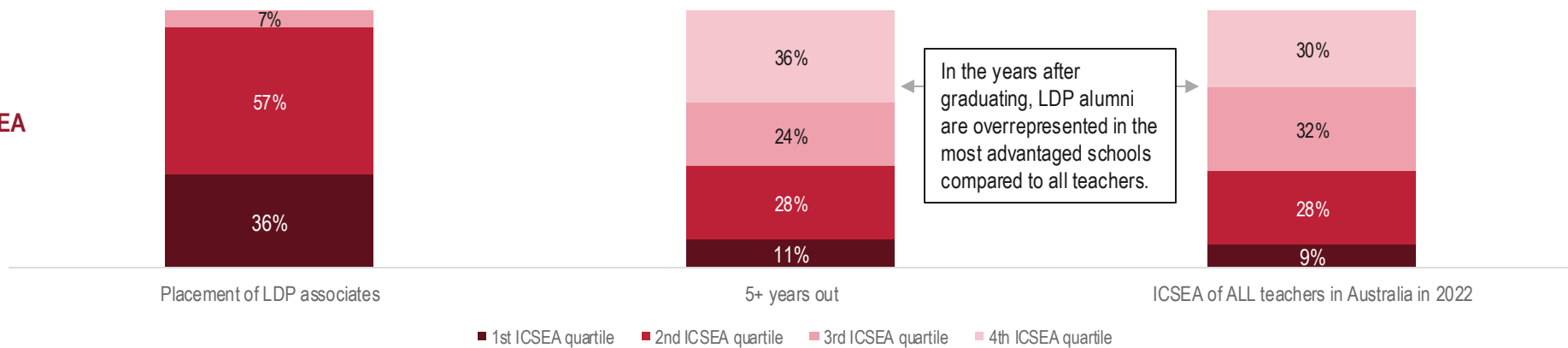
... retention in target schools five years post-program drops significantly, with alumni moving to schools in less disadvantaged areas closer to the cities.

This retention rate is at comparable levels to the placement of all teachers in regional and disadvantaged areas within Australia.

Distribution of teachers by regionality of placement school\*:






Distribution of teachers by ICSEA of placement schools\*:



Note: '5+ years out' data only includes alumni who are still teaching.  
\*Sources: TFA alumni survey 2023, and ICSEA and geolocation of all teachers taken from ACARA school profile 2022 data. See Appendix 6 for a full breakdown of retention rates across years in target schools.

# Barriers to retention in target schools

Retention in rural, regional and remote (RRR) schools is an issue facing both traditional and alternative pathways into teaching. It is a particular issue for TFA given the program’s targeting of these schools, creating a mismatch of participant and program objectives.

Barriers to retention in RRR / disadvantaged schools for the LDP	Participant profiles who are affected		
			
Participants are highly ambitious, and the opportunities in major cities are more attractive in terms of career, salary, professional development opportunities. <b>This is the most significant barrier to long-term retention in these contexts for LDP alumni.</b>	●	●	●
Participants want to make impact, and the potential for net impact they can bring is inherently more limited in smaller areas.	●	●	●
Participants see the RRR placement as a beneficial tool for professional development, but don't intend to stay there.	●	◐	◐
View the two-year placement in an unfamiliar and challenging context as an 'adventure' and do not have an intention to stay.	◐	◐	○
Have established family roots in originating areas and feel compelled to or pressure to move closer to home.	◐	◐	●
Feel limited connection with placement area and that there's 'nothing to do'.	●	●	○
Participants are commonly educated and typically from metropolitan coastal cities, and the difference in environment and lifestyle is a lifestyle change that participants aren't intending to or aren't able to adjust to.	◐	◐	◐
TFA places limited focus on retention in these areas to participants.*	◐	◐	◐

**TFA’s recruitment strategy is somewhat at odds with its equity mission**, as the motivations of the profiles of the participants that TFA targets are particularly unlikely to be incentivised to stay in regional or disadvantaged areas.

[On applying for TFA] *“People know the brand, it carries the weight. It’s a part of Teach for All, I’m able to name drop, which opens up doors for me and if I want to go overseas.”*

- TFA alumnus

## 2.4 LDP participant effectiveness

# Participant effectiveness

LDP participants typically require more support in their first year than a graduate teacher, but develop quickly, and by their second year are often perceived to be as effective or more effective than typical graduate teachers.

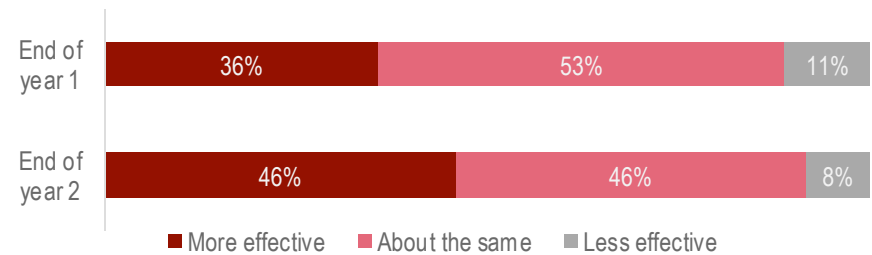
Participants in their first year require more support than a graduate teacher in the first semester of placement. The most common areas of intense need are:

- On navigating the school system
- On behaviour and classroom management
- Developing lesson plans and subject content – this is particularly an issue if there is limited existing materials at the placement school

This increased need is most acute in the first weeks of their placement but decreases as participants progress.

Most participants are ready to assume the responsibilities of a typical early career teacher by the start of their second year, though this isn't always the case.

According to school principals, **9 out of 10 LDP participants** are as effective or more effective than typical graduate teachers by the end of their first year of placement.<sup>1</sup>



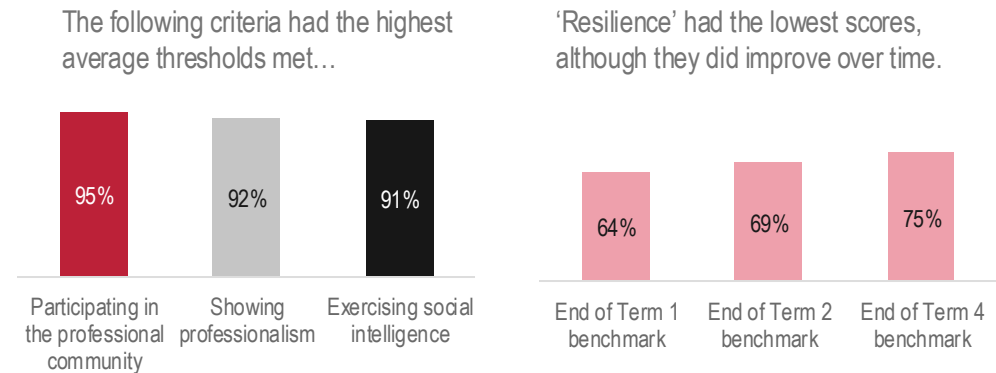
According to TFA's 'Leadership Continuum' system, most participants are consistently progressing and meeting teaching and leadership benchmarks.

TFA developed the 'Leadership Continuum' to understand the progression of participants across 15 criteria, most of which correspond to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL teaching standards).<sup>2</sup> They fall under 5 categories:

1. Preparing purposefully
2. Engaging others
3. Implementing effectively
4. Leading learning: engaging professionally
5. Leading self

Criteria are co-rated by participants themselves and their TLAs and are intended to provide clarity around their expected progression through the program and guiding the focus of their coaching sessions with TLAs at different stages in their development.

**In the 2022 cohort, participants met 82% of thresholds, which suggests high levels of continual improvement of participant effectiveness throughout their journeys.<sup>1</sup>**



Sources:

1. Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2022)
2. The Leadership Continuum system is based partly on self-assessment. As TFA acknowledges "results should not be considered a robust or objective measure of participant effectiveness." Nevertheless, they do contribute to the 'overall story' of LDP participant effectiveness. For a full breakdown of Leadership Continuum scores, please see Appendix 9.

# Strengths of teaching practice

LDP participants have the distinctive strengths of engaging well in professional learning, strong content knowledge, and an ability to communicate effectively with colleagues, parents/carers, and the community.

These perceptions of strengths are consistently shared by school principals...

And school mentors.

*“They have a high-level of subject specific expertise, intelligent, and the professional mindset can add to the professionalism of the school.”*

- Principal

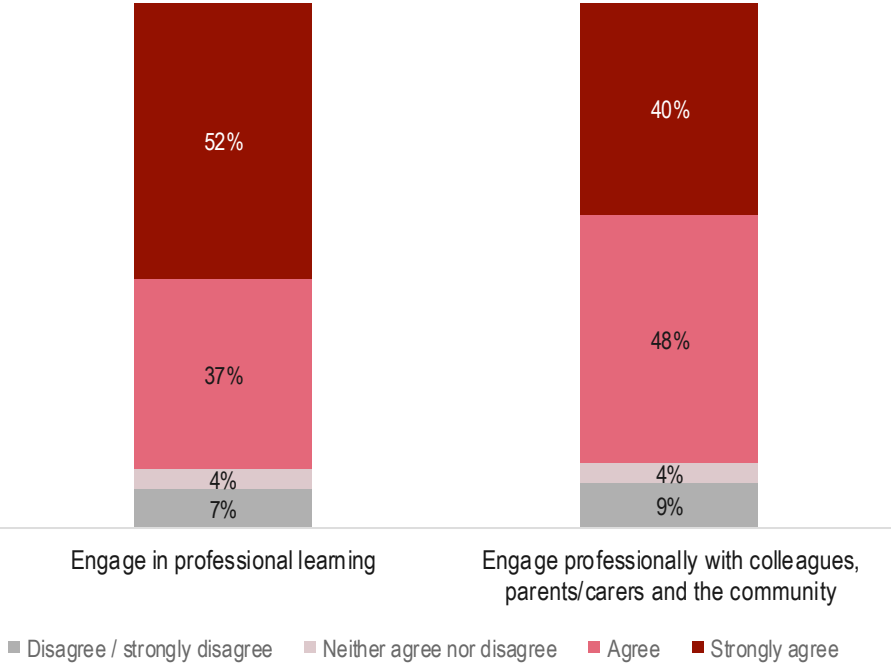
*“We get some high-flying participants with amazing content knowledge and a desire to instil this in the students. Some of our best teachers are participants – they take the ATAR courses because they have the content knowledge.”*

- Principal

55%

of principals engage in LDP because participants ‘Provide subject matter expertise we would otherwise be unable to obtain’.

School mentors agree participants are most effective in the following AITSL teaching standards:



# Students' perceptions of teaching practice

We analysed students' perceptions of teaching practice of LDP participants and non-LDP teachers. This contributes to the evidence supporting effective teaching practice of LDP participants.

## Student perceptions of teaching practice as a measure of teaching effectiveness

There is increasing understanding of the importance and scientific validity of gauging student perceptions of their teachers:

- Students can discriminate between teachers they like and teachers they perceive to be effective.<sup>1</sup>
- Students who highly rate the effectiveness of their teachers outperform those who do not.<sup>2</sup>
- Teachers with positive student perceptions are linked to more positive broader long-term life outcomes of their students.<sup>3</sup>

One such survey is the **Student Survey on Teaching** by Pivot, which asks students 25 questions on a 6-point Likert scale to understand student perceptions of teaching practice of their classroom teacher. These items are summarised as average scores out of 6 across three domains:

- Classroom Environment
- Instruction
- Relationships

They can also be mapped against 5 AITSL teaching standards:

1. Know students and how they learn
2. Know the content and how to teach it
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. Assess, provide feedback, and report on student learning

## Using this to analyse LDP participants and graduates

The analysis in this report includes data from 13 schools that engage with LDP and the Pivot survey, and compares the scores of those teachers on the 2022 Student Survey on Teaching with other non-LDP teachers at the same school. This includes:

- 55 LDP graduates and participants from cohort 2018 onwards rated by 2,190 students
- 676 non-LDP teachers rated by 11,438 students

### Strengths of this comparison

- Scores can be mapped to AITSL teaching standards, making it a stronger proxy for teacher effectiveness.
- It includes scores across many thousands of students, which increases the confidence of the results.
- Comparator scores only include teachers from the same 13 schools that the LDP teacher scores are drawn from. This helps to control for intra school factors, such as student familiarity with the survey or historic school trends of scoring.

### Limitations of this comparison

- The LDP and non-LDP cohorts differ in some fundamental ways:
  - The cohort of 55 LDP teachers include both graduates and participants since 2018, meaning some are still yet to complete their Masters. This puts the most advanced teacher in this cohort at 2-3 years of graduate teaching experience, and most are likely between 25–35 years old.
  - The comparator group of teachers includes all teachers who participated in the survey at those schools, meaning they are likely older with significantly more years of teaching.
- Due to privacy and identity factors, we can't determine the 'spread' of those LDP participants, i.e. we do not know how many are new participants and how many are more mature.

### What this means for this evaluation

Teacher effectiveness is notoriously difficult to define and measure. The results of this analysis provide insights into student perceptions of LDP teachers compared to other teachers, and this does play a role in understanding the effectiveness and impact of LDP teachers. However, this should be appreciated as a contributing element to understanding their effectiveness – it does not tell the 'whole story'.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226256956\\_Student\\_Surveys\\_for\\_School\\_Teacher\\_Evaluation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226256956_Student_Surveys_for_School_Teacher_Evaluation)

<sup>2</sup> <https://usprogram.gatesfoundation.org/-/media/dataimport/resources/pdf/2016/12/met-ensuring-fair-and-reliable-measures-practitioner-brief.pdf>

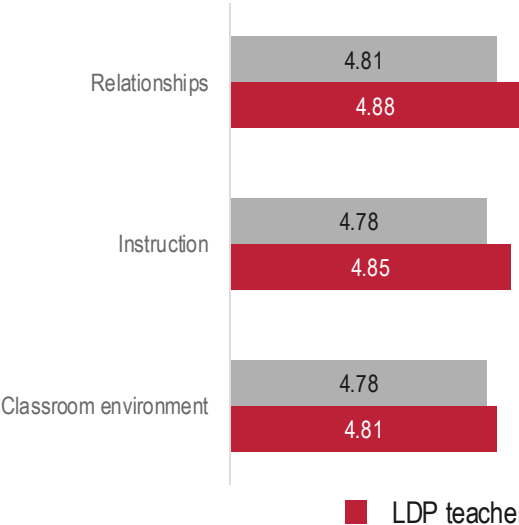
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.104.9.2633>



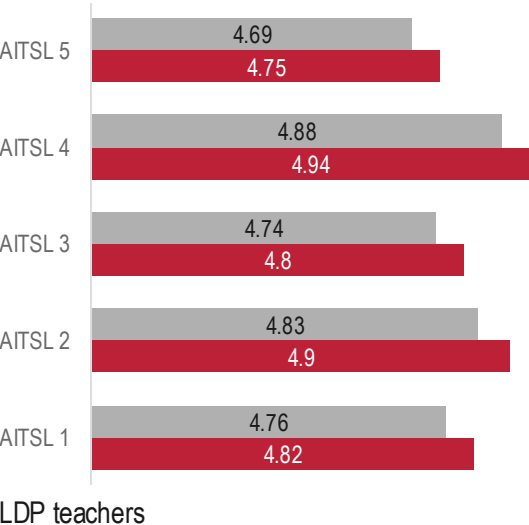
# Student perceptions of LDP teachers

According to a small analysis, students perceive average early career LDP teachers\* as comparably effective to other teachers at their schools, and scores were more consistent for LDP teachers.

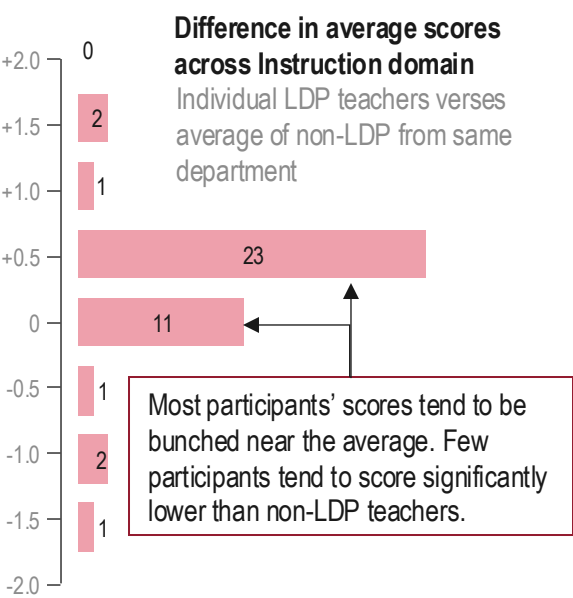
LDP teachers scored slightly higher than non-LDP teachers across Pivot's measurement domains...



And when mapped to AITSL teaching standards, LDP teachers scored higher across all five...



And have lower standard deviations (measure of spread their scores), indicating slightly more consistency in how the students rated them.



In one respect, the above results are positive for the LDP, as the LDP teachers represent participants of the 2018-2022 cohorts (which includes participants still completing the program and graduate teachers with less than three years experience) and are compared to *all* teachers in the same schools (who would have considerably more teaching experience on average). However, the lack of identifiability of the cohort due to confidentiality is a significant limitation of this analysis, as we can't identify which scores correspond to participants or graduates, or early career teachers in the non-LDP group.

Therefore, we cannot confidently say that LDP teachers are perceived as more effective by students, but there are indicators this may be the case.

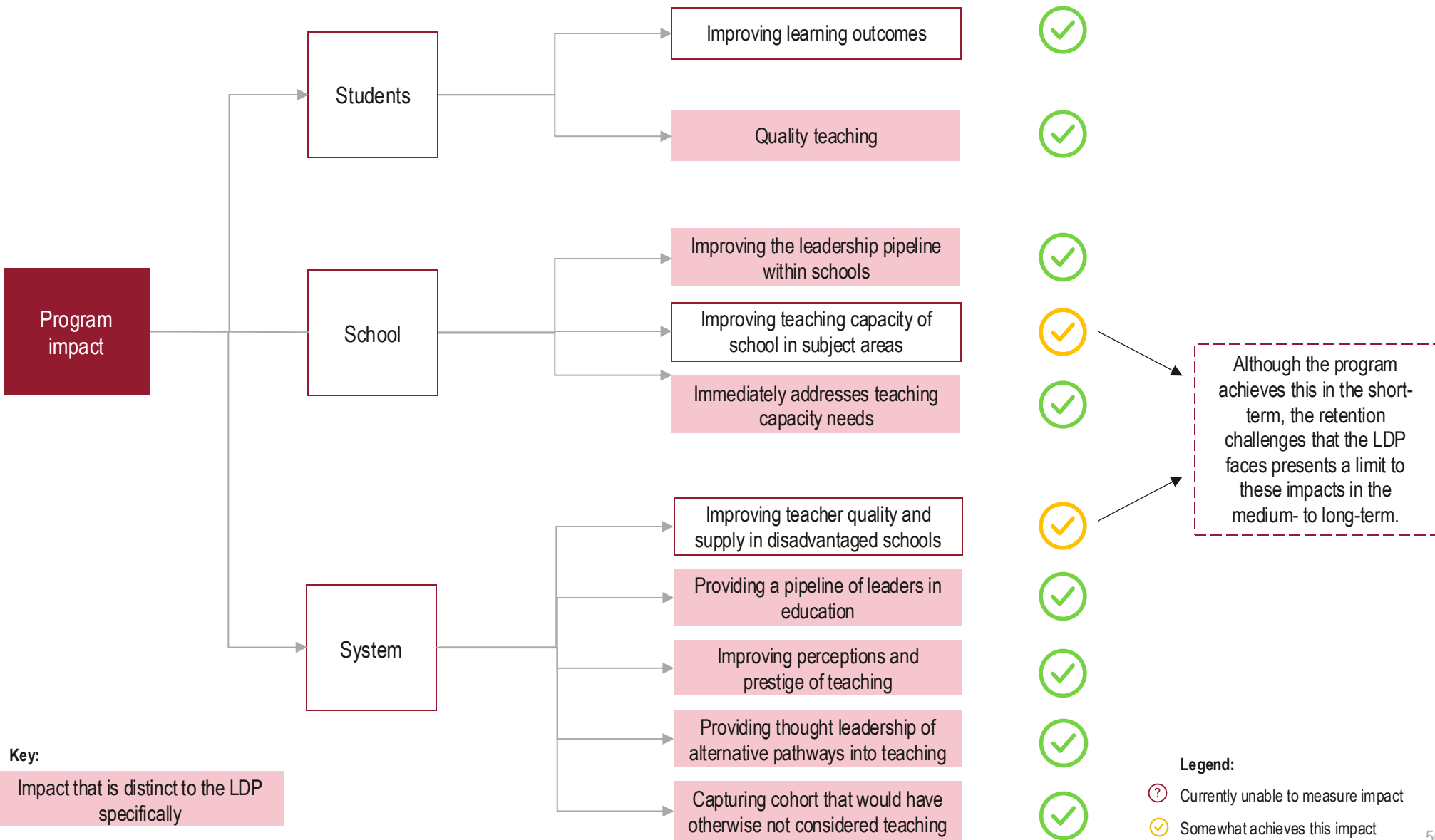
This trend is consistent, with LDP teachers having a lower standard deviation of scores across all Pivot domains and all AITSL teaching standards.

Source: Pivot analysis of 2022 Student Survey of Teaching of a selection of participating LDP schools.  
\*In this context of this slide, 'LDP teachers' refers to both LDP participants and graduates from the 2018-2022 cohorts.

## 2.5 LDP program impact

# Program impact overview

LDP participants can have a positive impact on their students, the school, and the broader education system.



# Participant impact on students

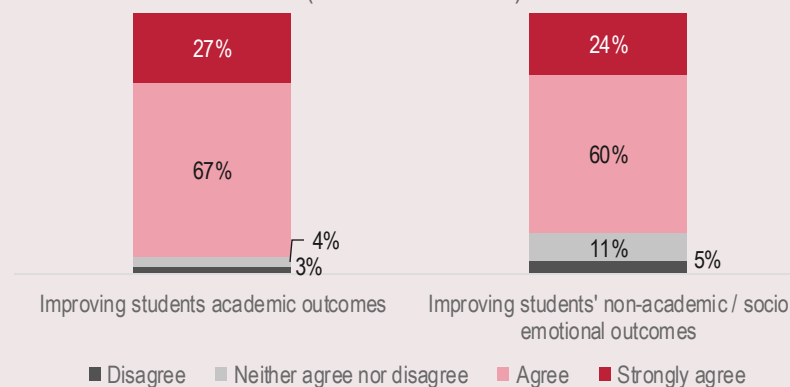
LDP participants are contributing to positive impacts on students' academic and non-academic outcomes through direct classroom teaching and by contributing to school culture.



