



Response
Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

1 December 2022

The Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Call for Submissions on the Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan. As the peak body representing state and territory joint councils of teacher associations, and with a network of up to 200,000 teachers from across the various sectors, the Australian Professional Teachers Association is in a key position to provide comment.

Our strength as an organisation lies in our ability to directly represent the interests of practicing classroom teachers across Australia. We are a voice for teachers and an effective conduit between decision-making bodies and the classroom. APTA provides an alternative to principal associations or teacher unions, with a classroom-focused, practitioner perspective that is directly connected to the student, rather than a managerial perspective of school operations. APTA is thus well positioned to provide an informed view from a teacher perspective on whether areas of policy warrant national consideration, or whether some issues are better addressed at a jurisdictional level or via other means.

We value the time made to speak with the APTA Board on Tuesday, 29 November and thank your representatives for the encouragement to submit a fuller response incorporating several of the ideas we expressed in this meeting. We feel too, a submission from a peak body should not carry the same weight as an individual teacher.

I can provide further detail to the comments in this response if this will be of assistance.

Cheryl Brennan
President
Australian Professional Teachers Association
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Priority Area 1: Elevating the Profession (1-4)

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Elevating the profession'?

YES/NO

This action aims to recognise the value teachers bring to students, communities and the economy.

The actions proposed recognise the value teachers bring to students, communities and the economy:

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Would you like to provide feedback about these actions?

The proposed actions 1-4, while welcome (particularly action 3), will only have superficial, limited and inadequate impact. APTA believes that slick advertising campaigns, carefully crafted statements from education ministers, introducing new awards and targets for HALTs are short-term band-aid solutions that do not make the best use of resources.

If the value teachers bring to students, communities and the economy is to be recognised, then more than the proposed actions are needed and APTA offers the following as a viable solution:

Elevating the profession can be achieved by involving the profession in the decision-making process through their subject associations; this would involve teachers directly in policy and strategy development. Unions represent teachers' interests, but professional associations were established, and are governed, by practising teachers to improve their practice and thereby improve student engagement and outcomes. Teacher associations through their peak bodies should be represented on working groups such as the one formed for this Action Plan. That participation should be remunerated to ensure that schools and teachers' associations can release teachers/staff to participate. Such action would elevate the profession, showing respect for teachers and for the perspectives they can offer that principals' associations and unions cannot.

Action 1

APTA feels that the proposal in Action 1 confuses two distinct issues. Efforts to elevate the profession need to focus on debunking public misconceptions about teachers and teaching. The proposal to showcase teacher contributions may appeal to aspiring teachers and could be construed as a recruitment drive rather than a strategy to elevate the profession.

Action 2

The creation of new Australian Teacher of the Year Awards is not supported by APTA. This is an expensive marketing strategy, duplicating state-based awards, requiring many teachers and school leaders to invest time into writing and supporting nominations, while only a small number of teachers are acknowledged. No matter how much media coverage the event

generates, the public message is that it is possible to identify a small number of exceptional teachers in the system. This elevates a few in the profession; not the profession.

Awards are a feature of many of the Joint Councils of Professional Teacher Associations or state registration bodies. Action 2 is an unwelcome duplication and diminution of a process that exists already.

Action 3

Encouraging members of the public to nominate teachers for Medals of the Order of Australia has merit and APTA supports this Action. This would be a positive step that would elevate the profession because teachers would be publicly acknowledged alongside the significant contributions of other professionals.

Action 4

APTA welcomes the recognition that not all expert teachers are interested in pursuing HALT accreditation and that there are other avenues and programs teachers can pursue in furthering their professional development.

Priority Area 2: Improving teacher supply (5-9)

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Improving teacher supply'?

YES/NO

This action aims to increase the number of students entering Initial Teacher Education (ITE), number of students completing ITE and the number of teachers staying in and/or returning to the profession.