**Principals largely reflect that participants are effective teachers, which is translating to positive impacts for students.**

- In general, principals feel that when a high period of needed support ends (usually by the start of Term 3 of a participant's first year), that participants are having positive academic and broader socio-emotional impacts on students comparable to a typical graduate teacher.
  - Principals did note some variation in this impact but note that the level of variation is lower than a graduate teacher, and that there is a sense that 'you know what you'll get with an LDP participant'.

Principals perceptions of LDP participants' impact on students (2020-2022 cohorts)\*



**Schools feel that the contribution the LDP brings to schools is distinctive compared to other ITE pathways and is likely to translate to positive student outcomes.**

- Those that have previous life and work experience bring a level of expertise and real-world knowledge that schools value.
  - They can connect to students quicker than typical graduate teachers.
  - Their expertise can improve the quality of teaching materials / resources.
- Participants are enthusiastic and keen to go 'above and beyond'.
  - They are often very involved in school culture and events, and sometimes organise extracurricular classes in areas of their expertise, such as a participant with a degree in literature setting up a book club for students.
- Their enthusiasm is felt by students and can contribute to a more engaging classroom environment.

*[Our participant is] "Involved in school life too, which is important, especially in country areas. He gets involved in the athletics day, swimming days, community stuff ... I want him to stay here and make him permanent."*

- Principal in a rural school

*"TFA participants have set up clubs, even in areas of curriculum like science and maths. They're making maths and science cool to the kids."*

- Principal in a rural school

\*Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2022)

# School participation

Schools primarily participate in the program to address the shortage of teachers in schools and to meet skills gaps.

**Schools are experiencing a teacher workforce shortage and need more teachers, particularly in regional and remote areas and for subject areas such as mathematics and science.**

Participants can provide subject expertise that enables schools to offer subjects at higher levels.

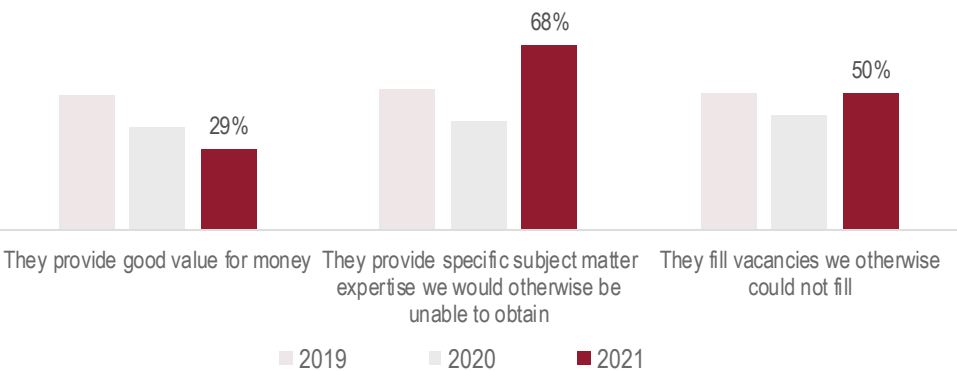
*"We get some high-flying participants with amazing content knowledge and a desire to instil this in the students – there is a passion. Some of our best teachers are participants – they take the ATAR courses because they have the content knowledge."*

- Principal (2023)

*"Getting quality people in the right schools is the value of TFA."*

- Jurisdiction coordinator (2023)

Reasons principals would chose to participate in the LDP in the future<sup>1</sup>



They also value other benefits such as receiving reliably high-calibre, enthusiastic teachers, though these are a secondary motivation for participating in the LDP.

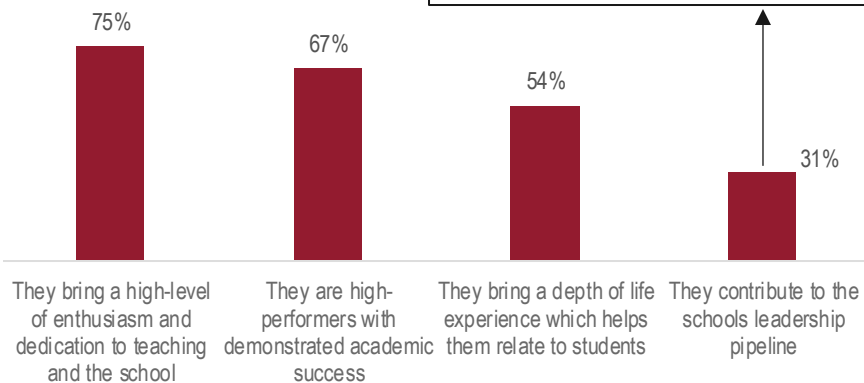
Even though schools primarily participate to address teacher workforce issues, they see additional benefits of participation. Most schools value key qualities that LDP participants bring:

- High-performing achievers
- High levels of enthusiasm
- Dedication to teaching

*"[Participants are] nerds for teaching, which works well in our school."*

- School principal (2023)

Reasons principals would choose to participate in the LDP in the future (2019-2021)<sup>2</sup>



This figure represents all responding principals, but principals from regional schools typically place more importance on leadership pipeline development compared to metropolitan schools.

Our findings are based on 2023 interviews with Principals / jurisdictions where the teacher workforce shortage is a lot worse, so the data is not very representative of that (last surveyed in 2021).  
Note: VIC principals were not surveyed during 2020-2022 due to COVID-19 and extended lockdowns.

<sup>1</sup> 'Value for money' in this context refers to the quality of teaching that schools have access to relative to the entry-level salaries that schools have to pay for TFA participants.

# Participant impact on schools – Teaching

Schools typically value participants' willingness to make a difference through leadership and sharing their skillset, which positively impacts the broader school culture. This impact is often felt very soon after placement commences.



## Providing teaching capacity in key subject areas

The teaching capacity that LDP participants provide is the most valued aspect of the program for schools. The LDP is also providing distinctive impact in this area, such as:

- Placing a high proportion of participants with teaching areas in maths, science, and other areas of need with high levels of content knowledge.
- Focusing placement in regional and disadvantaged schools, which are hard to staff and face considerable teacher turnover.
- The immediacy of teaching capacity, as schools enjoy full-time equivalent load from the start.
  - However, if participants withdraw from the program, the gap left in teaching is felt more by schools.



## Highly specialised skills and content knowledge

- Subject matter expertise (e.g. a participant with an exercise science PhD went into a sports teaching role, and brought a lot of expertise to it).
- Another participant had a Masters in Public Health and brought new resources and developed plans informed by that, which the school highly valued.
- Principals frequently mention the depth of content knowledge of participants in their teaching areas.

[Compared to traditional pathways to teaching, LDP participants are] *“High quality and have more material than from standard pathways.”*

- Principal



## Energy and passion to make a difference

They bring energy and enthusiasm to the role and school culture and want to contribute.

- Their energy can flow-on to other teachers who can feel renewed.
- This energy can often translate to fresh ideas, attitudes, or ways of thinking that some principals value.

As participants immediately enter the classroom, their impact on schools can be felt soon after their arrival, which is a distinct feature of the LDP. However, participants withdrawing from the program is felt strongly by schools – particularly in terms of addressing the gap left in teaching capacity, and especially so in hard-to-staff schools.

**TFA should maintain a thorough recruitment and matching process to minimise the chances of withdrawals.**

# Participant impact on schools – Leadership

Some schools have challenges filling leadership positions and frequently identify LDP participants as potential future leaders.

## Some schools struggle to fill leadership positions...

*"We need people in the classroom, but also need leaders, we need succession planning, we need to know who we are upskilling, guiding and mentoring to take on leadership roles in the future."*

- Principal in a rural school

## Principals frequently see LDP participants as having qualities that could make them good school leaders.

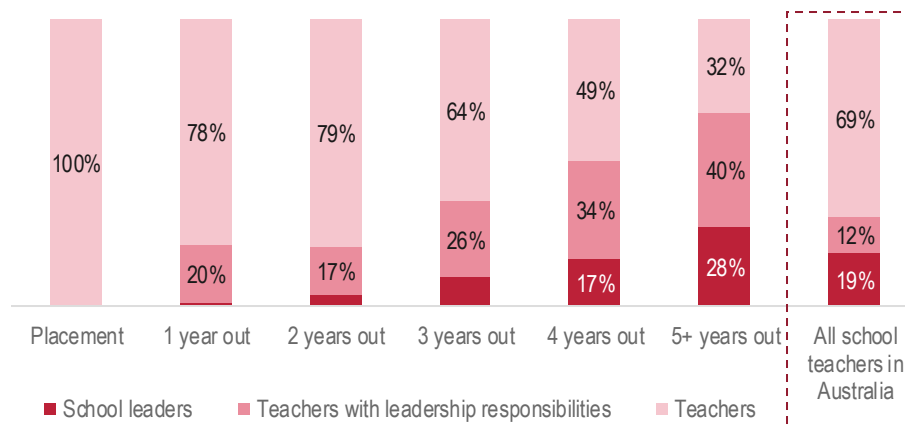
60% of principals agree that LDP participants have demonstrated leadership amongst other teaching staff.

Principals also frequently reference common qualities of LDP participants that they feel are strong indicators of future leadership potential:

- Strong work ethic
- Passion for teaching
- Innate need to make a difference
- Eagerness to get involved and seek extra responsibility.

LDP graduates are assuming leadership roles in schools significantly more frequently than typical teachers.

Proportion of TFA alumni in schools with leadership positions\*



## LDP teachers assume positions of leadership quickly:



- Within first year of graduation: Over 20% have leadership responsibilities.
- After 3 years: LDP teachers are more likely to have leadership positions than the average teacher in Australia.
- The average of LDP teachers prior to 2018 cohort: More than twice as likely to hold leadership positions as the average Australian teacher.

\*In this chart, 'School leaders' include principals, assistant principals, and lead / executive teachers. 'Teachers with leadership responsibilities' include teachers with other roles, which may or may not be remunerated. 'Teachers' refers to classroom teachers and casual / relief teachers. LDP data taken from 2023 Alumni Survey, comparable data of all teachers in Australia taken from *Australian Teacher Workforce Data: National Teacher Workforce Characteristics Report, December 2021 (the ATWD Teacher Workforce Report)*.

# Enablers for participant impact

We've identified conditions that enable schools to unlock higher value and impact from LDP participants.



## At least two participants from the same cohort placed in a school.

*"From the school side it means that you can streamline resources better. For LDP participants it means that they can visit each other's classes, plan together. But for candidates, it's the moral support."*

- Principal with many years' experience with LDP



## Effective school-based support infrastructure.

Schools that make significant efforts to integrate and tailor specific support for participants see greater benefits of participating in the program:

- Participants are quicker to develop their teaching skills.
- Participants can better navigate schools' systems and protocols.
- Participants have a more enjoyable experience, which can translate to strengthened retention.



## Schools recognise the distinctive skills and qualities of LDP participants.

Participants who feel empowered to make a difference and feel valued for their skills can leverage their expertise and contribute to the school in various capacities:

- Contributing to school culture, as participants are particularly willing to engage in activities outside the classroom.
- Volunteer for leadership positions that may be unappealing to some teachers as they come with considerable responsibility.



# Jurisdiction participation

Participating jurisdictions view the LDP as an established employment-based teacher pathway that plays a small but important role in filling teacher supply, particularly for regional and remote schools. However, jurisdictions are exploring other models that target a broader cohort into teaching.



**The LDP plays a small role in jurisdictions, where employment-based pathways form one of several policy responses to teacher supply challenges.**

The LDP plays an important role, but can only be scaled to a certain threshold:

- Schools have limited capacity to take on these people, who may require more intensive support compared to graduate teachers (particularly in more disadvantaged schools).
- The LDP targets a very specific 'type' of person in a limited pool. This is an intended design feature to attract high-achieving individuals into teaching.

Other policy responses include:

- Accelerated postgraduate ITE programs.
- Employing final-year pre-service teachers.
- Encouraging existing teachers to change subject specialisations.



**Jurisdictions that choose to participate in the LDP, do so because it is a 'tried and tested' approach.**

- It is already well-established and 'tried and tested' compared to similar models.
- TFA chooses high-quality participants through a rigorous selection process.
- TFA has a particular focus on placement in regional and disadvantaged schools, which is where jurisdictions face the biggest teacher supply challenges.



**Jurisdictions that choose not to participate in the LDP are exploring options that are more tailored to their contexts.**

- LDP participants are 'expensive' compared to other policy responses to address teacher supply challenges.
- Perceived poor retention.
- Perceived quality issues, given the intensive and employment-based nature of LDP training.
- 'Industrial push back' from teacher unions and principal associations.
- State and territory legislative / regulatory barriers relating to teacher registration.
- One jurisdiction was concerned about a perceived lack of cultural diversity in LDP cohorts.

**These jurisdictions are actively exploring and / or using several alternative employment-based pathways, including:**

- Scholarships and employment-based pathways for mid-career professionals.
- Teacher cadetships for Year 12 students.
- Teacher aide roles for pre-service teachers.

Jurisdictions are exploring options that provide more bespoke models tailored to the context of their own jurisdictions (e.g., working with local universities to develop employment-based pathways for local people in local communities). These models typically differ from the LDP in two main ways:

- Most do not target high achievers to the same extent.
- Most do not place participants immediately in the classroom.

# System impact – An untapped cohort

Key distinctive programmatic features and the prestige associated with the LDP has resulted in capturing a cohort of participants who would not have considered teaching careers due the loss of income during study and / or the perceived negative status and career progression of teachers.

## Most common barriers mid-career cohorts face to joining the teaching workforce.\*

Financial barriers, as many people who would like to pursue teaching can't afford to take time off from work to study.

Returning to full-time university study rather than being practically engaged in a job is unappealing.

Some negative perceptions of the teaching profession:

- High workload
- Increased difficulty since COVID-19
- Modest prestige of teaching profession

## Does the LDP address these?



Almost all participants say that the 0.8 FTE and the respective wage was a critical factor in their decision to pursue the program and enter teaching more broadly.



LDP participants are typically eager to engage in classroom teaching as soon as possible, and the program presents an opportunity to get 'straight into the classroom'.



TFA has a strong reputation and the famously low acceptance rate of LDP has, according to some schools and participants, 'flipped prestige from a barrier to a feature'. LDP does have a very high workload, though this is unlikely to deter the kinds of participants that are otherwise attracted to the program.



All LDP participants and alumni that we spoke to said that key features of program or structure were decisive factors in their applying, and some said that they would not have considered teaching at all without the LDP specifically. TFA is capturing a cohort who would otherwise not be in teaching were it not for the option of the LDP.

Legend:



Addresses these barriers to an extent



Fully addresses these barriers

\*Source: Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel (2023) at <https://www.education.gov.au/quality-initial-teacher-education-review/resources/strong-beginnings-report-teacher-education-expert-panel>

# System impact – Distinct programmatic features

The LDP is an established program that has distinct programmatic features which can influence other jurisdictions to develop or procure their own alternative ITE pathway, positively contributing to the alternative ITE ecosystem as a thought leader.



**Attracts high quality and diverse career changers to teaching**

The LDP taps into a cohort who would not otherwise pursue teaching, therefore expanding the workforce as well as providing an alternative pathway. It achieves this through:

- Offering an attractive programmatic structure.
- Providing a pathway that high achievers are more likely to see as prestigious.

*“Participants are coming into the program that would not have otherwise considered teaching ... the skill set and experience that TFA participants bring are unusual and this flows through to the support they are able to provide the students.”*

- State education department representative



**TFA plays a leading role in alternative ITE thought leadership**

The LDP is the most established alternative ITE pathway in Australia. In jurisdictions where it is the only or one of the only major alternative pathways, jurisdictions draw evidence and learnings from the LDP, which are influencing their decision-making in developing or procuring future pathways.

In this respect, the LDP plays an influential role as a representative of alternative pathways, and its success is important for alternative pathways more broadly.

*“TFA has provided us with a lot of learnings as they continue to move forward in that space.”*

- State education department representative discussing their jurisdiction's efforts to explore alternative ITE pathways



**Develops future educational leaders**

Considering that LDP graduates have effectively spent two years delivering teaching capacity, LDP retention rates in teaching roles are comparable to mainstream pathways. However, a large proportion of LDP participants become educational leaders:

- **In schools:** Approximately 50 LDP teachers hold principal or assistant principal roles in schools in 2022.
- **In broader education:** Graduates work across the educational sector, such as advocacy organisations, education research institutes, (e.g. Grattan, Australian Education Research Organisation), and ~30 work in education departments across Australia.



### 3. La Trobe University's Nexus program

# Summary of findings

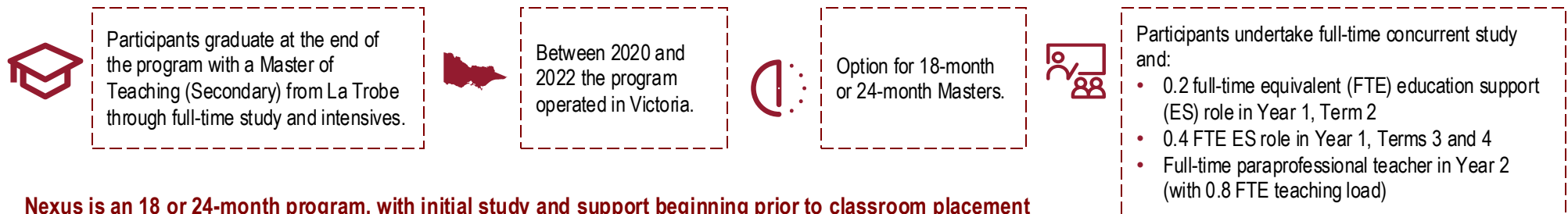
Section	La Trobe University's Nexus program	Page(s)
Attraction and recruitment of Nexus participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants from diverse educational and career backgrounds are attracted the Nexus program due to the focus on social justice.</li> <li>Participants are recruited for their alignment to the Nexus mission and whether they are likely to be effective teachers. They tend to be mid-career changers with subject matter expertise.</li> </ul>	63-67
Target schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most participants are placed in hard-to-staff schools, satisfying a key objective of both Nexus and the HAT Program.</li> <li>Nexus aims to concentrate participants in specific areas to cultivate Nexus 'hubs'.</li> </ul>	68-69
Pre-placement learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program starts with a Nexus-run intensive. The intensives are a key point of difference to traditional ITE pathways. Participants highly value the intensives for both the content and as an effective introduction to teaching.</li> <li>The Masters program commences in Semester 1 of the university year. Participants study full-time during Term 1 of the school year, prior to their classroom placement. This scaffolded approach to classroom placement effectively mitigates heavy workload.</li> </ul>	71, 73-74
Work-integrated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Master of Teaching workload is time-consuming due to regulatory requirements, but Nexus is aiming to address the workload challenges by integrating the academic content through program design.</li> <li>Participants gradually begin their classroom placement in an Education Support role before undertaking a paraprofessional teaching role in their second year. This scaffolded approach is well suited to the type of participant that Nexus targets.</li> </ul>	75-78
Support for participants and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants receive effective wraparound support from their classroom mentor and program leaders.</li> <li>Nexus is committed to a partnership model and is in direct communication with schools right from the recruitment stage.</li> </ul>	79-82
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While retention rate in the program has decreased with the third cohort, early data indicates alumni intend to stay in the teaching profession in the medium term and are more likely to stay in target schools.</li> </ul>	85
Participant effectiveness*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available data suggests positive indications of participant effectiveness. Thorough data collection practices would help to determine common areas of strength.</li> </ul>	86-88
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite the program's infancy, there are indications that the program delivers quality teaching driven by social justice training.</li> <li>Through program design, Nexus can address both teaching and non-teaching capacity needs in schools.</li> <li>The Nexus program is an important contributor to the broader alternative teaching pathway ecosystem.</li> </ul>	89-96

\* Note that teacher effectiveness is notoriously difficult to define and measure. The results of this analysis provide insights into student perceptions of Nexus teachers compared to other teachers, and this does play a role in understanding the effectiveness and impact of Nexus teachers. However, this should be appreciated as a contributing element to understanding their effectiveness – it does not tell the 'whole story'.

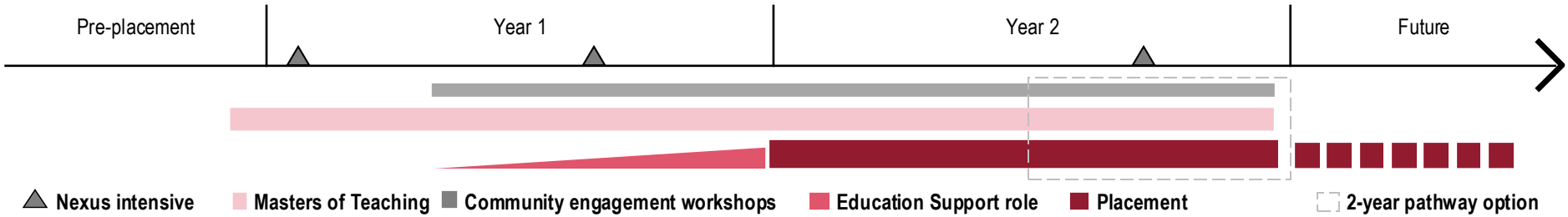
# Nexus program delivered by La Trobe University

The Nexus program is an employment-based pathway to teaching with a strong focus on social justice that aims to develop and place teachers in economically and culturally diverse secondary schools in Victoria.

Participants study full time and gradually increase their classroom load to become full-time paraprofessional teachers by their second year.



Nexus is an 18 or 24-month program, with initial study and support beginning prior to classroom placement



### The program consists of learning components....

**Master of Teaching (Secondary)**  
Participants graduate with a degree from La Trobe University.

**Nexus intensives**  
Three 2-4 day intensives to build knowledge, skills, and network.

**Community engagement workshops**  
Fortnightly workshops to support teaching in hard-to-staff schools.

### ... classroom placements...

**Year 1 - Education support (ES)**  
Paid, routine support to teachers in the classroom under supervision.

**Year 2 - Paraprofessional**  
Paid, paraprofessional teaching under direction of other school professionals.

### ...and mentoring and peer support

**Classroom mentor**  
Experienced teacher at placement school observes and provides support.

**Nexus network**  
Nexus participants and alumni who share experiences and support.



## 3.1 Nexus attraction and recruitment

# Attraction to the Nexus program

Nexus attracts participants from diverse educational and career backgrounds by focusing on social justice and providing a door to teaching that applicants find more appealing than traditional pathways.



## How applicants are attracted to the Nexus program

Nexus applicants are attracted through traditional recruitment means (e.g., website, mailing list, social media).

Nexus typically attracts ~140 applicants per cycle – about four times as many as the program eventually accepts.

Data is limited on how participants become aware of the program, as Nexus does not collect this.

### Consideration for Nexus:

Nexus should expand attraction efforts in Victoria.

Other comparator programs attract over 1000 applicants in Victoria each year. While the target applicant cohorts across different programs will not necessarily be completely aligned, it does signify that there is large interest in these kinds of programs.

Nexus should also capture data on how applicants became familiar with the program to identify common attraction pathways.

Note: Nexus has recently hired a marketing and communications role to better proliferate the program to potential applicants in coming years.



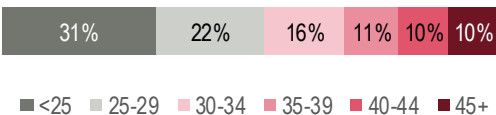
## Who is attracted to the Nexus program

There is a high level of diversity within Nexus applicants across educational, professional, and demographic backgrounds. However, Nexus does struggle to attract First Nations applicants.

Applicants typically:

- Come from diverse educational background and employment backgrounds. The most common degrees are Bachelors of Science, Arts, and Health Science.
- Are those wanting to serve the community and be part of its 'social justice' component.
- Are from a diverse range of ages:

Ages of Nexus applicants



- Average age of applicant: 32
- Median age of applicant: 29



## Why applicants are attracted to Nexus

- Applicants feel it has some comparative advantages to mainstream pathways, such as:
  - The programmatic structure. Applicants typically do not want to return to university to study, and the gradual introduction to the classroom – the '**scaffolded approach**' – is an appealing program structure. (See pages 70-82 for more info)
  - It offers a moderate financial incentive.
- Applicants have a passion for social justice, and getting to quickly join school communities is a faster way for participants to have direct impact.
- There is an accelerated pathway, which is faster than most alternative pathways and a standard Masters pathway.
- It presents a challenging and exciting experience.

(On why the program was attractive) *"Living in a really different environment, and doing something really difficult."*

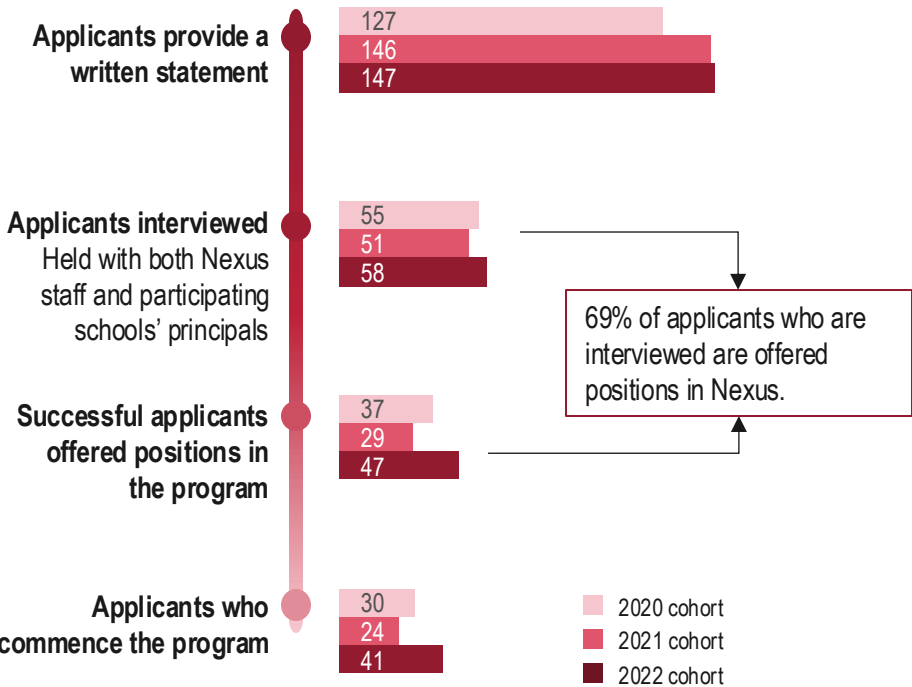
- Nexus alumnus



# Selection process

The program’s selection process captures participants who are likely to be effective teachers and are aligned with the Nexus mission, but improving applicant numbers and implementing more structured assessment against selection criteria will strengthen future cohorts.

## Timeline of selection process



The high ratio of successful applicants from initial interview is unusual and suggests that the written statement is acting as a ‘weeding out’ process for high-quality applications. Nexus should continue its efforts to improve overall applicant numbers, which should result in more people being interviewed and ultimately a stronger cohort.

Nexus selection criteria	Demonstrates potential to be an effective teacher	Aligned with Nexus’s mission
Previous university degree with good results (Weighted Average Mark of 65 or more)	✓	
Knowledge in high-needs areas, such as STEM and Special Education	✓	
Strong interpersonal skills, resilience and the drive to become a high-quality secondary teacher in Victoria	✓	✓
Demonstrated understanding of cultural diversity	✓	✓
Demonstrated passion for social justice		✓

Participants **must** also satisfy the following\*:

- Have an undergraduate degree in a discipline other than teaching
- Permanent resident or citizen of Australia

The above criteria are well-matched to both the mission of the program, and selecting participants who are most likely to be successful teachers given the context of the program structure. However, we are not aware of a scoring system or weighting of the above criteria. La Trobe should consider implementing a structured and weighted scoring system to increase objectivity and consistency across personnel involved in the recruitment process.

\*Originally, participants needed to be within one hour’s travel distance from placement school. This criteria has since been softened, but Nexus does strive to place participants in areas that they are familiar with.

Source: Nexus participant data 2020-2022

# Successful applicants (1/2)

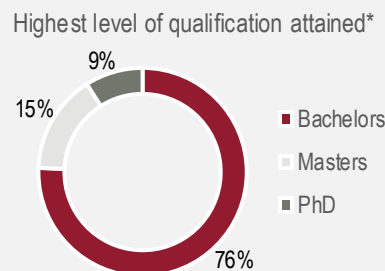
Successful applicants tend to be mid-career professionals with subject-matter expertise in high-demand areas in schools.



## Subject expertise in in-demand areas

There is a high level of diversity in tertiary degree fields, with applicant degrees ranging from Nanotechnology to Jewelry Manufacturing.

However, successful applicants tend to fill **teaching areas that address key subject specialisation gaps** principals identify as high need – particularly in rural / regional areas.



## The most common teaching areas of Nexus participants:



Science  
56% of participants



Health and physical  
education  
25% of participants



Humanities and Social  
Sciences (HASS)  
48% of participants



Mathematics  
21% of participants

*“Rural areas are struggling to retain teachers in technical studies, PE, home economics, physics, chemistry, and maths. Hard to get – kids aren’t choosing to do that at Uni.”*

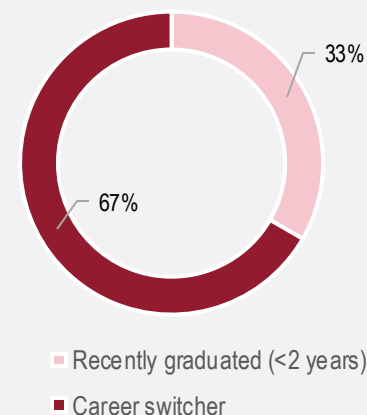
- Principal in a regional school



## High proportion of career switchers

The program captures a large proportion of **mid-career professionals** looking to transition to teaching – a key strength and point of difference for the program

All Nexus participants (2020-2022)\*



Principals value the approach and experience that career changers bring to complement the approach that recent graduates bring (which are more common in traditional ITE pathways).

*“Even experienced teachers can come in with an expectation that can be different from the way you operate. Career changers are more flexible - they can meet expectations in different contexts with their work experience.”*

- Principal at a regional school

\*Source: Nexus participant data 2020-2022  
Note: Some Nexus participants identify multiple teaching areas

# Successful applicants (2/2)

Successful applicants are aligned to the mission of the program, both in terms of the how Nexus selects for diversity, and participants' demonstrated passion for social justice.



## Participant diversity

All participants satisfy at least one of the Nexus target equity groups.\*

Participant characteristic	Proportion of participants (2020-2022)
Low SES background	34%
Women	47%
Non-English speaking background	12%
Has a disability	5%
From a rural area	21%
Indigenous	1%

Schools value participants who are from a low-SES background or from a rural area the most. They feel it helps participants better connect with students and is likely to result in higher retention (See page 85 for more information on retention).

[Compared to other alternative ITE pathways] *"Retention is higher for Nexus because things for them are more familiar."*

- Principal in a regional area



## Passion for social justice

Successful participants are **aligned to Nexus focus on social justice**, and most have demonstrated this commitment in the past

- 41% have professional / work experience in low SES schools
- 60% have volunteer experience in a low SES communities

During the first stage of recruitment, all applicants must include in their written response their passion for teaching and social justice. Participants feel that their experience is what makes them 'right' for Nexus over other options.

*"Nexus participants are super passionate about social justice, passionate about making an impact in the world, and have moral integrity. Most have life experience – lots had very successful careers before so it's impressive that they've sacrificed that."*

- Nexus alumnus

\*Source: Nexus participant data 2020-2022

# Benefits and challenges of recruitment process

The Nexus recruitment process captures its target participant cohort and involves schools in this process to better match participants to target schools. It faces some challenges with recruiting First Nations participants, and the challenges with completion rates could be improved with a wider pool of applicants.



## Targeted recruitment process

- Nexus successfully recruits from underrepresented cohorts. It is a requirement for participants to identify with one or more of those cohorts to participate.
- The program recruits candidates who have a clear passion for teaching, social justice, and solving education inequities. Participants almost always cite the program's focus on these elements as the catalytic reason for pursuing Nexus.



## Inclusion of principals

Nexus focuses on staffing 'economically, culturally diverse and hard-to-staff schools in Melbourne, regional and rural Victoria'. Given the diversity of these school contexts and the nuanced needs, the involvement of principals in this process better aligns candidates to those contexts. This may be less of a priority in a program that is aiming to staff schools that have some more homogenous qualities but is very effective for Nexus.

Direct benefits of this feature include:

- Principals highly value this feature, which increases principal and school buy-in, and school leadership is more motivated to see it succeed (like ensuring adequate support systems are in place).
- It fosters better principal understanding of program for school leadership.
- Participants will be better matched to the school they're placed at.
- Principals more likely to commit to employing them.

Principals are also beginning to recommend local community members to participate in Nexus.

*"Principals improve their chances of getting a good teacher by engaging with this program. It reduces chances of picking someone up not suited to the profession."*

- Principal at a low-SES school



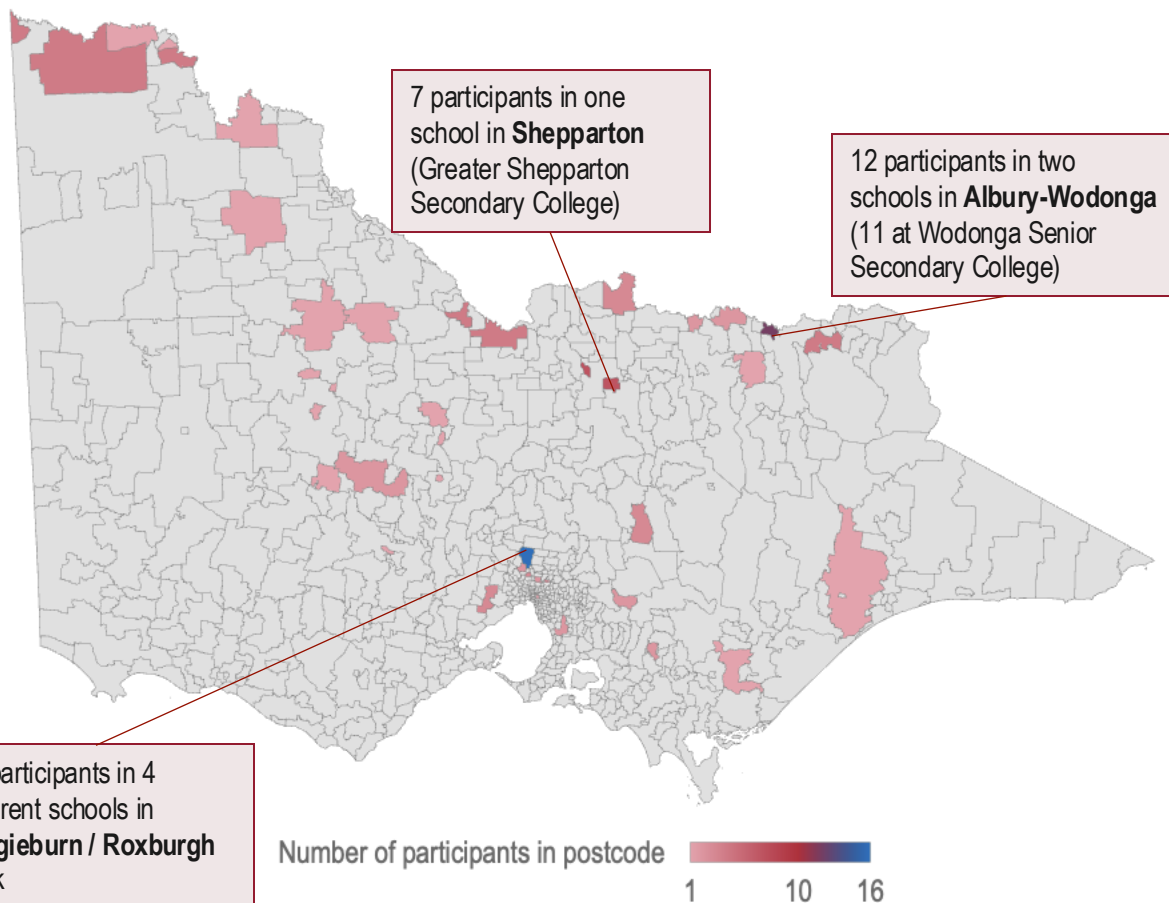
## Recruitment challenges

- It is moderately successful in recruiting participants who will transition to become an effective teacher. Participants who do transition to teaching appear to be effective and are well-regarded by their school communities (see pages 87-88, 93-94), however the program faces some challenges in completion rates (see page 84). Improving application numbers would be a helpful step in addressing this, as a higher pool will allow the program to be more selective and recruit applicants who have higher indicators of program completion likelihood.
- The program has struggled to recruit First Nations participants. La Trobe acknowledge this and continues to explore ways to encourage participation through consultation with First Nations groups.
- Tertiary completion rates are underrepresented in First Nations populations.
- Many First Nations peoples seeking education careers often secure roles as career education staff, which is typically paid more than a graduate teacher. La Trobe has identified this as a barrier, as it is hard to incentivise this cohort to engage in the program.

# Participant distribution

Nexus participants are spread across metro and regional Victoria, with a higher concentration of participants in some areas where La Trobe has made conscious efforts to cultivate Nexus 'hubs'.

Distribution of Nexus participants by postcode of 2020, 2021 and 2022 cohorts



In its first three cohorts (2020, 2021, 2022)  
Nexus placed:

**95 participants**

across **45 different schools**

in **37 different postcodes**

in **all four Victorian educational regions**

La Trobe is actively cultivating 'Nexus Hubs' with concentrated numbers of participants in select schools with strong connections to La Trobe.

The benefits of this approach include:

- Stronger participant peer networks
- Leveraging the strengths of schools who are effective hosts of Nexus participants to maximise impact

The objective of this approach is to improve retention through improved in-school experience for participants and stronger connections to the local communities.

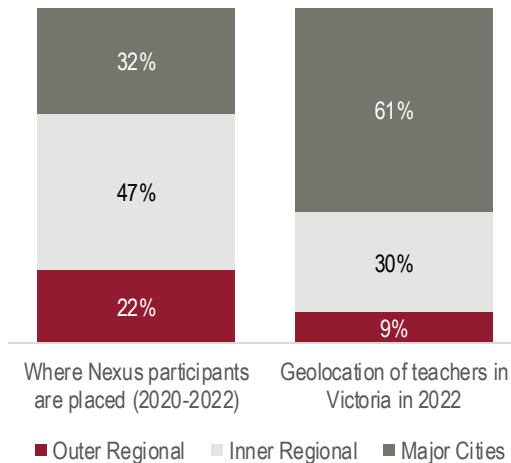
# Demographics of target schools

A large proportion of Nexus participants are placed in hard-to-staff schools, satisfying a key objective of both Nexus and the HAT Program.



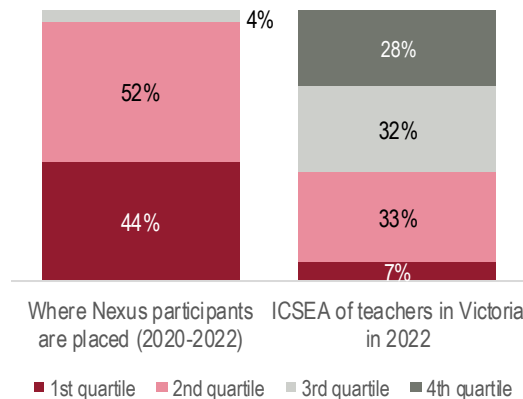
~Three quarters of Nexus participants are placed in regional schools

- 69% of Nexus participants are placed in regional schools, compared to 39% of all teachers in Australia.



Nexus participants are placed in the most disadvantaged schools in Victoria

- 96% of Nexus participants are placed in the bottom two ICSEA quartiles. In comparison, only 37% of all teachers in Victoria are in schools in the bottom two ICSEA<sup>1</sup> quartiles
  - No participants are placed in the top quartile.
  - Participants are over 7 times as likely to be in a highly disadvantaged school compared to typical teachers in Victoria<sup>2</sup>



Nexus participants are placed in culturally diverse schools with high needs

- Placement schools typically have:
  - High levels of cultural and ethnic diversity
  - High levels of students with specific support needs
  - Issues with teacher attraction and retention

[Placement school] "Has high level behaviours and incidents. Lots of trauma, and lots of issues. Kids are very complex. If you're coming to teach at this school, you need to be aware we are teaching with high level trauma, and you're going to need to be resilient and do things differently."

- Principal at a regional school

<sup>1</sup>ICSEA is the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage provides an indication of the socio-educational backgrounds of students. It is calculated on a basis of student factors (e.g. parents' occupation and education) and school factors (e.g. geographical location, proportion of Indigenous students). It was created by ACARA to enable fair comparisons of student cohorts across schools and is set at an average score of 1000. The 1<sup>st</sup> quartile represents the most disadvantaged schools, and the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile represents the most advantaged.

<sup>2</sup>Despite the 1<sup>st</sup> quartile accounting for 25% of schools, only 7% of teachers are placed there because they tend to have smaller student populations.

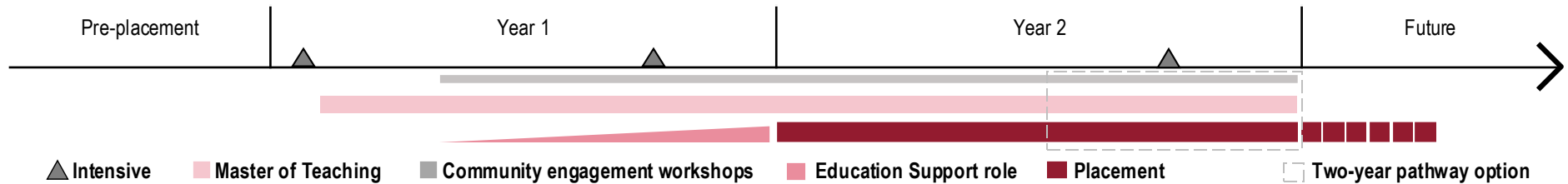
See Appendix 11 for a further breakdown of participant placement.



## 3.2 Nexus program components

# Learning components

Participants start the program with a Nexus intensive, then commence the Master of Teaching. La Trobe delivers Masters units throughout the program, alongside two additional Nexus intensives and fortnightly community engagement workshops.



**Learning components begin in the February, one week prior to the beginning of semester 1**

## 3 Nexus intensives

2-4 day intensives that include workshops linking to the broader aims and ethos of the program.

Content includes a focus on:

- Social justice
- Indigenous worldviews
- Trauma informed teaching

## Community engagement workshops

Fortnightly workshops are part of the community engagement series that supports teaching and learning in hard-to-staff schools. Speakers include representatives from:

- Banksia Gardens (disengaged youths)
- Islamic Museum
- Lighthouse (students with trauma background)

## Year 1 Masters

Professional practice includes 35 days of supervised placement in discipline specialisation.

Coursework units include:

- Designing and evaluating learning for all
- Digital literacies
- Framing identities and cultures
- Professional identity and ethics for educators
- Understanding learning, inclusion and differentiation

## Year 2 Masters

Professional practice includes 25 days of unsupervised placement embedded in paraprofessional work.

Coursework units include:

- Integrated curriculum: critical and creative thinking
- Integrated curriculum: sustainability
- Researching teacher impact
- Sustaining evidence-based practice
- Teaching for impact and inclusion
- Transitions and pedagogies: middle and senior school
- Understanding research for professional enquiry



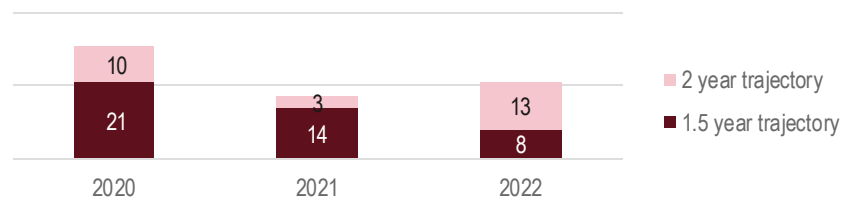
# School placement structure and optionality

Nexus is an 18-month program, though participants may choose to extend the academic element to 24 months.

Nexus was originally designed as an 18-month accelerated program to align with the accelerated Master of Teaching qualification that La Trobe offers. In this structure, participants complete 4 subjects per semester, with an additional 2 during each of the mid year holidays and Christmas holidays of the first year.

During the first year of the program in 2020, some participants expressed that they were struggling with the workload, largely due to the difficulties of navigating the program during the onset of COVID-19. Nexus responded by offering participants to switch to a 24-month option (though participants will still enter the paraprofessional role at the start of their second year).