The actions proposed will be effective in increasing the number of students entering ITE, number of students completing ITE and the number of teachers staying in and/or returning to the profession:

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Would you like to provide feedback about these actions?

APTA supports any actions that will ultimately improve teacher supply as federally, a projected shortfall of more than 4,000 high school teachers by 2025 is alarming. It is an obvious imperative that we not only attract people to the teaching profession but also encourage teacher retention.

APTA suggests that much more attention could be given to mentoring programs to support new teachers and particularly for professionals switching careers to teaching. Many countries, such as China, assign expert teachers as mentors to people new to the profession. This is currently being implemented in the NSW DET but the problem is that the expert teachers are spread across the entire state.

APTA suggests a solution is to fund professional teaching associations in each State who have access to outstanding teachers to implement formal mentoring programs. If the Federal, State and Territory governments invested more money in these associations, they could tap into many expert teachers who could provide the mentorship and guidance needed by those new to the profession. Many professional teacher associations currently have less formal mentoring programs, but these could be scaled up with funding to formalise them. Funding of professional teacher associations would allow these subject-focused, very experienced teachers to have professional development days where mentor teachers and graduate teachers meet, form mentoring partnerships and then, from then on, communicate regularly throughout the year. This type of support is often best provided by a teacher who has knowledge of the teaching area of the graduate teacher. Therefore, subject-based teacher associations are well placed to organise mentoring on this level.

Action 6

Offering bursaries to attract the "brightest and the best to the profession" and encouraging people to leave other professions to become teachers is commended but it must be recognised that the bigger issue is retention. The 'brightest and the best' do not necessarily

make the best teachers and increasing supply of teachers will only work if the other priority areas are addressed, such as workloads and burnout.

The improved data collection suggested in Action 5, may alleviate some issues with undersupply of teachers but only if the data can accurately prioritise the disciplines/subjects where teachers are most needed.

Action 8

APTA suggests that new teachers should be released and funded to attend professional learning and participate in mentoring and teacher networks that are facilitated by professional teachers' associations. It is increasingly common that a school will not have a trained subject specialist for each subject, leaving many teachers to fend for themselves when it comes to curriculum planning, finding resources and professional reading. The practical and nourishing support from expert teachers, facilitated by teachers' associations, accelerates the learning of new teachers, saves them time and reduces their feelings of professional isolation, keeping them in the schools that need them most.

The capacity to attract and retain quality teachers is the key objective in the Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan. As professional teacher associations whose members span Early Childhood Education, Primary, Secondary, Higher Education and TAFE, we know that we need a workforce in which teachers have higher-level skills and professional qualifications, both of which are crucial for the nation's productivity. We need to focus on school culture, productivity growth, improved wages, minimising attrition and raising innovation levels, eroded during the pandemic, to increase community engagement and teacher wellbeing.

Action 9

APTA does not see efforts to target overseas teachers being successful as other countries, e.g. the United Kingdom and the United States, are also experiencing a teacher shortage. Even if these actions are successful, the inherent issues remain regarding the failure to keep teachers in the profession. Again, mentoring provided by professional teacher associations could serve to support overseas entrants to the profession.

Priority Area 3: Strengthening Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (10-13)

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Strengthening Initial Teacher Education'?

YES/NO

This action aims to ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and quality.

The action proposed will ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and quality:

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Would you like to provide feedback about these actions?

APTA supports any actions that will strengthen initial teacher education.

Action 10

APTA's member associations can provide anecdotal evidence about placements in schools for preservice teachers being dependent on already stretched and overloaded teachers agreeing to take on the additional work involved in the supervision of a preservice teacher. This is a huge commitment of time in mentoring, guiding and supervising the preparation, implementation and review of lessons by the preservice teacher. This is not commensurate with the time that is required assist the preservice teacher to prepare for their placement, guide and then review their lesson planning, supervise and give feedback on their lesson implementation as well as review their lesson and provide aural and written feedback. This important role - guiding, mentoring and supervising pre-service teachers - is woefully underpaid and therefore not respected by teachers. There is little quality control about which teachers have preservice teachers as demand is so high.