Number of participants who pursue program trajectories\*



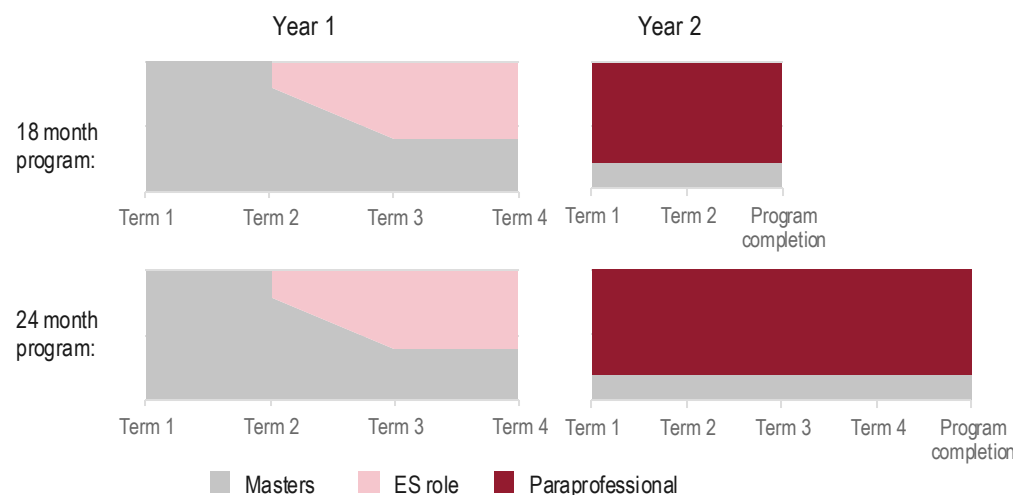
## Benefits of this optionality:

- Widens the pool of potential participants who would be attracted to the program
- Participants can better pick a structure that suits their needs, particularly in terms of workload and level of comfort and confidence before undertaking a paraprofessional teaching role
- Allows the program to respond to participant needs rather than locking a participant into a structure

In both options, participants begin their journeys focusing on the academic elements and gradually shift focus to the classroom. This effectively mitigates heavy workload.

The program is specifically designed to introduce participants to the classroom with a reduced workload and gradually build up capability before transitioning to a 0.8 FTE paraprofessional role at the start of year 2.

The program is designed this way to provide a more manageable workload for participants when transitioning to the classroom.



There are inherent significant workload commitments that all early career teachers / alternative ITE students undertake in the early months of teaching which can create significant workload (e.g. navigating schooling systems / protocols). **This structure facilitates a more manageable and balanced workload.**

\*Source: Nexus Status reports (2021-2023)

# Intensives

Intensives are a key point of difference of the Nexus program that traditional pathways do not offer. Nexus's pre-placement intensives are the most valuable component of the program to inform a participant's teaching practice due to how practical the content is for the classroom.

## Participants find the main benefit of the intensives is that the content is directly applicable to the classroom:

- Intensives cover tools and tasks that will be necessary in the classroom.
- They cover priority content that participants are most concerned about, including:
  - Dealing with difficult behaviour
  - Classroom management
  - Navigating school systems
- Participants reflected that the intensives demonstrate the practical application of theoretical teaching concepts.

**These benefits are a point of difference when compared to traditional ITE pathways**

## Intensives contain valuable additional content that isn't covered in the traditional Masters pathway

- Intensives are taught by academic staff who have a specialisation in diversity and inclusion.
- They contain a lot of modern pedagogy that is not in the Masters, such as:
  - Cultural competency training
  - Trauma-informed care
- Teaching staff and leaders recognise that participants enter schools with the supplementary knowledge that they are unfamiliar with but is valuable. Teaching staff can then apply this in their own teaching.

*"Other teachers at my older low socio-economic school would ask 'what resources are you using, why are you doing it this way' because the teachers didn't have that in their toolkit."*

- Nexus alumnus

## Intensives provide an opportunity to develop relationships with peers and Nexus staff

Participants can:

- Network with one another and connect with participants who will be placed in their area or school.
- Develop a sense of belonging within the cohort, which is useful later in their teaching when they need to seek support from peers.
- Seek direct engagement and develop relationship building with program managers and officers.

*"[The intensive] got me pumped up to become a teacher]"*

- Nexus alumnus

## Consideration for Nexus:

The above insights are drawn from interviews with Nexus alumni and participants, and qualitative comments from surveys collected by La Trobe. La Trobe should consider implementing quantitative data collection. This will provide La Trobe with more understanding of the specific strengths and areas for improvement of intensives through targeted quantitative feedback from participants.

# Integrating the Master of Teaching

The Master of Teaching relies heavily on academic theory and has reasonably demanding coursework due to regulatory requirements. Nexus is taking considerable efforts to address this through both its original programmatic design and iterative changes to improve its integration into this model.

Challenges with the Master of Teaching	Implication if unaddressed	Design features that address this	Key changes that La Trobe has made to address this	The impact of these changes
It is heavily theory-based. While valuable, participants reflect that it isn't as useful in a Nexus context, as practical application of those skills are in greater demand.	Participants cannot directly apply what they are learning and rely on other sources to inform their teaching practice in schools.	<p>Providing intensives, which include content covered in the Masters, but presented in a way that allows for more practical application in the classroom.</p> <p>The gradual introduction into the classroom, which allows participants to front-load their theoretical knowledge before practically applying it when they come to teach in their second year.</p>	<p>La Trobe has made efforts to adjust or tailor the Masters experience to better suit the program structure of a Nexus participant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants receive automatic extensions on assignments.</li> <li>Nexus staff have made arrangements with Masters subject coordinators to make assignments more tailored towards the experience of Nexus participants. For example, if a Masters student was tasked to develop teaching materials, Nexus participants may be able to reflect on their experiences doing this already rather than producing materials from scratch that might not be applicable in their school-based role.</li> <li>Nexus staff are also assessing the work that participants do in schools and exploring if it can be recognised and credited to the Masters. (This is currently in development).</li> </ul>	<p>These design features and iterations have been recognised and well-received by participants, and as a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some issues with the relevance of the Masters content remain, but</li> <li>the workload of the Nexus program is manageable for most participants and in most circumstances.</li> </ul>
The Masters can create a high workload for participants given their concurrent teaching.	Some participants may struggle to keep up with the workload, resulting in higher rates of program attrition.	<p>Providing a high level of support for participants through school-based and Nexus-based support, and cultivating a strong peer network.</p>	<p>Providing the option for participants to switch to a 24-month Masters structure.</p>	<p>There are significant regulatory requirements that Nexus must adhere to in order to remain accredited. Nexus is consistently and very proactively exploring ways to navigate this, but it does mean the issues in integrating the Masters are likely to persist.</p>

# Education support role

The education support role is an effective first step for participants to integrate into the classroom.

Participants are placed in schools as education support (ES) Class Level 1 Range 1 during Terms 2-4 in their first year. This role involves performance of routine tasks under direction of teachers, such as administrative activities, coordination of planning tasks, or providing physical and emotional care for students.\*

## Benefits of role for participants

**Staff and students have visibility of the participant** and have developed relationships with them before they begin teaching.

## Participants develop non-teaching knowledge and skills.

Skills like navigating the school and school-specific processes and protocols generally can't be learned through the Masters or intensives and must be learned on campus.

It is a **comfortable introduction to the classroom** for participants. The gradual introduction is a less intimidating and stressful way than going straight into a teaching role.

Participants can **learn through observation** of different teaching styles and strategies that they can adapt for their own pedagogy / context.

Starting with an ES role means that participants can **focus more on the Masters for the first semester** which can be helpful to manage their workload / adjust to studying.

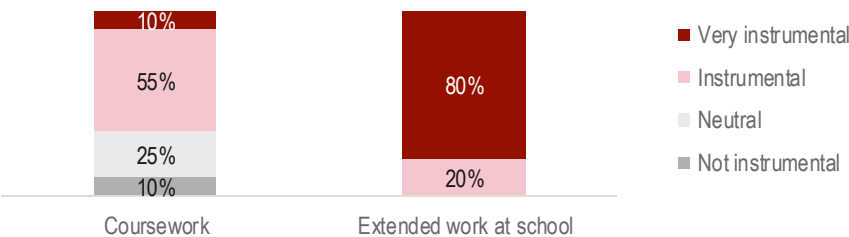
## Benefits for schools

The **role is quite flexible** and can slot into areas that the school needs. During COVID-19, this involved calling parents, helping teachers with tech etc.

As a result, participants feel confident and prepared to teach, though there is some uncertainty about the role's parameters.

Participants heavily attribute their classroom readiness to classroom experience they have – more so than the Master of Teaching.

Participant perceptions of how instrumental program elements are for building their confidence in teaching\*\*



## There is some confusion with school staff on the expectations of this role.

Unlike a full-time education support worker, the objective of this role is to develop broader teaching skills with the intention of transitioning into a full-time teaching role. In this context, staff can be unclear in areas of reasonable expectation and task setting, which is causing some participants to question their understanding of role expectations.

## Consideration for Nexus

Nexus should provide clearer communication of role parameters and expectations to schools – especially to staff who will be engaging with participants in the classroom during this stage.

\*Taken from 'Participant Preparedness Survey' of Cohorts 2020 and 2021 at the end of the program.

\*\*Description and example tasks taken from Department of Education Victoria Policy and Guidelines.

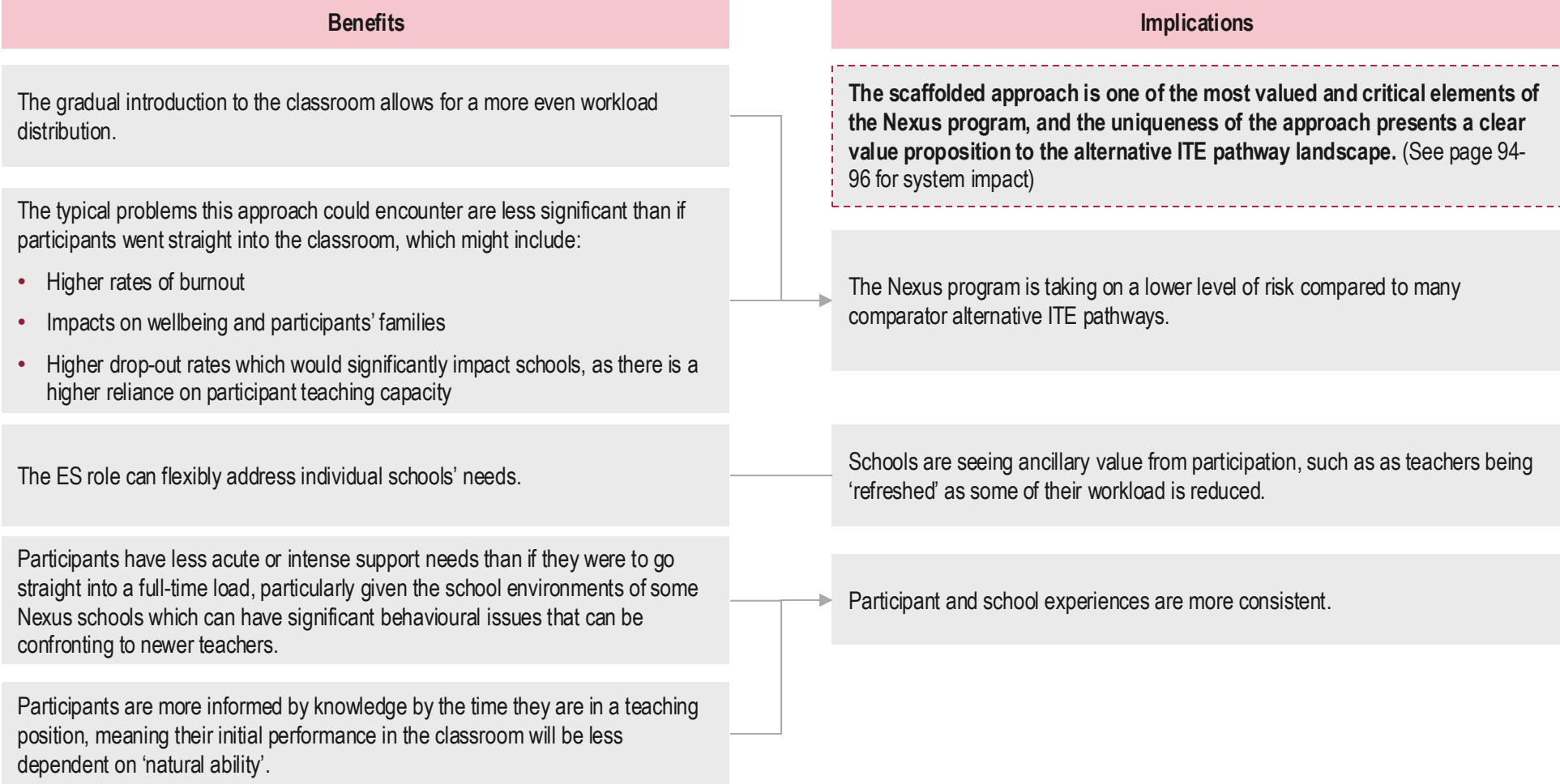
# Learning through classroom teaching

Although engaging in significant classroom teaching prior to completion of the Masters brings some challenges, these do not outweigh the costs and this structure is seen as effective and highly valued in preparing participants for full-time teaching roles.

	Effects of learning through classroom teaching	Implications
Positive	<p>Participants can accelerate their teaching practice development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can immediately apply their theoretical learnings into the classroom.</li> <li>• Many participants are attracted to the profession for the classroom environment and interactions with students. This approach enables this to occur sooner than traditional pathways.</li> <li>• Participants reach a level of teaching confidence sooner into their degree compared to a traditional pathway</li> </ul>	<p>This is a key objective of the HAT Program, Nexus, and Victoria's ITE strategy. It is the primary benefit of alternative mid-career pathways compared to traditional pathways.</p> <p><i>"The Nexus program was pivotal to my confidence stepping into the classroom as a graduate teacher. I feel like I have been given a head start in my career."</i></p> <p>- Nexus participant</p>
	Participants get to earn a wage from the start.	This is one of the flagship features of the program, and a key attractive feature for the target participant cohort.
	Participants will graduate with significantly more teaching skills and experience than a traditional graduate teacher.	Highly valued by schools and participants.
	Schools are more likely to offer high salaries upon graduation given the experience they have.	This improves retention rates in placement schools post-program, and retention in teaching more broadly.
Challenging	Success is more dependent on factors outside of the program, such as natural ability and the resilience of participants.	This can result in more varied experiences (particularly early on), but programmatic features like robust participant and school support will mitigate this effect.
	Participants will not be equipped with the full suite of Masters content by the time they begin classroom teaching.	The life and career experience of the target participant cohort is well-suited to learning on the job, and typically find that the full suite of Masters content is 'nice to have', but not as valuable as the learnings through practical teaching.
	Participants typically need a higher level of immediate support during their early weeks of classroom teaching compared to the early weeks of a graduate teacher. This places additional time and resource burden on schools.	This period of intense support is relatively short, and the support needed consistently drops week after week. In many cases, participants need less support and oversight 12 months in compared to graduate teachers.
	Schools see reduced immediate teaching effectiveness compared to a graduate teacher, particularly in a participant's early weeks.	Participants are quick to 'catch up', schools are willing to make this investment to see benefits down the line.

# Positive implications of the scaffolded approach

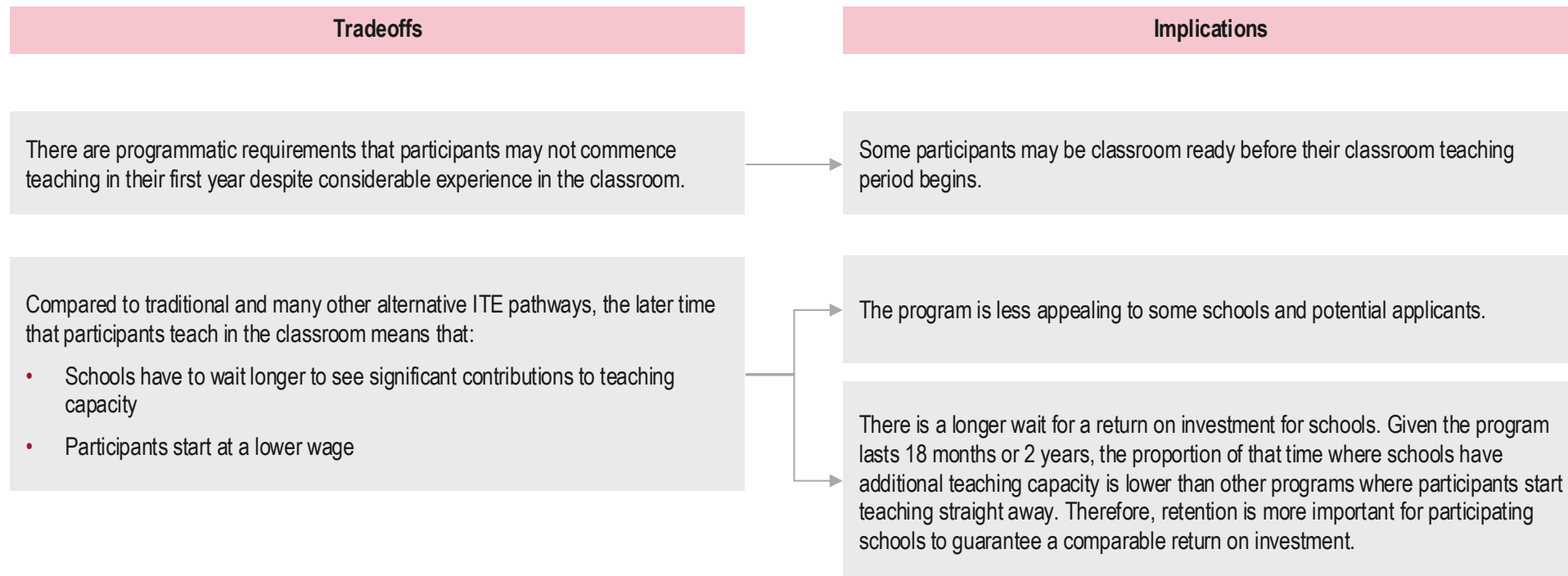
The scaffolded approach to learning is an effective and valued design feature to prepare teachers for the classroom. It mitigates the risks of work placement that other pathways may face and is well-suited to the type of participant that Nexus targets.



In some schools, the Nexus approach to support is influencing their own approaches to introducing other early-career teachers to the classroom (both within and outside Nexus).

# Tradeoffs of the scaffolded approach

The scaffolded approach has some limitations, but overall is an appropriately designed and effective approach as it aligns with Nexus's objectives and target recruitment cohort.



**In our assessment, the benefits outweigh the tradeoffs.** The scaffolded approach is an appropriate and effective structure for Nexus, given its target recruitment cohort, objectives of developing holistic teachers (rather than delivery teaching capacity), and provides a unique model for the alternative ITE knowledge base.

# Participant support – Design

La Trobe has designed holistic wraparound support for participants through a classroom mentor and program leaders, who provide flexible support.



## Classroom mentor

### Who they are

An experienced teacher at the placement school, often with previous mentoring support and capacity to provide support, observation and professional development

### What support they typically provide

- Feedback on teaching practice
- Observation
- Advice on school-based questions (like navigating placement school systems)
- Strategies to manage workload
- General wellbeing support

### When they provide it

- During classroom observations
- Weekly sessions
- Ad-hoc support
- Reaching out with concerns or questions to other staff members on behalf of the participant

### What they require to deliver this support

- Capacity – mentors given dedicated time to provide support
- Guidance and resources from La Trobe
- Strong and trusting relationships with participants



## Program leaders

### Who they are

La Trobe education professors who run and manage the Nexus program

### What support they typically provide

- Pedagogy
- General wellbeing support
- Information about the program and programmatic elements and expectations around pay and teaching hours
- Any other support that participants can't receive from their classroom mentor

### When they provide it

- Typically ad-hoc, at the request of participants
- During intensives and other Nexus events

### What they require to deliver this support

- Visibility of the issue through communication with participant
- Strong and trusting relationships with participants

*"I could go to the Nexus side for everything – pedagogy, emotional support, academic."*

- Nexus alumnus



## Peers

### Who they are

- Peer Nexus participants
  - In the school
  - In the region
  - In broader Nexus network
- Peer teachers at their placement school

### What support they provide

- General wellbeing support
- Reflective practice and general advice on practice

### When they provide it

- Ad-hoc

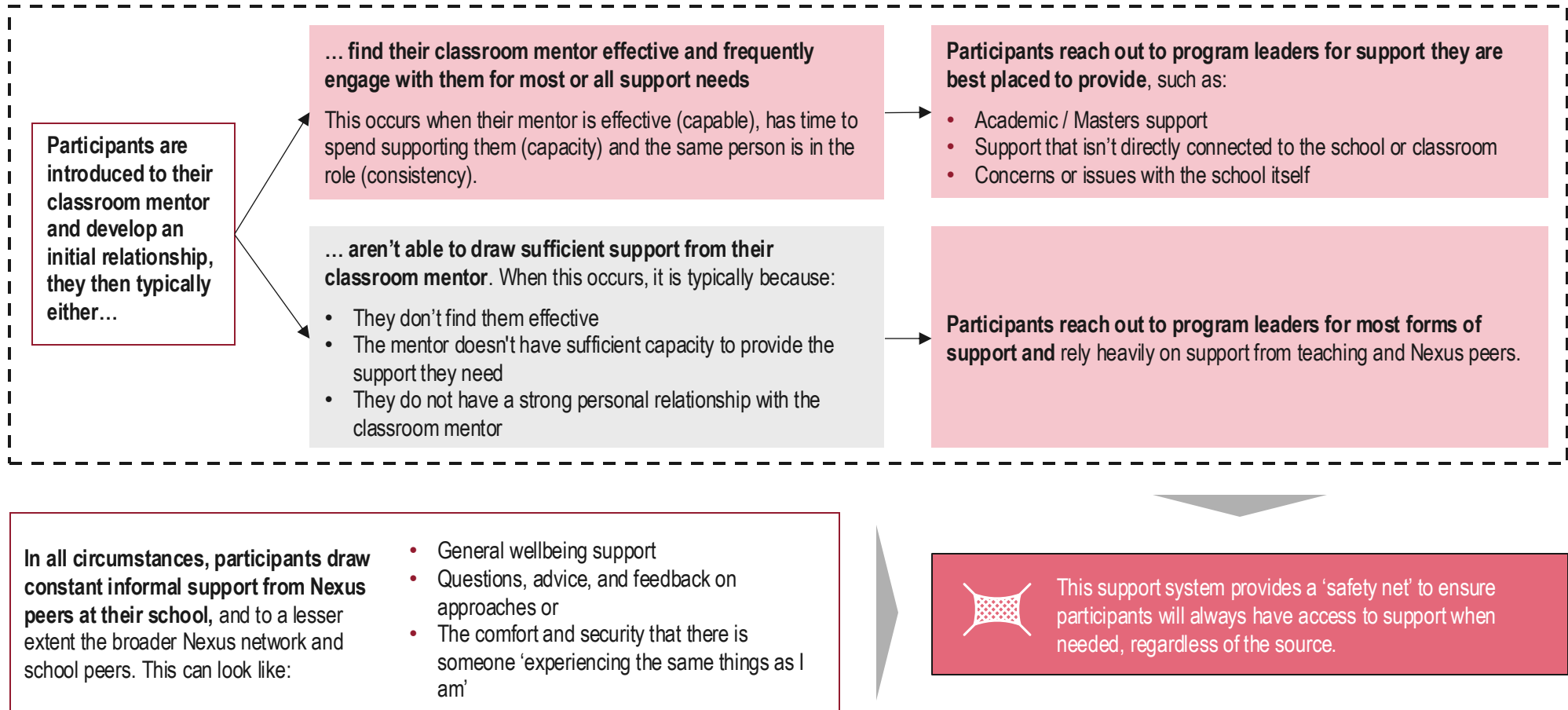
### What they require to deliver this support

- More than one Nexus participant at a school
- Strong relationships with each other





# Participant support – Implementation

Participants typically develop a strong relationship with their school-based classroom mentor and peers for most support needs. If this isn't possible, Nexus leadership is able to effectively address those support needs to increase the chance that participants will receive sufficient support.



## Legend:

 Participant feels supported

 Participant doesn't feel supported

Source: Alumni interviews

# Participant support – Effectiveness

Participants are very well supported in Nexus, both in terms of the level of support they receive and the breadth of issues that can be addressed. The ‘guarantee’ of effective support from program leaders is the driving force behind the support system’s effectiveness.

**The ‘safety net’ system is effectively supporting participants, and a well-designed way of ensuring participant support considering Nexus’s scale and size.**

In most cases participants find classroom mentors effective, but only if they have all of the the following qualities

- **Competency** – if they have the skillset and attitude to be a good mentor.
- **Capacity** – If they have sufficient time allocated and minimal competing priorities to observe participant teaching practice, deliver support, and prepare support materials.
- **Consistency** – If the same person is in the role for a significant amount of time during a participant’s placement. Participants shared that even if they found a classroom mentor effective and had a good personal relationship, they still found it difficult to establish a good mentor-mentee relationship if there wasn’t stability in the role.

**Participants always find support from program leadership effective**

- They consistently satisfy the above criteria.
- They have knowledge of both the Masters and the Nexus perspectives, as they are both the education provider and responsible for delivery.
- They provided acute and flexible support during COVID-19 and remote teaching periods, which were particularly challenging for regional teachers.
- Program leadership cultivates strong relationships with participants to enable this support, and all participants we spoke to felt a strong sense of trust with leadership.

**Overall, this support structure is operating as intended and effective because:**

1. The program is relatively small and operates in a single jurisdiction
2. Problems can be addressed centrally, and program leadership has better visibility of issues.
3. It is unlikely that the needs of a participant will ‘slip through the cracks’

**Participants overwhelmingly cite the support provided by the Nexus leadership team as the key strength of the program, and it has likely improved program completion rates.**

*“The Nexus team have been reliable and proactive when assistance is required and collaborate with my school consistently. The Nexus program and staff have made my experience of a Master degree comfortable and I feel confident entering into my career as a paraprofessional as a result.”*

- Nexus alumnus

*“The most helpful element of the program was having the 3 main Nexus people contactable. There was always someone available to answer questions.”*

- Nexus alumnus

## Consideration for Nexus

Robust quantitative data is not available to capture participant feedback on support elements, though qualitative feedback in interviews and La Trobe administered surveys mention support most frequently as the primary strength of the program.

La Trobe should strengthen its data capture to understand how widespread these sentiments are, and specifically what kinds of support they find most needed and valuable.

# Support for schools

Several schools require support to host a Nexus participant given the unique structure and support enablers for success. Participants who are placed in schools that have a strong understanding of Nexus typically have better experiences.

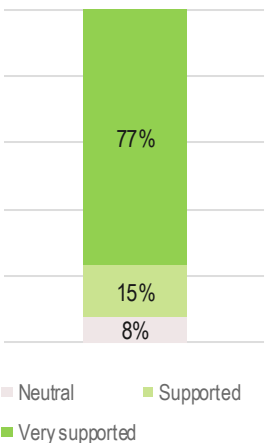
## How schools are supported:

- Significant guidance and training for mentors. The level of support provided here is very high compared to both traditional ITE and other alternative pathways.
- Provided information on expectations and structure of the model. In earlier years of the program's life some participants felt that schools didn't understand the model, but La Trobe's efforts to address this have been effective.
  - This is particularly important for Nexus, as its model is unique (even within alternative ITE pathways) so school staff and leadership need guidance.
- Nexus's commitment to a partnership model with schools and bringing them along for the journey.
  - Schools are involved from the recruitment process stage.
  - Nexus staff aim to involve school leadership in conflict resolution and all other issues where appropriate.
  - Direct communication with program officers.
    - A clear point of contact / team they can go to for questions.

## Impacts of effective support for schools

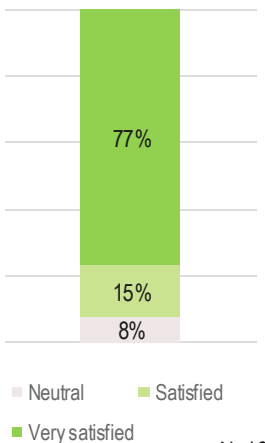
- Schools have a better understanding of Nexus and can support / host Nexus participants better e.g.
  - Better induction process
  - Offering better support
    - Maintaining high quality of mentor
- Effective support for schools has flow on effects to participants:
  - Transition into the school better, making them more familiar with the school system.
  - Participants feel more confident to teach at their school / feel more part of the school community.
  - This can contribute to higher retention at placement schools.

Principal perception of support from Nexus staff



No principals said they were 'unsupported' or 'very unsupported'

Satisfaction with Nexus resolving issues\*



No principals said they were 'not satisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'

N=13

## Consideration for Nexus

The effectiveness of schools' roles as hosts and sources of support for participants varies significantly across schools, and some schools have developed effective processes and staff understanding on how to best engage with the program and support participants, so all parties extract high value from participating. La Trobe should codify and proliferate these approaches to all schools.

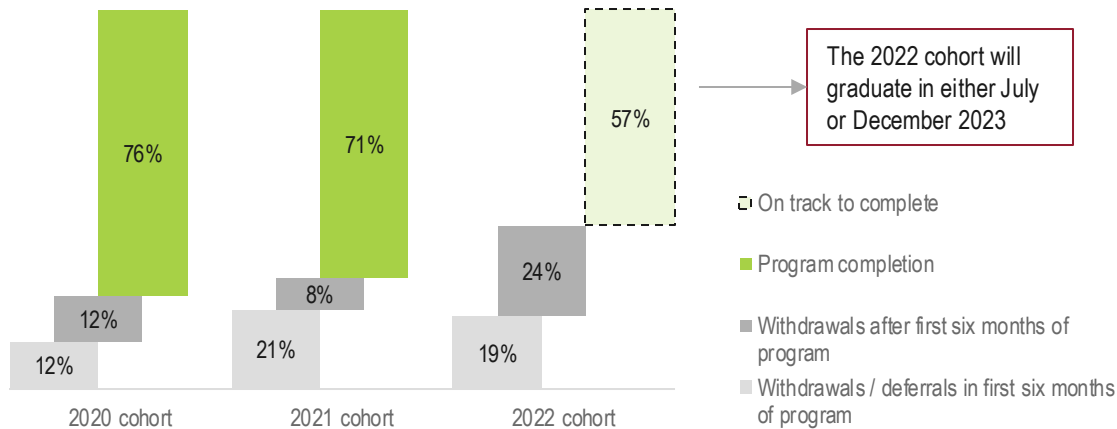
\*Source: Nexus school satisfaction surveys, 2020-2022

## 3.3 Nexus program completion and retention

# Participant completion

Participant completion rates were competitive with rates of traditional ITE pathways in the first two cohorts, although the most recent cohort experienced higher attrition. Of participants that withdraw, half transition to the mainstream Masters program at La Trobe.

Nexus completions / withdrawals as a proportion of starting cohort size<sup>1</sup>



The average completion rate during the first two cohorts (74%) was comparable with average completion rates in tertiary programs for education<sup>2</sup>. However, the 2022 cohort is on track to have a lower completion rate. Insufficient data is available to determine the cause of this.

Despite this, there are some positive implications of Nexus completion information:

- Approximately half of participants who withdraw from the program transition into the mainstream Masters of Teaching cohort. A small number also defer. These participants are withdrawing from this program but remain on the pathway to becoming teachers, with Nexus providing a gateway into teaching.
- Participants who do withdraw, tend to do so earlier in their ITE journey compared to mainstream participants, who may have to wait until they have completed their studies and enter the classroom to realise that teaching isn't for them.

Although data is limited, there are indications that the two primary reasons participants withdraw are that:

1. The environment of placement schools can be confronting and difficult for some participants to navigate. This can be due to:
  - Difficulties handling challenging student behaviour, or
  - Difficulties for some participants to live so far away from family.
2. They are passionate about teaching but would be more suited to a mainstream Masters program. Some participating principals felt this was more likely to occur with younger participants.

*"One (of our Nexus participants) got an extension for this year as he's not ready to take his classes on his own yet. But it's not that he's not suitable, he just needs more time. He's moved on to the traditional teaching Master's."*

- Principal

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>Nexus applicant data, Nexus status reports 2021-2023

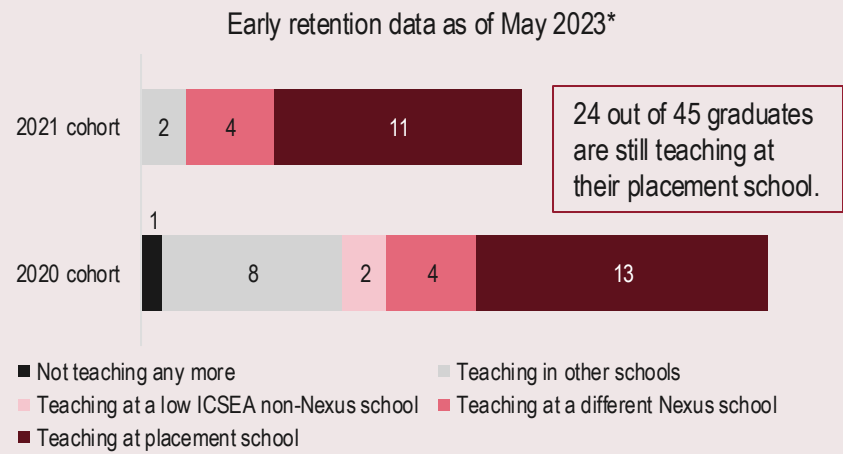
<sup>2</sup>Completion rates for Bachelor degrees in teacher education in Australia in 2021 was 64% for those who commenced since 2013 according to 'Completion Rates of Higher Education Students – Cohort Analysis, 2005-2021' – The Australian Department of Education. Postgraduate rates are typically higher, with an average 78% completion rate across all fields according to the ITE Data Report 2019.

# Participant retention

We are unable to determine the long-term retention of Nexus participants due to the infancy of the program. Early data indicates that alumni intend to stay in the teaching profession in the medium term and are more likely to stay in regional and / or disadvantaged schools.

## Early retention data for the first two cohorts is positive:

- Most Nexus participants remain at their schools after the program, with 53% still teaching at their placement school.
- Only one graduate has left the teaching field.
- 71% are teaching at a school that hosts Nexus students. This may be because of one or more of the following:
  - Schools that host Nexus participants value Nexus graduates as teachers
  - Nexus graduates value the workplaces that Nexus-hosting schools provide
  - There are communication channels between schools and Nexus participants / graduates
  - La Trobe’s efforts to cultivate Nexus ‘hubs’ are working well



## There are indications that graduates intend to have long teaching careers

- Anecdotally, all participants we consulted have strong intentions to remain in teaching.
- The high level of alignment with the focus on social justice and passion for teaching, achieved through Nexus recruitment process.
- Principals have broadly reflected that they feel more confident Nexus participants will remain in teaching compared to typical traditional ITE pathway graduates, and attribute this to a stronger perception of drive and enthusiasm they sense from participants.

## Participants in Nexus specifically may be more likely to stay regionally because:

- There is less of a culture shock moving into regional areas, with a lot of participants coming from Victoria and / or regional areas themselves.
- Nexus tries to recruit for people who live in the local region.
- Participants are primarily from Victoria, and value the ability to easily visit friends and family.
- They are a tight-knit and smaller cohort – they form a strong sense of community with one another, making it easier to stay in the region due to the support networks they have built.

### 3.1.4 Nexus participant effectiveness

# Participant effectiveness

It's too early to tell how effective Nexus graduates are, though there are positive indications. Improved data collection practices would help to understand how effective they are and identify common areas of strength.

## Early principal feedback indicates that graduates will become effective teachers...

Principal ratings of Nexus participants against the AITSL teaching standards (out of 5) are promising, especially considering these surveys are taken prior to graduation.

Engaging in professional learning (outside of Masters degree / program elements)	4.63	Planning and implementing effective learning	4.12
Engaging professionally with colleagues, parents / carers and the wider community	4.53	Content knowledge and how to teach it	4.00
Assessing, providing feedback and reporting on student learning	4.16	Understanding of how students learn	3.85

Principals often attribute strengths in the areas with higher ratings to participants' enthusiastic and proactive attitudes, and career experience / older age when compared to graduate teachers.

## ... but it is too early to determine the level of effectiveness.

### Consideration for Nexus

Strong data and data collection processes will enable better understanding of program effectiveness and should be established and maintained early in the program's life to ensure key metrics are being tracked.

Current data collection methods have limitations. For example, the principal survey data collected from surveys administered by La Trobe could be improved in some areas:

- It has low response rates with an overrepresentation of principals who consistently respond.
- Survey design could be more granular, as the AITSL teaching standards can encompass multiple skills (for example, asking about 'content knowledge *and* how to teach it').

Nexus should consider investing in strengthened survey collection processes and encourage higher response rates.



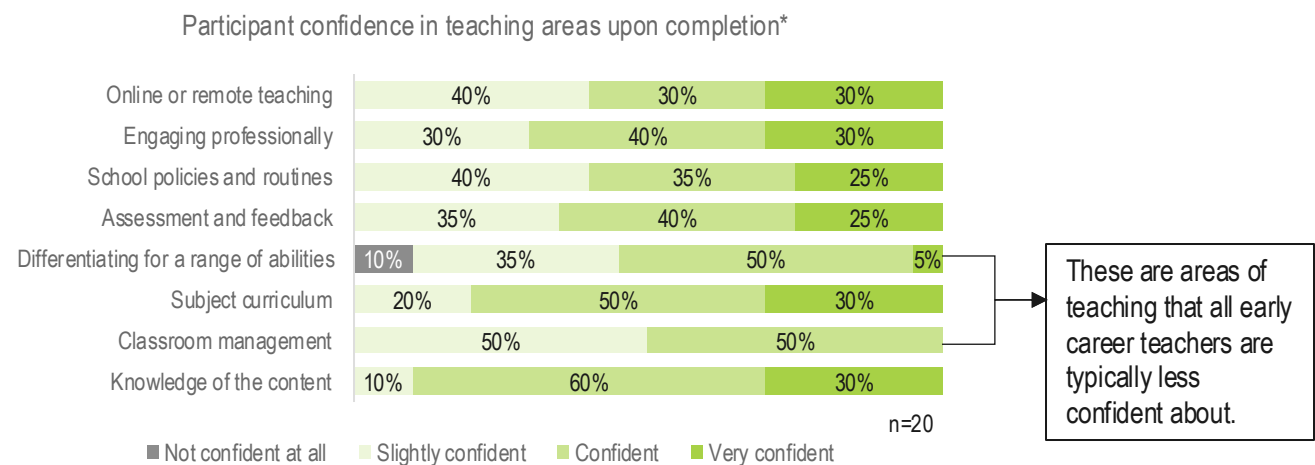
# Accelerated pathway to effectiveness

In most instances, participants reach a level of effectiveness comparable to an early career teacher in their second year of the program. This is a key strength of Nexus and similar alternative pathways.

While the level of teacher effectiveness is difficult to determine, it is clear that Nexus participants who graduate the program do so at a level of effectiveness and classroom preparedness higher than a graduate teacher in a mainstream pathway.

Every participant / alumnus we consulted felt confident that this was the case...

... as did principals.



(On the value of the program) *“With Nexus, it’s the 1-2 years of experience in the classroom, so you’re getting a high-quality graduate.”*  
- Principal

*“My partner is on a traditional teaching pathway, and he doesn’t put stuff on compass, his mentor does that. He doesn’t do things like calling parents and developing those skills. There’s all this admin stuff that we got to experience because we were paraprofessionals that other learning teachers don’t do.”*  
- Nexus alumnus

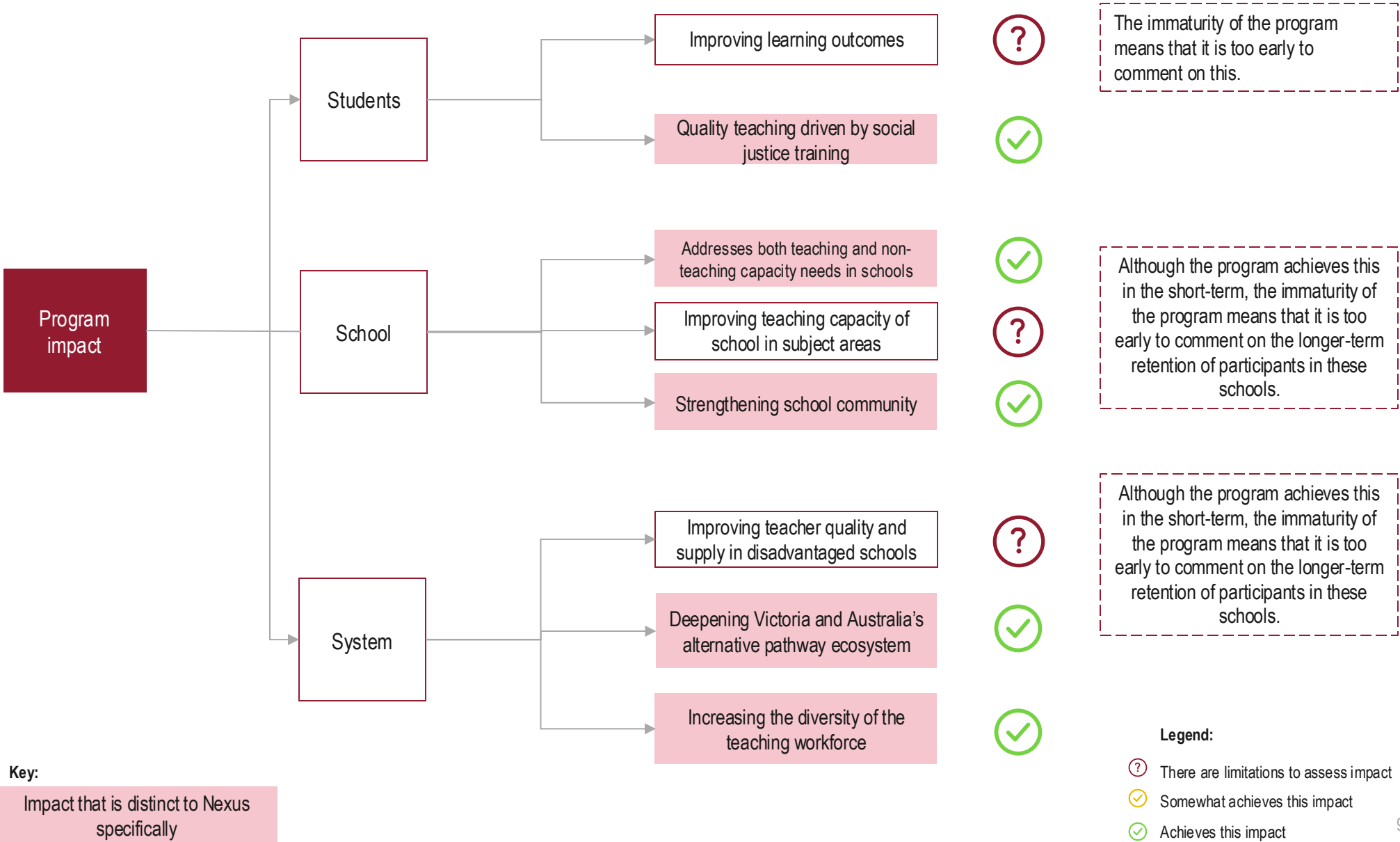
*“When Nexus students graduate, they are streets ahead of a graduate teacher.”*  
- Principal

\*Taken from La Trobe’s ‘Participant Preparedness Survey’ of Cohorts 2020 and 2021 at the end of the program. The sample size was small, but aligns with interview findings with participants / alumni, who often mentioned classroom management and differentiating teaching as challenges.

## 3.5 Nexus program impact

# Program impact overview

Nexus participants can have a positive impact on their students, the school, and the broader education system.




# Participant impact on students

Though there are limitations on determining student impact, there are indicators that Nexus participants and graduates are providing positive impacts for students.

**Understanding the extent of student impact isn't yet possible given how young the program is. However, there are positive indicators:**

 **Schools feel that the contribution Nexus brings to schools is distinctive compared to other ITE pathways, and is likely to translate to positive student outcomes.**

- Those that have previous life and work experience bring a level of expertise and real-world knowledge that schools value.
  - Participants and participating school leadership feel that they can connect to students quicker than typical graduate teachers.
  - Their expertise can improve the quality of teaching materials / resources.
- Their enthusiasm is felt by students and can contribute to a more engaging classroom environment.