APTA suggests that the supervision of teachers needs to be better remunerated so that more teachers see that it is a valued option and part their personal professional learning. Shortcutting ITE programs by giving students permission to teach at the same time as they do their degree is a band-aid solution. This creates unreasonable expectations for the preservice teacher who has the responsibility for classes and in addition, a fulltime university load without the advantage of being able to attend lectures and tutorials.

Priority Area 4: Maximising the time to teach (14-18)

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Maximising the time to teach

YES/NO

This action aims to improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration.

The actions proposed will improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration:

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Would you like to provide feedback about these actions?

APTA supports any measures that improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration. APTA also acknowledges that this is perhaps the most significant factor in poor teacher retention.

The issue of “making time” is mis-reported. It is not about teachers’ professional standards as interpreted in recent research. Teachers are dedicated to their roles. Membership of professional teacher associations and voluntary work in professional and subject-discipline associations is testament to this. The teachers’ time-poor issue and work overload is about shifting the balance to increase the dedicated focus on teaching, learning and assessment and reducing the burden of the compliance – the repetitive and overlapping red tape through the regulatory frameworks, such as safety risk assessments or business continuity plans. Teachers require greater human resource support in terms of administrative time and reduction of duplicative efforts of record-keeping across multiple student and asset management systems, or smarter strategies standards compliance with competing Commonwealth and State or Territory governance. As documented by AITSL (Shifting the balance, December 2020), a consistent focus on red tape reduction is urgently needed.

Reducing teacher workload is an outstanding goal for the Action Plan to pursue. However, the objective appears to “move” teacher effort from one thing ie. “free up teachers” so that they can work on another thing: “teaching and collaboration”. The issue is not one of shifting teacher effort from one activity to another; it is that teachers are working far too many hours per week, and they are saying in clear terms that this is a contributing factor to their plans to leave the profession.

This is acknowledged in Action 15 where an enterprise bargaining agreement is mentioned that “explicitly encourages teachers to disconnect from digital technologies when accessing rest time, weekends and leave/vacation periods.” The goal should therefore be ‘Reduce teacher workload and maximise the time to teach.’

While piloting new approaches to teacher workload reduction is a welcome initiative, APTA does not support the premise inspired by the Grattan Institute report released recently, that a central bank of teaching resources would save teachers’ time.

Firstly, a central bank of teaching resources takes away from teachers an intrinsic part of their role – to develop unit and lesson plans nuanced to the needs of their students; differentiated to meet the full span of abilities within their classroom. This is not the part of their workload from which most teachers are asking to be relieved. The Grattan research correctly identified that this is a major part of what teachers spend their time doing. However, this is not the problem. The Grattan Institute report appears to treat the fact that because teachers spend a lot of time on something, then this has been treated as problematic. Perhaps they should have asked teachers, what is it that you spend your time on that others could do instead, or, what is it in your job that prevents you from doing the work of a teacher (planning and creating resources to deliver interesting and engaging lessons)?

Secondly, it is not possible. To save all teachers time, such a bank would need to have sample lessons and resources to support every line and every option within the curriculum, with complete instructions for differentiation for each of these, and recommendations for customisation to suit different cohorts. This would take many years to build, teachers would inevitably (and publicly) disagree about the quality and suitability of the resources for their context, and the size of the collection would be so unwieldy that it would be hard for teachers to locate the resources they were looking for. As soon as the resources were completed they would need to be revised, culled and replaced to reflect curriculum changes.

If the Australian Department of Education or the state and territory departments chose only some subjects within the curriculum to support in this way, to make the project more manageable, it would not achieve the goal of saving most teachers time, and it would send a message that the time of some teachers, was perceived as more valuable than others.