 **Their passion and enthusiasm for social justice can be felt by staff and can manifest into activities that foster the same enthusiasm in students.**

One alumnus reflected that she organised activities to build student cultural awareness, including museum visits and working collaboratively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

 **Their trauma informed training equips them to better deal with increasingly complex needs in the classroom.**

This is particularly valuable in Nexus's target schools in regional areas or hard-to-staff schools:

- Students in these areas more commonly face complex non-academic issues
- Access to these skillsets is less available inside and outside school

*"Students not only get energetic teaching from the participants, but also from the refreshment that existing staff get by having someone else to contribute."*

- Principal at a regional school

## Consideration for Nexus:

We are limited in what we can say about impact on students, primarily because the program is too new to properly evaluate the impact.

La Trobe should consider exploring implementing evaluation mechanisms to understand the impact that participants have on students. This could include:

- 'Light touch' baseline and endline surveys for schools, staff, and / or students at the beginning and end of a participant's paraprofessional role
- Improved principal or mentor survey instruments that directly address perceptions of impact on students

# Participant impact on schools

Although Nexus is new, schools are already enjoying positive impacts from the program, which bring distinct value compared to mainstream and other alternative ITE pathways.



## Contributing teaching and support role capacity in difficult-to-staff contexts

As some schools face historic issues in filling and retaining their teaching workforce, the teaching capacity that Nexus participants provide is the most valued aspect of the program from schools' perspectives.

Nexus is providing distinctive impact, such as:

- Focusing placement in regional and disadvantaged schools, which are hard to staff and face considerable teacher turnover.
- The ES role allows for more flexible, school-specific contributions.

*"Recruitment is the problem for us. Retention is not an issue if you have a good school culture. There's just not enough teachers to begin with."*

- Principal at a regional school



## Re-energising enthusiasm and passion for teaching

Nexus participants bring notably positive attitudes and considerable energy, which has positive impacts for both staff and students.

One principal shared that Nexus participants re-energised their staff in two ways:

- Having energy and enthusiasm for teaching that is infectious.
- In their ES role, participants were able to relieve some of the workload of teachers who were facing burnout. These teachers had more 'breathing room', which also re-energised them.

*"Students not only get energetic teaching from the participants, but also from the refreshment that existing staff get by having someone else to contribute."*

- Principal at a regional school



## Broadening the expertise of schools

Nexus participants bring distinctive expertise:

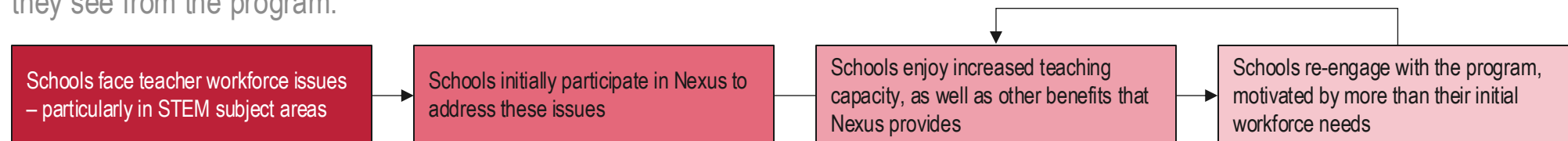
- Life and professional career experience, which can add value in two main ways:
  - The ability to create or augment teaching and learning materials, which can improve the level of quality of their resources and student's learning.
  - Being able to better demonstrate to students the real-world application of teaching subject content.
- Social justice experience and training can mean classrooms are more culturally safe and inclusive for students.

*"Nexus participants have purposely chosen teaching and have life experience. This enhances the relationships with the kids and what they can offer compared to someone younger who hasn't had as much."*

- Principal at a regional school

# School participation

Schools initially participate in the program to address the shortage of teachers given the current teacher workforce environment. Schools continue to engage in the program to both address the teaching workforce shortage, and because of the other benefits they see from the program.



**There are indications that schools initially participate to address their immediate teaching workforce needs, though data should be consistently collected to better understand principals' motivation.**

Nexus is attractive to schools because:

- It helps to address teacher shortages in RRR areas e.g., mathematics and science.
- It provides access to high-performing people with demonstrated academic success, high level of enthusiasm and dedication to teaching.
- It provides access to high quality teaching, contemporary pedagogy, and lived experience.

## Consideration for La Trobe:

The above insights were drawn from consultation with schools. We understand that La Trobe does not collect information on principals' reasons for engaging with Nexus in the first place, only the benefits to participating after they already have engaged when they are familiar with the experience. La Trobe should aim to collect this info, to inform their engagement processes to make sure the program is appealing to principals and schools who might not know the unique value that the program offers.

**Schools see positive outcomes beyond their initial objectives for participating, which encourages continued participation. Many of these benefits are specific to Nexus:**

- Access to teachers who have a key focus on diversity and inclusion in their teaching practice.
- Developing a leadership pipeline is particularly important for regional / remote schools, and some participating schools have felt that Nexus participants are typically more likely to be suitable for future leadership roles (though the youth of the program means the actual conversion to leadership roles can't be known).
- There is more programmatic support provided to participants, so they are 'less burdensome to manage' compared to a grad teacher where the onus of support falls largely on the school.
- The ES role provides work capacity that schools can flexibly use for non-classroom teaching work, such as assisting teachers in developing class materials.

# Jurisdiction participation

The Nexus program aligns with and contributes to Victoria's efforts and investment in cultivating a pipeline of high-quality teachers.

Victoria's Excellence in Teacher Education reforms aim to:

- improve the quality of initial teacher education (ITE)
- improve support and development for teachers early in their careers
- increase the status of the teaching profession

Within this, Victoria has committed to developing and promoting high-quality alternative pathways to teaching through **four key areas of reform**:



**Nexus contributes to all four areas of reform, making the program a valuable contribution to Victoria's ITE ecosystem.**

1

Raise the quality of teaching and the status of the profession through a robust approach to selection into initial teacher education.

Nexus attracts a cohort aligned with its mission and passion for social justice, and its recruitment process effectively identifies participants with those motivations and who have potential to deliver effective teaching practice.

2

Ensure high-quality pathways into the teaching profession for capable and committed candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Nexus focuses on attracting and recruiting participants from diverse backgrounds, including under-represented cultural cohorts and those from regional or outer regional areas.

3

Improve course quality through partnerships, and feedback loops between graduates, schools and ITE providers.

Nexus has strong relationships with partner schools, however there is room for Nexus to improve its feedback mechanisms through better data collection.

4

Develop early career teachers to become excellent teachers and leaders, including through improved induction and mentoring.

One of the key features of the program is the robust support system, including providing guidance and resources for school-based mentors to provide support, and through additional direct support from La Trobe to Nexus participants.<sup>1</sup> The scaffolded structure of the program is also designed to provide a smooth transition into classroom teaching.<sup>2</sup>

Source: Jurisdiction interviews

<sup>1</sup>See pages 79-82

<sup>2</sup>See pages 71, 77-78

# System impact – Teacher supply

The Nexus program has key features that addresses barriers for those who would otherwise not consider teaching due to its shorter course length and opportunities for paid employment during the course, a key strength of the program.


## Most common barriers mid-career cohorts face to joining the teaching workforce

Financial barriers, as many people who would like to pursue teaching can't afford to take time off from work to study.


Returning to full-time university study rather than being practically engaged in a job is unappealing.

- Some negative perceptions of the teaching profession
- High workload
  - Increased difficulty since COVID-19
  - Modest prestige of teaching profession


## Does Nexus address these?

 Many participants say that the wage they were paid at in their first year as an education support / teacher aid is not enough, and participants only reach a 0.8 FTE paraprofessional salary in their second year. Nexus is continuing to implement additional financial incentives to mitigate this, such as scholarships and living allowances.

 Nexus presents an opportunity to get 'straight into the classroom', which participants consider as a key factor of their decision to enter Nexus.

 The scaffolded structure of the program mitigates high workload during the course, (especially when compared to other ITE pathways) though the workload issues of the career itself remain. The issue of 'teaching prestige' is a barrier for some, but less common in the participant cohort that Nexus targets.

Approximately half of the Nexus students / alumni that we spoke to said they would not have pursued teaching without the option of Nexus or a similar ITE program, and half said that they would have likely pursued teaching eventually, but Nexus was a preferable option. More data should be collected to understand the participant motivations at the applicant and recruitment stages.

 Nexus is capturing a cohort that would likely have pursued teaching either through mainstream or another alternative ITE pathway. However, the opportunity to participate in Nexus catalyses many participants' decisions to pursue teaching, and for most participants it is the most preferable pathway option.



# System impact – Distinct programmatic features

The Nexus program is a positive contribution to the alternative ITE ecosystem because the distinct programmatic features indicate positive potential in its own right, and potential in how it could be applied in other contexts.



**Provides a unique option to the ITE pathway landscape**

- Not as intense as programs that go straight into the classroom
- Still includes 'earn while you learn' from the start
- Explicit focus on social justice captures a cohort that other options do not directly target, and includes distinctive skills such as trauma-informed practices



**It contributes to the alternative ITE knowledge base**

Programmatic elements are providing valuable insights on a school and jurisdictional level, as stakeholders feel they could be applied more broadly in education:

- The scaffolded approach is a distinct structure, and its impacts on improving accessibility for career-changers to transition to teaching can be further explored
- The intersection of the robust support system and scaffolded approach
- The model could be applied to others who would otherwise go through a traditional pathway (i.e. not just for career changers or those with a passion for social justice)



**Addresses key target demographics which disproportionately face workforce challenges**

Nexus achieves this by:

- Targeting schools with high needs for participation
- Targeting participants with a passion for addressing these equity issues
- Recruiting participants from underrepresented cohorts

*"Nexus is a good option for people slightly older with commitments. (People should) Have that in mind when designing other models."*

- Jurisdictional education department representative

*(On Nexus's inclusion of social justice training) "It's kind of the way for the future. Schools are increasingly saying that everyone needs it. The complexity of presentation across the schools, and what is expected of teachers is more and more."*

- Jurisdictional education department representative

*"It has long been reported by graduate teachers that 'this wasn't taught in university' - usually when discussing student behaviour, or administration tasks or just how 'full on' teaching is. In taking on a Nexus student they learn our school's teaching and learning model from the 'get go'."*

- Principal at a regional school

# Appendices

# Appendix 1: High level evaluation framework

<b>Objective of the HAT Program</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the growth of alternative, employment-based pathways into the teaching profession...</li> <li>2. as a mechanism for improving access to quality teaching and education...</li> <li>3. ...for all Australian students, regardless of location.</li> </ol>	<b>Objective of this evaluation</b>	Unpack the effectiveness of the HAT Program through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— How much each program is achieving the HAT Program objective, and</li> <li>— How much each program is achieving its own objectives and its own distinct strengths, challenges and impact.</li> </ul>
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1 Program inputs	2 Participant journey	3 Outputs
<b>Attraction and recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How appealing is the program to prospective participants?</li> <li>• How were participants attracted / recruited?</li> <li>• Are the right participants being recruited?</li> <li>• What academic skills (including literacy and numeracy) and personal attributes are assessed for selection into the program?</li> <li>• What are the strengths / challenges of the recruitment process?</li> <li>• Were appropriate schools selected?</li> </ul>	<b>Program components</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the program components (e.g., Masters, intensives, and employment-based aspect) fit-for-purpose for the program and were they effective?</li> <li>• What are the benefits of the work-integrated-learning or employment-based aspect of the program? What are its risks?</li> </ul> <b>Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What support is offered to participants during the program and how effective is that support?</li> <li>• What support is offered to schools and how effective is that support?</li> </ul>	<b>Recruitment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many participants applied to the program? How many were selected?</li> </ul> <b>Completion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the participant completion rate?</li> <li>• What factors (those assessed at selection) contribute most to completion / attrition?</li> <li>• What are the reasons some participants withdraw?</li> </ul> <b>Retention:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the participant retention rate and how does it compare to general retention rates for teachers:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— In their placement schools i.e., schools with a grater need,</li> <li>— In the teaching profession,</li> <li>— In the education sector.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

4 Outcomes		
Student level	School level	System level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact has the program had on the performance of school students taught by the program's teachers?</li> <li>• What inferences can be drawn from the outcome data in terms of results for program teachers compared to non-program teachers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the program produce effective teachers?</li> <li>• Does the program address school needs?</li> <li>• Do participants have a positive impact on their peers and school culture?</li> <li>• What other benefits do schools gain from participation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the program addressing the HAT Program objective?</li> <li>• Does the program contribute to improving teacher quality and supply?</li> <li>• What impact has the program had on the employment-based pathways landscape in Australia?</li> </ul>

Lenses for analysis:\*

Government policy objectives	HAT Program v. comparator non-HAT Program	Scalability	Value for money	Implications for employment-based pathways
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\*Some of these are applied on an individual program level, some on the HAT Program level, some on both.

# Appendix 2: Full evaluation methodology (1/2)

We undertook extensive quantitative and qualitative fieldwork and analysis over a two-year period to inform the evaluation.

Project establishment	Wave 1: Fieldwork	Wave 1: Reporting
July – August 2021	August – September 2021	September – October 2021
<b>Project initiation meeting</b> Held a kick-off meeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce the team</li><li>• Confirm our timelines, scope, methodology and objectives</li><li>• Identify any ongoing hypotheses you may have.</li></ul>	<b>Data corroboration</b> Corroborated the data provided by TFA and La Trobe by comparing datasets and interviewing both providers. Understood factors such as the methodologies underpinning data collection, sample size, cohort surveyed, questions asked, response rate etc..	<b>Draft evaluation report (Wave 1)</b> Developed a draft evaluation report based on the research conducted to date. Used qualitative and quantitative data to answer key evaluation questions contained in the evaluation framework and identified areas for investigation in Wave 2.
<b>Data request</b> Submitted formal data request to the Department.	<b>Analysis and synthesis of data</b> Thoroughly analysed and triangulated all data provided by TFA, La Trobe and Commonwealth / other data to draw out insights and evaluate whether the HAT Program is meeting its policy objective	<b>Final evaluation report (Wave 1)</b> Provided the draft report to the Department for feedback. Incorporated any feedback and finalised the report.
<b>Stakeholder engagement plan</b> Developed and finalised stakeholder engagement plan.	<b>Education jurisdiction interviews</b> Interviewed the 8 State / Territory Departments of Education to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For those where LDP / Nexus operates, determined how implementation has played out and is meeting policy objectives by understanding their experience of the program, and</li><li>• For those where LDP / Nexus doesn't operate, determined the scaling potential of the HAT Program by understanding the reasons for not implementing their program, and what it would take for them to implement it.</li></ul>	
<b>Project plan</b> Developed and finalised project plan.	<b>Online focus groups</b> Ran 4 online focus groups with HAT Program participants to understand their experience of the HAT Program overall, motivations for partaking, whether the HAT Program has met their expectations, career plans post qualifications, and any areas for improvement within the HAT Program.	
<b>Develop draft evaluation framework</b> Developed an evaluation framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in meeting its policy objectives. Identify data sources, gaps in existing data collections and strategies for addressing those gaps.		
<b>Workshop to finalise evaluation framework</b> Provided framework to Department for feedback and finalisation.		

# Appendix 2: Full evaluation methodology (2/2)

Wave 2: Fieldwork		Wave 2: Reporting
October 2021 – December 2022	January 2023 – May 2023	May 2023 – June 2023
<p><b>Interviewed TFA and ACU</b> Interviewed TFA and ACU to understand how the LDP has changed since previous evaluations in terms of its aim, scope, size, processes, delivery etc. The interviews also covered any challenges the providers or university were facing, and the future for the program.</p>	<p><b>Data analysis</b> Analysed all data sources to draw out insights, confirmed / challenged our hypotheses, evaluated whether the HAT Program was meeting its policy objectives and potential areas for improvement. Supplemented with additional data sources where needed (e.g., desktop destination analysis).</p>	<p><b>Draft evaluation report (Wave 2)</b> Developed a draft evaluation report which was built on our Wave 1 report and used both qualitative and quantitative findings to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Answer key evaluation questions, and</li> <li>2. Identify recommendations for improvement.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Deep dive of Nexus</b> Conducted a deep dive of the Nexus program by interviewing appropriate La Trobe university staff. Sought to understand how rollout has gone since 2020, what processes and decisions underpinned program design and delivery, what the major challenges in implementation were, and any of their initial reflections on rollout.</p>	<p><b>School case studies (SA, WA, VIC)</b> Selected a random sample of representative HAT Program-participating schools for case studies. Interviewed the principals, teaching staff and HAT Program participants and captured their views on the program design and delivery, and how well it was meeting policy objectives.</p>	<p><b>Final evaluation report (Wave 2)</b> Provided the draft report to the Department for feedback. Incorporated any feedback and finalise the report.</p>
<p><b>Desktop literature review</b> Analysed research literature on the strength and nature of the relationship between student engagement and student outcomes (including academic outcomes), to inform the potential design of a student engagement profiling tool.</p>	<p><b>Alumni interviews</b> Engaged HAT Program alumni to understand their experience of the program, and whether they were still in the teaching profession now.</p>	
<p><b>Developed fieldwork instruments</b> Developed interview guides to give stakeholders context for discussions, and develop surveys based on the interim report. Provided surveys to the Department for feedback and signoff.</p>	<p><b>Education jurisdiction interviews</b> Interviewed the 8 State / Territory Departments of Education again, this time we tested our hypotheses and emerging findings with them and captured their views on any potential recommendations for improvement we've developed based on Wave 2 findings.</p>	
<p><b>Ethics approvals</b> Submitted ethics approval requests to relevant jurisdictions for in-school fieldwork.</p>	<p><b>Alumni interviews</b> Investigated viability of using student perceptions of teacher practice as an additional input for examining impact.</p>	
<p><b>Online focus groups (participants)</b> Ran 4 online focus groups with HAT Program participants to understand if their experience of the HAT Program or career intentions had changed since Wave 1 and tested any hypotheses or potential recommendations we've identified with them.</p>	<p><b>Comparator analysis</b> Desktop analysis on comparator programs to LDP and Nexus.</p>	

# Appendix 3: LDP data

This evaluation is informed by substantial consultation across relevant stakeholder groups, and robust programmatic data. TFA’s high-quality data and data collection processes serve as an example of best practice data collection for alternative ITE pathways.

## Our approach during this phase of evaluation

### 1. Analyse program data from TFA

Dandolo provided TFA with a request for data, and in early 2023 TFA supplied available relevant LDP data, with a specific focus on the 2020-2022 cohorts. We then analysed this data.

### 2. Consultation

Given the breadth and depth of data that TFA provided, we were able to commence qualitative fieldwork armed with hypotheses we were looking to test and fill in the gaps that the quantitative data alone could not tell us.

### 3) Final data from TFA

We reconnected with TFA and they provided us with:

- Information addressing specific questions we had that emerged during our consultation stage and as insights emerged, such as details on LDP’s upcoming expansion into NSW.
- Up-to-date data regarding the 2022 cohort, as they were still enrolled at time of writing the evaluation.

## Key data sources



### Qualitative research dandolo conducted

- Case studies: Interviews with current participants, their mentors, and school principals
  - 2 schools in WA
  - 2 schools in SA
  - 5 schools in Victoria
- Interviews with 21 TFA alumni
  - From 2018-2021 cohorts
  - Across all currently participating jurisdictions, and one from ACT (which used to participate in the HAT Program)
- Interviews with state and territory Education department representatives from all jurisdictions, including those that do not currently participate in LDP.
- Interviews with TFA staff.
- Online discussion boards with TFA participants from the 2020 and 2021 cohorts.



### Data collected by TFA

- Robust and data from TFA including (but not limited to):
- Programmatic information, which includes documents such as Intensive breakdowns, TFA Indigenous engagement strategy, orientation manuals, program advertising material, etc.
    - Recruitment data
    - Completion data
  - Principal and mentor surveys, including TLA assessments of participant progress
  - Participant surveys collected at different points during their journey
  - Alumni surveys
  - Financial information

## Data limitations

- Due to COVID-19 related research restrictions, we couldn’t engage with schools or current participants in NT or Tas, though we did speak to multiple alumni who were placed in those areas.
- Assessing teaching effectiveness is challenging in any context. We have strived to assess participants’ teaching effectiveness through ample data that TFA collects and our own thorough consultation to build a well-rounded view, though capturing this accurately will always be a challenge.



TFA collects and analyses data that is significantly more robust and comprehensive than most programs we evaluate. This is a key strength of TFA and of the HAT Program as it enables:

- Better understanding of effectiveness and impact,
- Evidence-based decision making, particularly when iterating the program, and
- Higher levels of confidence in findings in evaluations such as this one.

# Appendix 4: Nexus data

We conducted extensive consultation as part of this evaluation. La Trobe also provided extensive qualitative and quantitative data, although there are limitations with their survey data.

## Our approach during this phase of evaluation

### 1. Analyse program data from La Trobe

Dandolo provided La Trobe a request for data, and in early 2023 La Trobe supplied available relevant Nexus data, which we analysed.

### 2. Consultation

As Nexus is new and data provided from La Trobe was limited, stakeholder interviews were instrumental in developing an understanding of the program's impact and stakeholder perceptions.

### 3) Final data from La Trobe

We reconnected with La Trobe to:

- Test insights and address specific questions that emerged during our consultation stage, such as how the program has changed over time.
- Collect the latest data regarding the 2022 cohort.

## Key data sources



### Qualitative research dandolo conducted

- Interviews with principals and mentors across 4 participating Nexus schools in Victoria
- Interviews with 6 Nexus alumni
  - From 2020 and 2021 cohorts
  - A mixture of participants in the 18 month and two-year options
- Interviews with the Department of Education Victoria about the role of Nexus, and discussions with other jurisdictional Education department representatives about alternative ITE pathways more broadly.
- Interviews and updates with La Trobe staff.
- Online discussion boards with Nexus participants from 2020 and 2021 cohorts.



### Data collected by La Trobe

Data from La Trobe including (but not limited to):

- Nexus program information, which included documents such as Intensive breakdowns, recruitment criteria, status reports presented to other organisations, and some quantitative data, including:
  - Recruitment data, and
  - School and participant placement data.
- Principal school satisfaction surveys, and surveys of participants taken at various points during their journeys.
- Financial information.

### There are some limitations with the survey data La Trobe collects.

Principal and participant surveys have the potential to provide valuable feedback on programmatic elements, perceived performance of participants, and effectiveness and impact of the program as a whole. La Trobe is missing out on some of these insights.

The impact of these limitations means that we relied more heavily on consultation to develop insights, and La Trobe data was used for triangulation purposes instead.

### Consideration for La Trobe:

La Trobe should consider including a dedicated data team or outsourcing data capture responsibilities to ensure the impact of Nexus is effectively captured, and to better inform continuous improvement.



- There are substantial questions that the surveys 'miss'. For example, principals aren't asked in surveys what attracted them to the program. These questions can provide valuable insights for La Trobe about the value proposition that could inform future engagement and attraction strategies.
- Data that is collected is not granular enough. For example, participant feedback on intensives is quite high level, which makes it difficult to specify which elements participants are reflecting on.
- Response rates to surveys are low, with some as low as 15%. This makes it difficult to apply results more broadly, as often in these contexts the results are from participants who will feel strongly one way or another and may not be representative of the cohorts as a whole.
  - This is a particular issue for Nexus, as the program is relatively small which exacerbates the effects of a low response rate.

# Appendix 5: Alternative employment-based pathways

Jurisdictions have alternative employment-based pathways that range from targeting mid-career professionals, upskilling existing teachers, to partnerships with their local universities.



## Leap Program – Western Australia

The Leap program gives both new and existing teachers opportunities to teach in additional specialist areas or move into a new area of teaching.

Leap provides an opportunity for:

- Primary teachers to train in teaching secondary students
- Secondary teachers to train in another learning area.
- Teachers who can speak more than one language to teach languages in a primary or secondary school.

Participants can undertake an additional qualification through either a graduate certificate or a short course.

The Department will cover both the course fee and course materials.

Examples:

- A secondary science teacher who took a graduate certificate in Mathematics to teach the subject.
- A primary teacher who took a Leap course in secondary English to teach secondary school.



## Turn to Teaching Program – Queensland

The Turn to Teaching Internship program is an employment-based pathway for those looking to change their career to teaching.

The program prioritises applicants who can specialise in priority subject areas and are willing to work in rural or remote locations. The aim of the program is to focus on selecting a diverse group of aspiring teachers that reflects Queensland communities.

Turn to Teaching provides participants with:

- Financial support while studying a two-year postgraduate ITE course, including a \$20,000 scholarship in the first year of the program
- One year of learning
- A paid internship teaching position with support in the classroom in their second year
  - Reduced teaching load (50%)
  - A supervising teacher, mentor and access to a community of practice for interns to share their experiences.
- A permanent teaching position in a Queensland state school following completion.



## The University of Canberra Affiliated Schools Program – ACT

The Affiliated Schools Program is a professional learning program for pre-service and current teachers delivered through a partnership between the University of Canberra and ACT Government.

The program sees participants undertake the following:

- A two-year Master's degree that is given in a compacted way which includes:
  - One year of learning
  - Practical work experience in the second year
- A pedagogical clinical practice where the tutorials are held in the school.

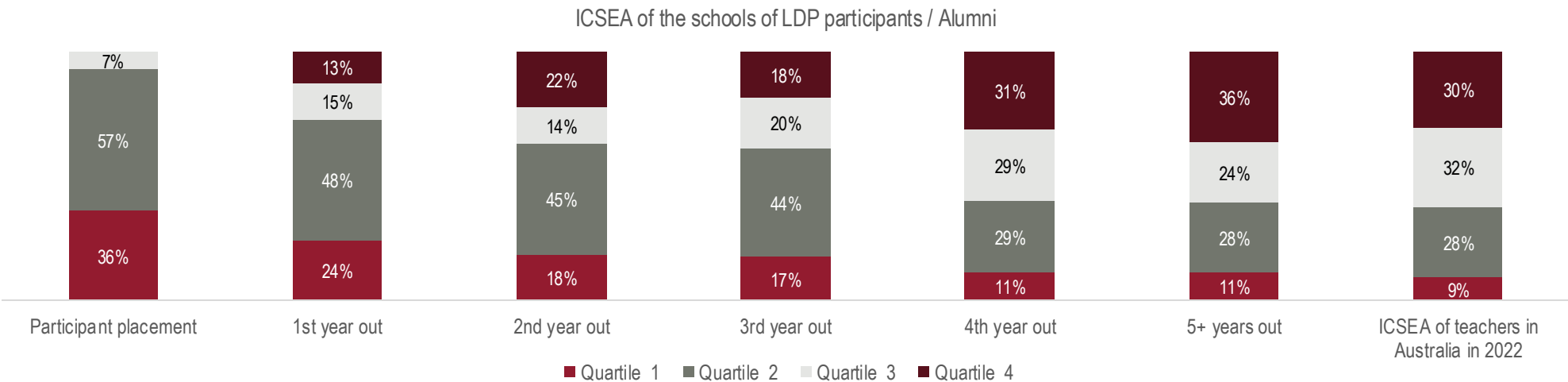
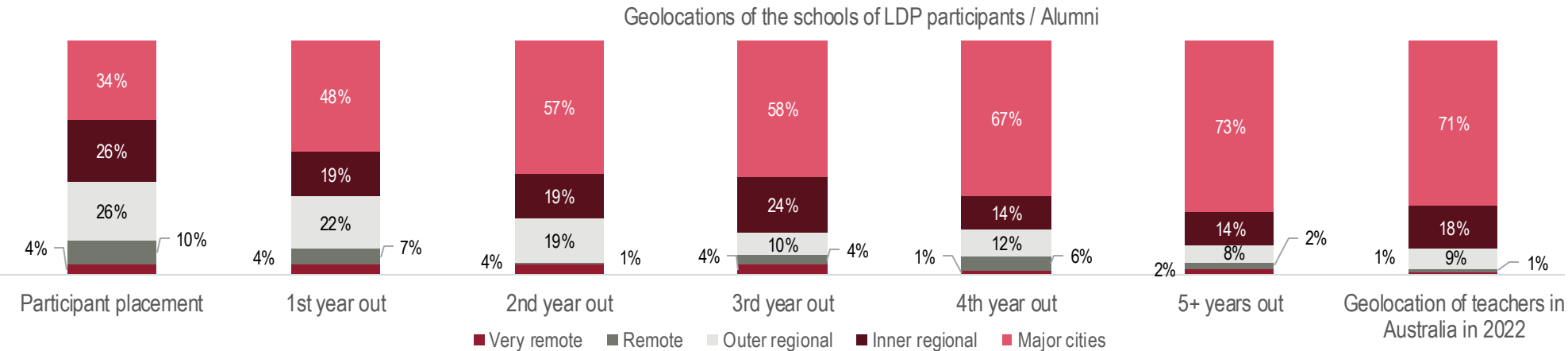
### Other examples:

- Teach.MathsNOW scholarship in NSW – a program for people changing their careers to become a Maths teacher which provides:
  - \$50k for a Masters of Teaching
  - An initial year of fulltime learning
  - Participants placed in schools in their second year as para-professionals, working up to 0.5 FTE while they complete their Master of Teaching
  - Guaranteed permanent job upon completion of the program.
- NSW government has announced a partnership with TFA to design a pathway program to encourage mid-career workers to move into teaching.
- The Tasmanian government has a partnership with the University of Tasmania to deliver an 18-month fast track for a Master of Teaching which includes three professional experience placements.



# Appendix 6: LDP participant retention by placement school

Although the majority of LDP participants are placed in low ICSEA schools in regional / remote Australia, there is a sharp drop in teaching in these target areas by two years post-graduation.

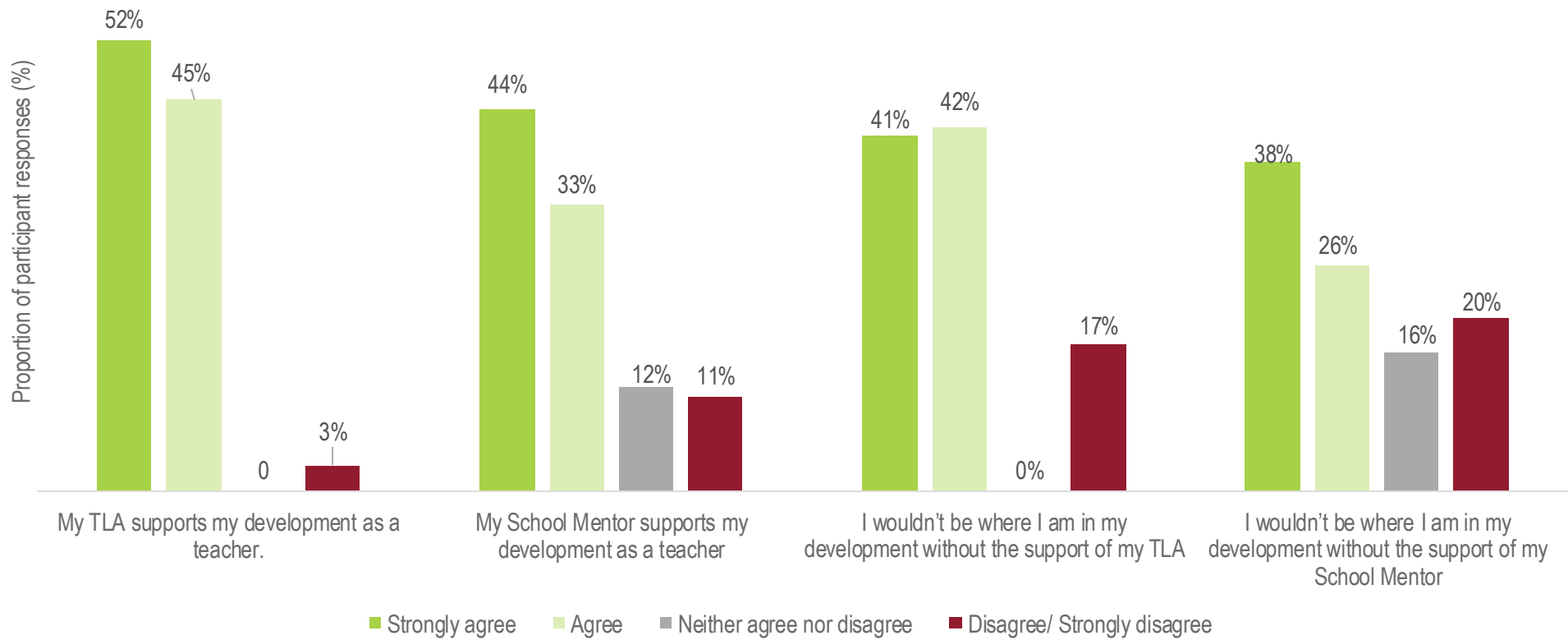


Source: LDP participant and alumni data

# Appendix 7: LDP participant views on Teaching Learning Advisors (TLAs) and school mentors

LDP participants credit the TLA slightly more than the school mentor with their development as a teacher.

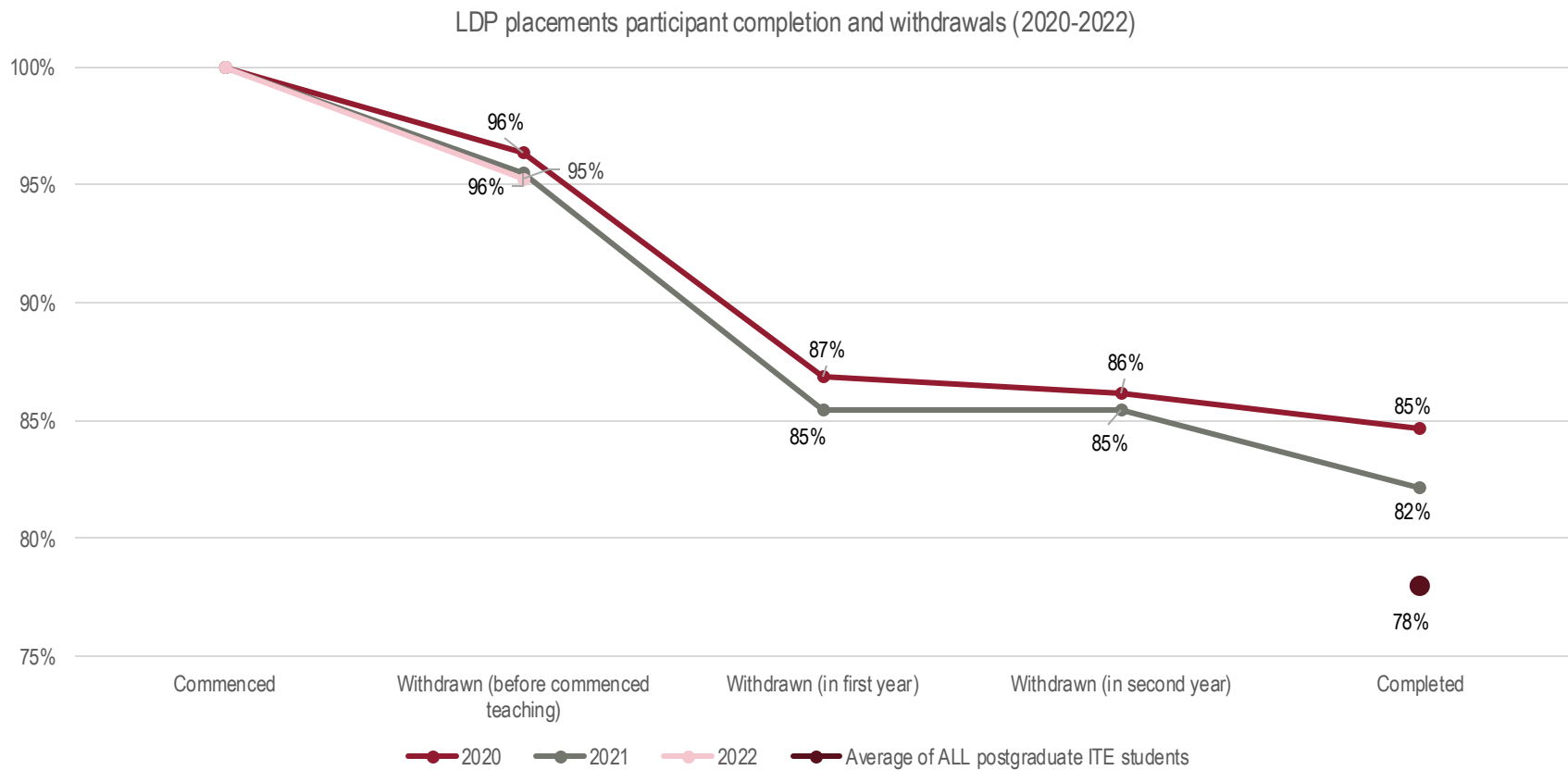
The extent to which participants agree with statements about the support provided by TLAs and school mentors (2022)



Source: participant support survey data (2018-2022)

# Appendix 8: LDP participant completion data

LDP completions from 2020-2022 are higher than the average completion rates for undergraduate and postgraduate initial teacher education courses in Australia.

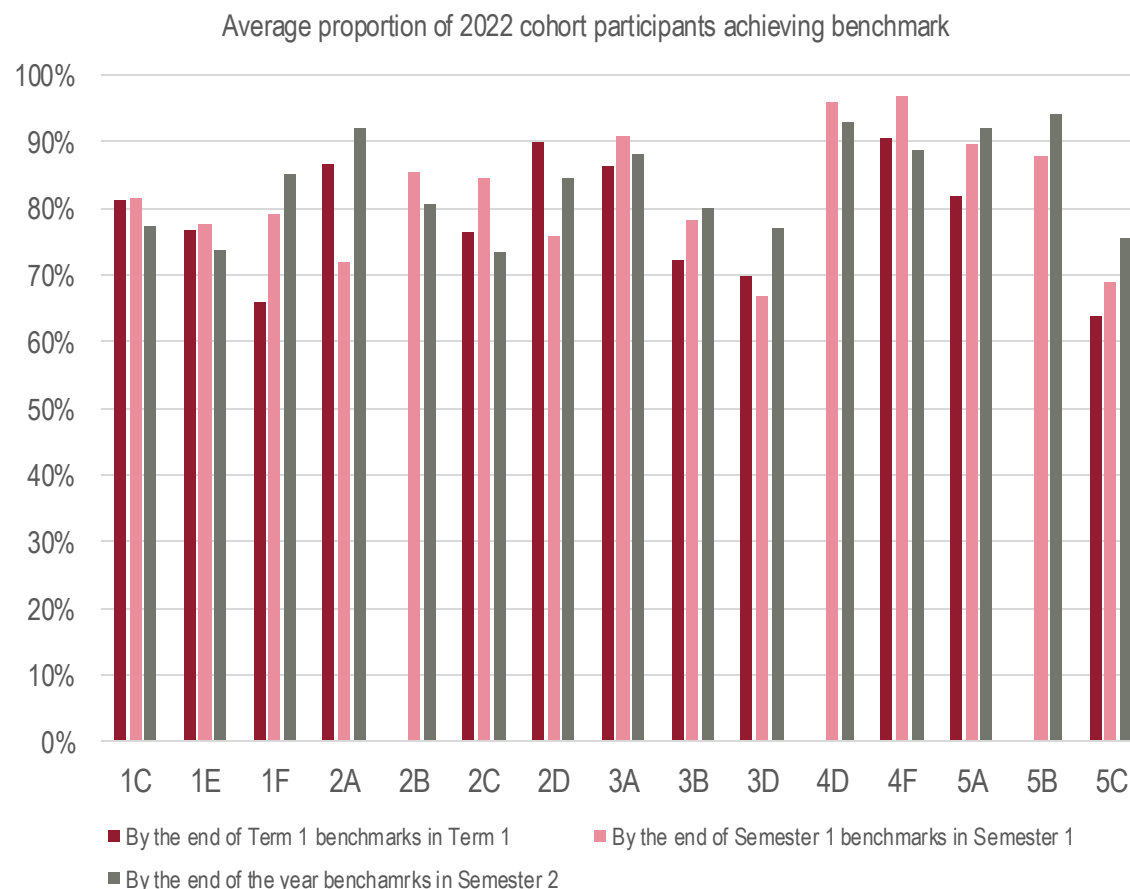


Source: LDP participant data (2020-2022)

## Appendix 9: LDP's leadership framework

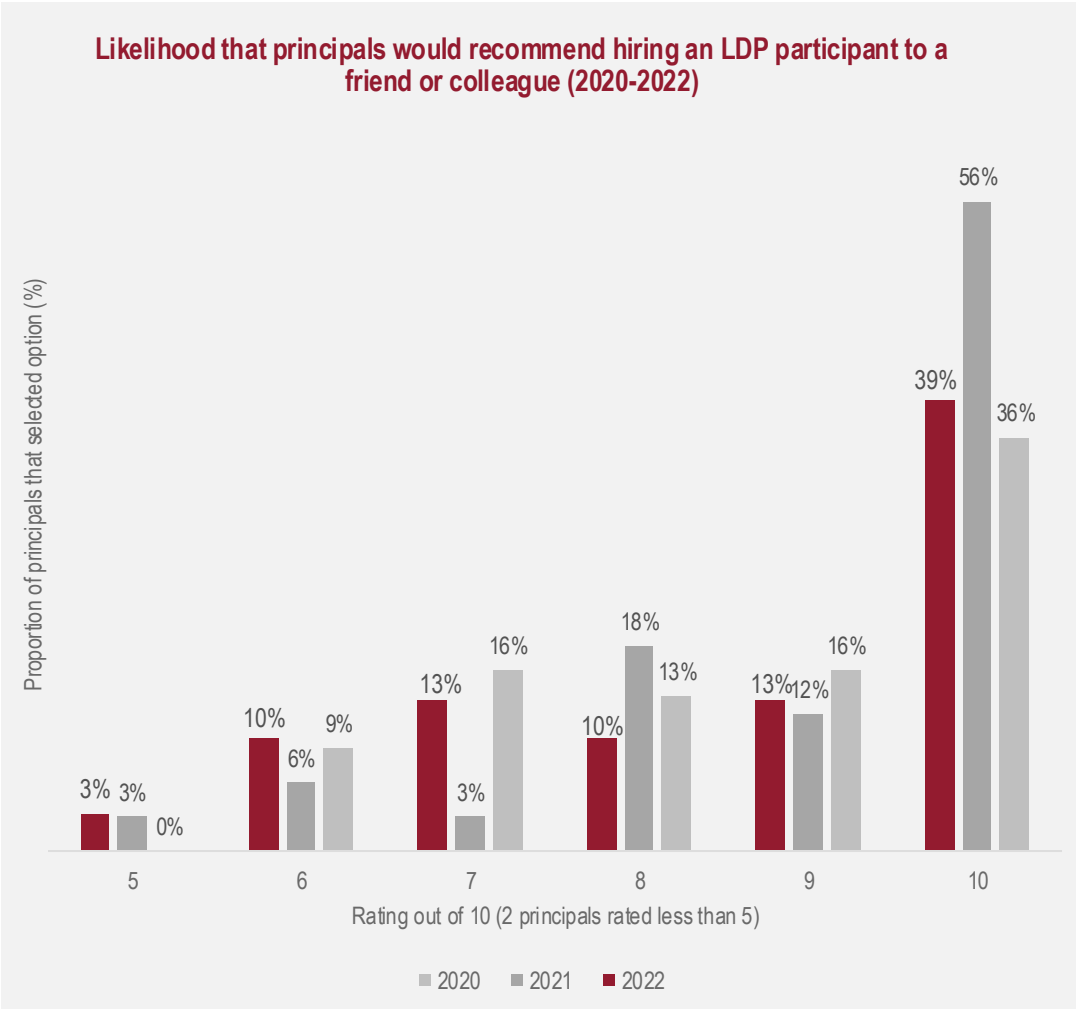
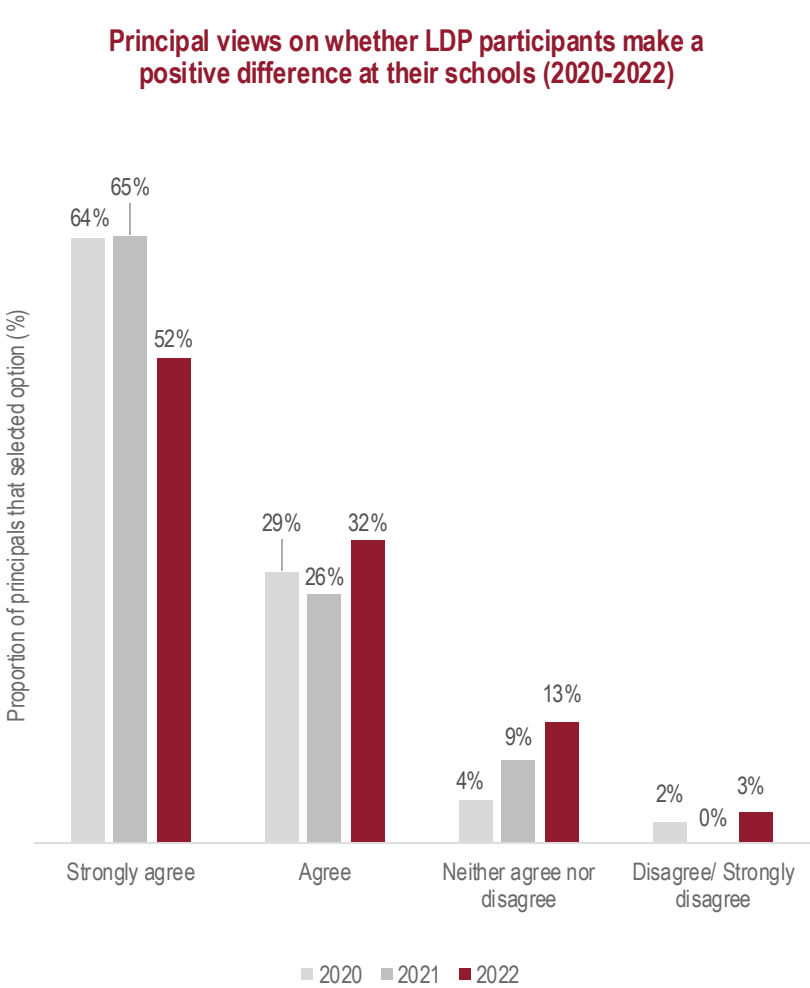
TFA developed the 'Leadership Continuum' to understand the progression of first year participants across 15 criteria, most of which correspond to the AITSL teaching standards.