Thirdly, in some subjects, it is the exposition to a wide range of perspectives, and encouraging teachers to use their initiative and professional judgement in choosing how to implement the curriculum, that is fundamental to developing an informed, diverse and open-minded citizenry.

Finally, the recommendation ignores the complex, distributed and effective work already undertaken in this space by many professional teachers' associations. For example, the Victorian Commerce Teachers' Association produces a highly regarded journal, each issue of which contains sample teaching resources for teachers to customise and use. It does not prescribe a single set of resources for each topic, but rather it continues to produce diverse and updated resources each year that reflect new thinking and approaches. Similarly, the Business Educators Association of Queensland supports teachers with a bank of online quizzes in one subject area that they hope to scale up to a number of others in coming years. Members of the History Teachers' Association of Victoria participate in an online network of teachers of VCE History: Revolutions in which teachers continually share resources. This network and its archive provide induction, support and time-savings to new teachers but also challenge expert teachers to keep thinking about ways to improve and innovate. This could not be achieved by a centralised and slowly-updated bank of resources. Teaching resources produced by teacher associations are tailored to the curriculum needs of the state or territory that produce them, making them very desirable as they target the specific curriculum needs. This saves teachers having to sift and sort through a bank of

resources only to then need to tailor those resources to match their state's curriculum requirements.

APTA supports the suggestion that as one of the initiatives to be piloted, states and territories could invite professional teachers' associations to apply for funding to scale up or introduce initiatives of this kind, which would result in a greater pool of authors and ideas, and a curated and constantly updated collection of resources for teachers to consider and customise.

Action 15

APTA supports and welcomes this initiative. This action, however, ignores work already underway by teacher associations to maximise teachers' time to teach, plan and collaborate. APTA see this as a missed opportunity with the unintended consequence of disempowering teachers.

Initiatives to address teacher workload issues should focus on long-term, sustained improvements that enable teachers to focus on teaching. These are most likely to be achieved by:

- increased staffing in schools in administration, counselling, social work and compliance
- whole-of-Department-of-Education commitments to remove unnecessary reporting or administration requirements, and to limit the introduction of new requirements each year
- providing schools with access to expertise and advice that can optimise the interoperability of school IT systems (such as learning managements systems, reporting software, attendance software, etc.) to ensure that the use of digital technologies reduces rather than increases the time teachers spend on administration.

APTA suggests progress reports that include valid evidence of the effectiveness or otherwise of initiatives should be shared with teachers across Australia.

Teaching associations already provide learning area-specific professional development, teacher support, mentoring and resource development. At present there is not a consistent approach by states/territories to support professional teaching associations. Associations in populated states in key learning areas can generate some revenue from membership dues, sale of resources or corporate sponsorship; but localised subject associations and those operating in smaller jurisdictions struggle to generate the revenue they need to best meet the needs of their members. They rely on already stretched teachers volunteering their limited time to fulfil positions on small committees that make up a good number of our subject specific member associations. Funding would encourage smaller teacher associations to fund administrative support to assist them in their organisation of teacher support activities.

Where government funding is provided, responsive professional learning can be delivered at scale. The Northern Territory has implemented an effective policy approach. The Professional Teachers Association of Northern Territory (PTANT) has signed a five-year funding agreement with the Northern Territory Department of Education which provides financial support and an administrative officer position to support the work of NT-based professional teacher associations. The agreement allows NT-based associations to apply for up to \$20,000 in grants to be used for professional development of teachers. In the 2021-22 financial year, 23 grants were provided to teaching associations which directly benefited over 800 teachers. In addition, NT coordinates a biennial Festival of Teaching - a one-day professional learning event which supports discipline-based and cross-curricular professional learning. In 2021, over 58 workshops were delivered to over 250 attendees. APTA recommends that all state and territory governments explore opportunities to fund the work of professional teaching associations. APTA believes the Northern Territory model - where human resources and funding are provided to the peak body/joint council to support state-based associations - is an effective way to achieve high returns from existing networks. Workload issues are a significant burden for teachers and often it is not the answer to employ paraprofessionals or administrative staff to alleviate the burden, it is due to the interoperability of systems operating in schools that cause teacher to become exasperated. They are simply following the instructions of the school administration whether that be in reporting at the end of a term or as is done in many schools, additionally, 'continual' reporting after each piece of assessment or other administrative details such as planning curriculum so that exam timetables can be forecast or entering data about students who are late, leave early or are absent from class.