Code	Criteria	Corresponding AITSL teaching standard
1C	Setting Instructional Outcomes	3.1
1E	Designing Coherent Instruction	3.2
1F	Designing Student Assessments	5.1
2A	Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	4.1
2B	Establishing a Culture for Learning	3.1
2C	Managing Classroom Procedures	4.2
2D	Managing Student Behaviour	4.3
3A	Communicating with Students	3.5
3B	Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	3.3
3D	Using Assessment in Instruction	5.2
4D	Participating in the Professional Community	6.3, 7.4
4F	Showing Professionalism	7.1, 7.2
5A	Exercising Self Awareness and Self-Control	-
5B	Exercising Social Intelligence	-
5C	Being Resilient	-



# Appendix 10a: Meeting school needs

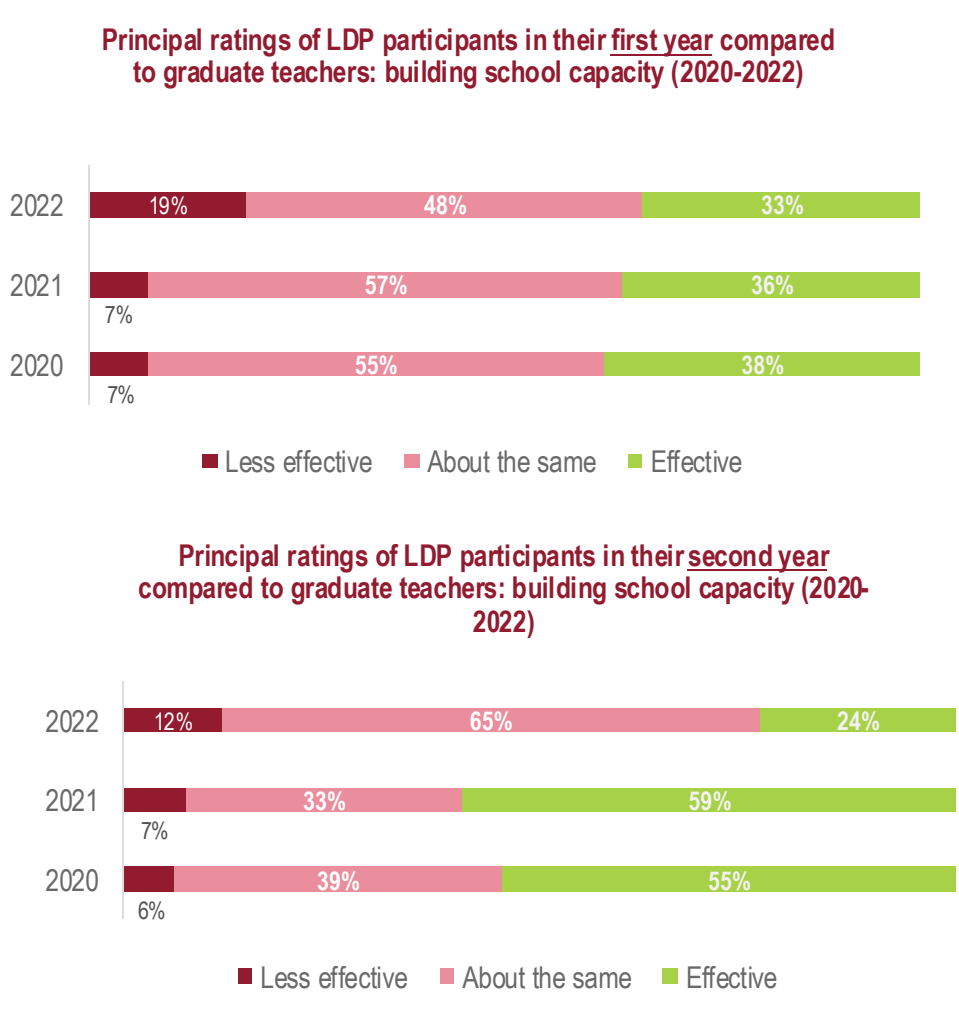
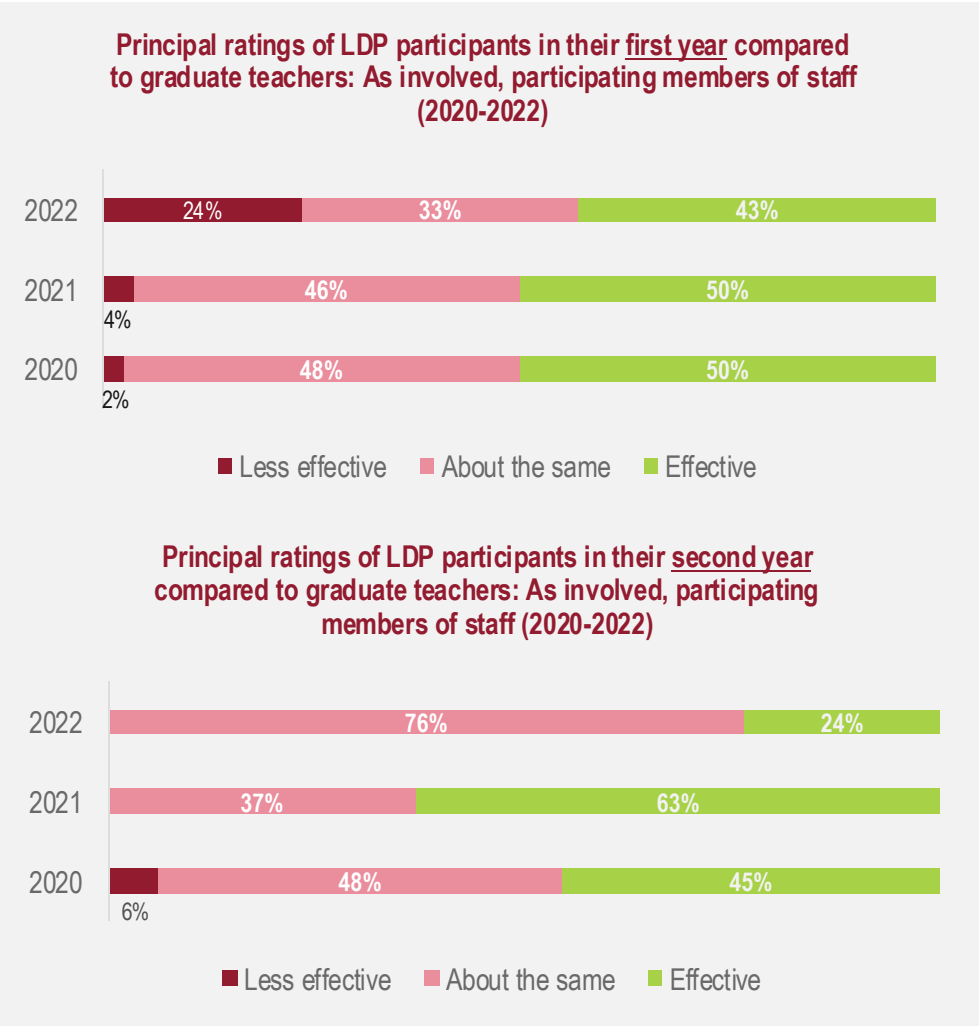
Schools say that LDP participants make a positive difference in their school, enough that they would recommend them to others.



Source: Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2022)

# Appendix 10b: participant impact

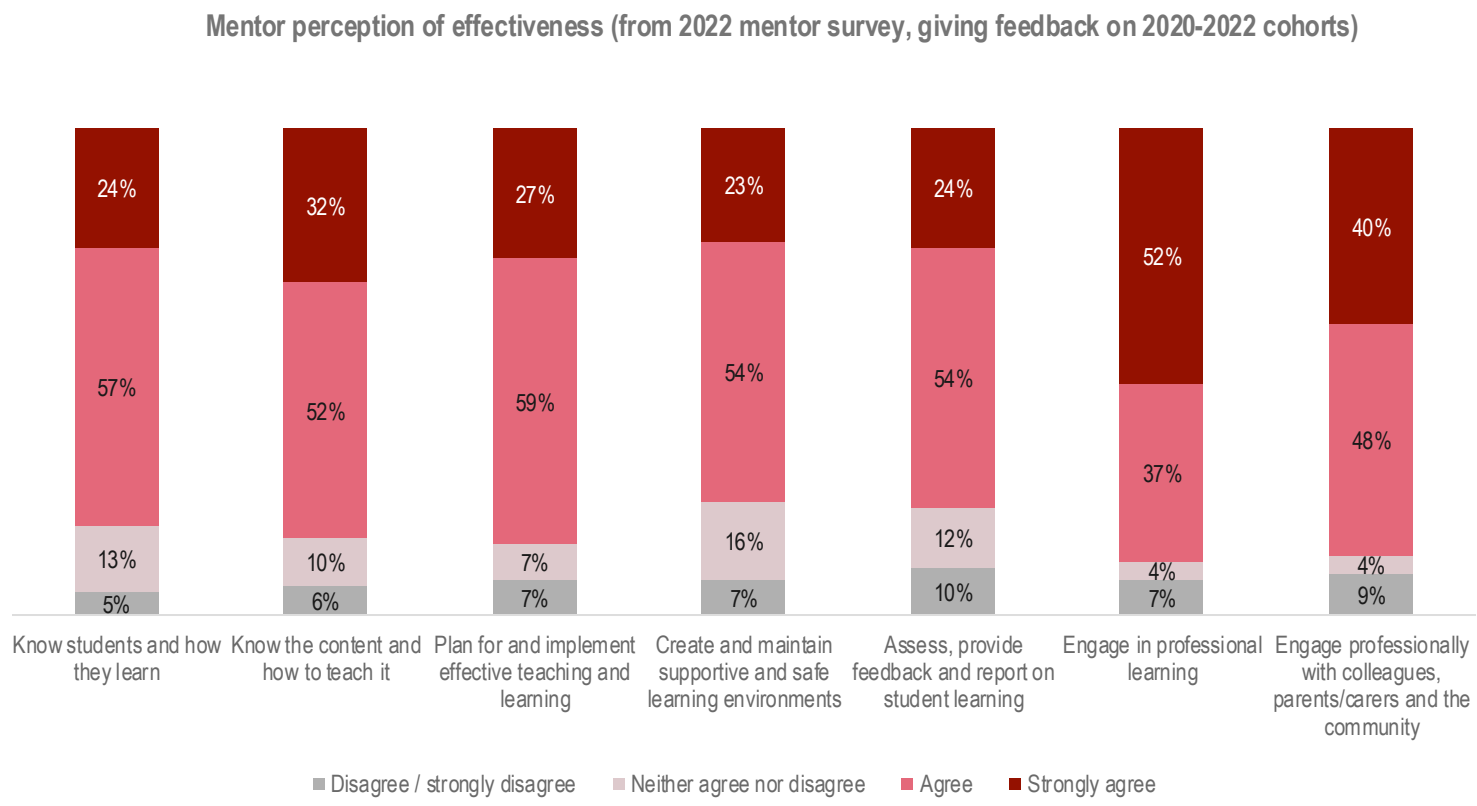
Survey responses indicate that principals largely viewed LDP participants to be as effective as graduate teachers when it came to being participating members of staff and building school capacity.



Source: Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2020-2022)

# Appendix 10c: LDP classroom mentor perception of participant effectiveness across AITSL teaching standards

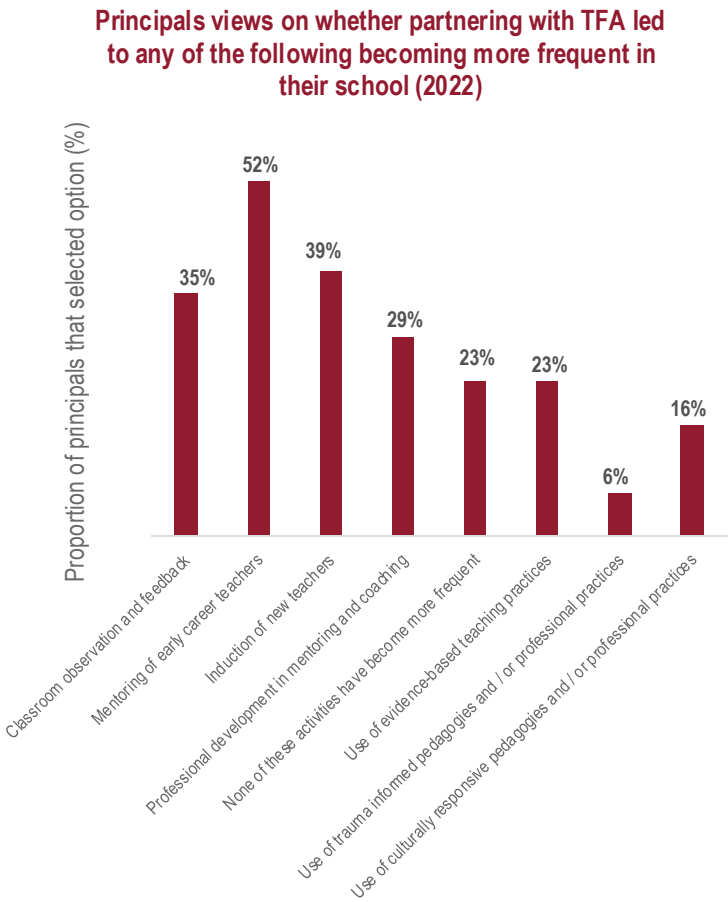
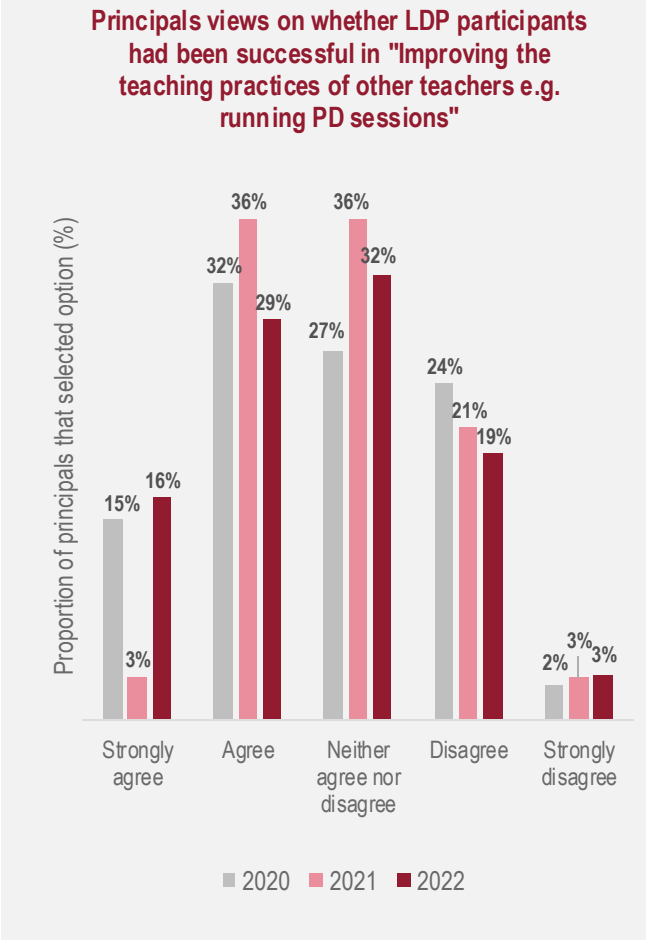
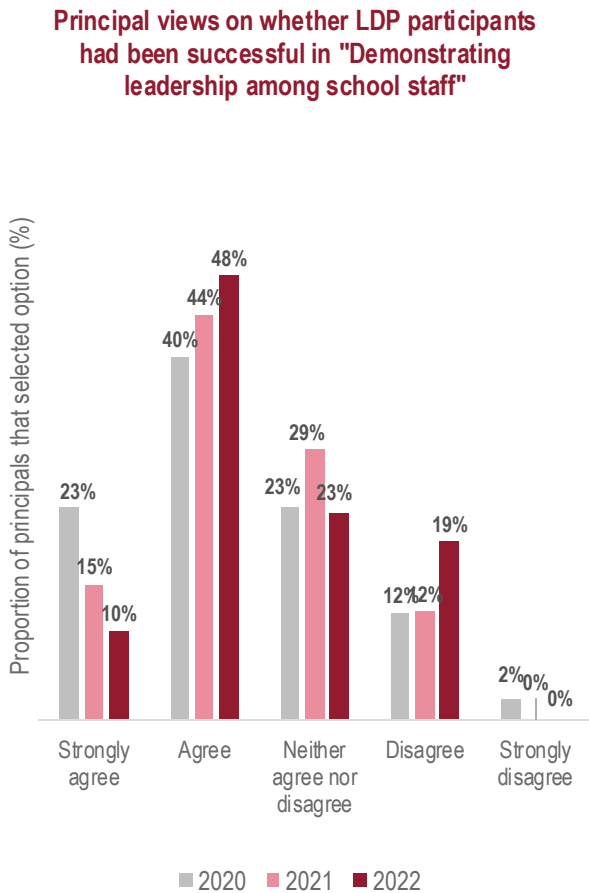
Classroom mentors consistently rank participants highly across AITSL teaching standards across the three cohorts.



Source: LDP mentor survey (2022)

# Appendix 10d: Participant impact

Principals agreed that LDP participants demonstrated leadership in the school and contributed positively to the school.

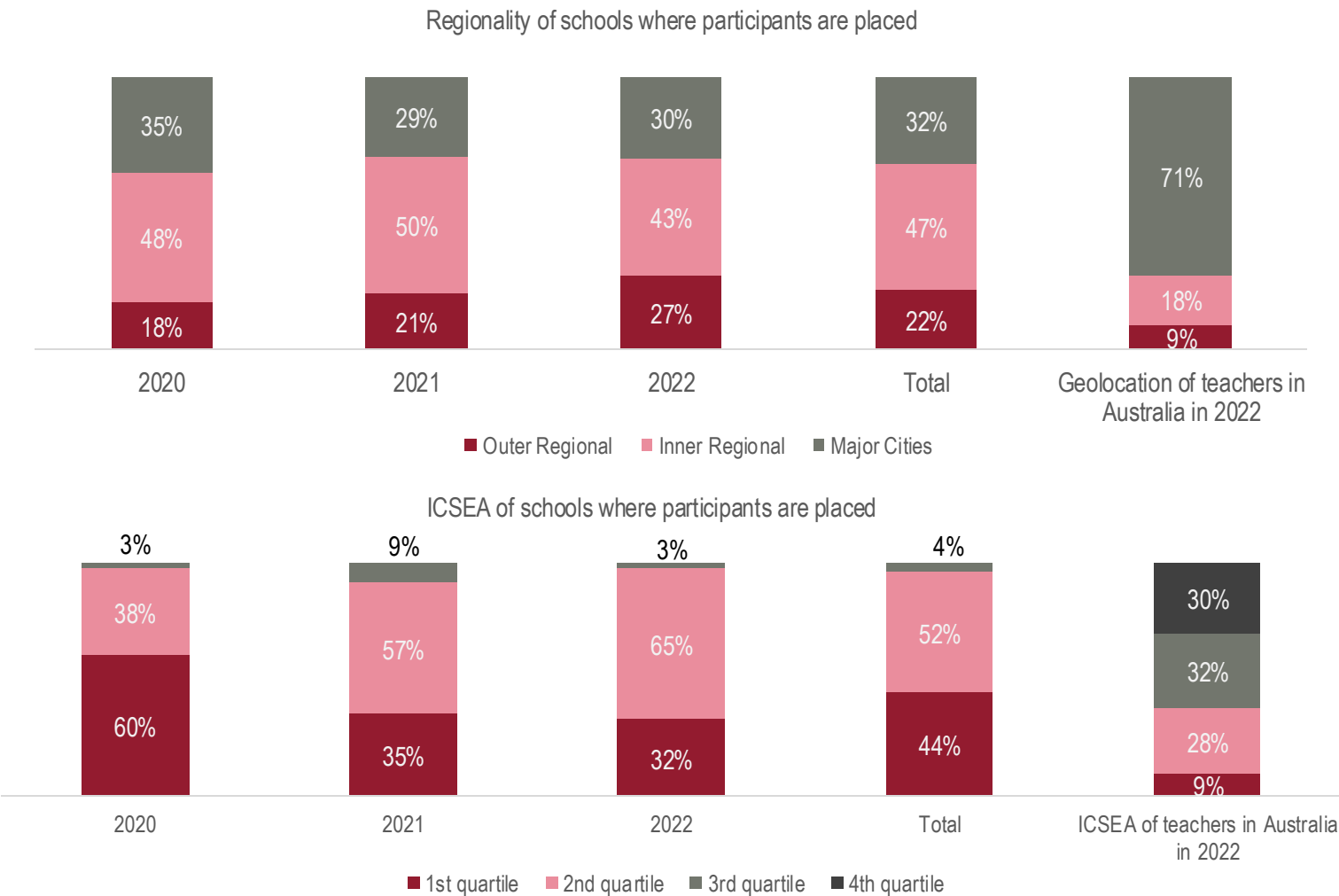


Source: Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2022)



# Appendix 11: Nexus participant school placement regionality

Nexus participants are placed in some of the most disadvantaged schools in regional Victoria.



Source: Nexus participant data