Often it is the case that the school is using technological systems that have been in place and relied on for more than a decade but then the need for more sophisticated data analysis programs that allow more detailed tracking of students have been implemented. The interface with students, however, is neither of these systems as that requires a learning management system and then the system that is used to administer the timetable and track classes is yet a different system. Generally, there is limited interoperability between these systems, and this causes administria for teachers who are at the confluence of several systems. This increased emphasis on data has occurred close to the same period where schools have needed to pivot their curriculum with online offerings. Data it is agreed, is important, but the cost is that it creates a burden for teachers who are required to engage with a multitude of different systems, often requiring the duplication of data.

Action 16

APTA welcomes this initiative. Progress reports that include valid evidence of the effectiveness of initiatives (including the number of annual downloads of the teaching resources being produced by curriculum authorities and other agencies) should be shared with teachers across Australia.

Action 17

"Each initiative in the next National School Reform Agreement will be subject to a Teacher Workload Impact Assessment". If this is implemented in good faith, this could be the most significant strategy in the Plan. Teachers will rejoice to see this being proposed. However, teachers will not celebrate the next sentence, which says that "States and territories, non-

government school authorities and teachers' unions will be consulted on the development of the workload impact assessment." APTA is dismayed to see that no practicing teachers and no professional teachers' associations have been included in this planned consultation process. This suggests that there is little respect for the teacher perspective; again, this is a way to boost the status of the profession - include teachers in the discussion about an assessment of what impacts their workload.

This Action would be even more powerful if the states and territories committed to subjecting all new initiatives to a similar assessment, as part of a national collaboration to rapidly reduce teacher workloads.

The 'Development of a Sample Learner Profile' is an example of an Education Ministers' initiative that would have benefitted from having an assessment of the potential impact on teacher time built into the design stage and process. The teacher time that would be required to develop a comprehensive Profile on every student did not appear to be a consideration, and there were no questions about this impact included as prompts in the consultation process. It was practising teachers who first raised this issue during consultations.

Action 18

APTA supports the review of the use of teaching assistants and school support staff to determine how they can be optimally deployed to reduce teacher workload. One suggestion is the implementation of a school registrar responsible for recording, tracking and monitoring student attendance.

Priority Area 5: Better understanding future teacher workforce needs (19-23)

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Better understanding workforce needs'?
YES/NO

This action aims to better understand future teacher workforce needs, including the number of teachers required.

How effective are the proposed actions in better understanding future teacher workforce needs, including the number of teachers required?

Extremely effective
Very effective
Moderately effective
Slightly effective
Not effective at all

Would you like to provide feedback about these actions?

APTA supports any measures that improve the information available for teacher workforce planning.

Action 20

APTA believe this Action is essential and will provide very valuable information for subject associations in helping them to target their own resources.

Action 22

APTA believe that this Action does not mention early-entry ITE students into classrooms before they have graduated. As discussed previously in our response to Action 10, prioritising conditional or provisional registration to increase supply is an area fraught with issues. Preservice teachers Australia wide now complete a capstone assessment based on the Graduate Teacher Standards and for early-entry ITE students this must be completed simultaneously with their full-time university subjects, while they have responsibility for classes in a school. This is too much to ask. Without significant support, burnout is a real factor for early-entry education students before they are even appointed to their first full-time position as a teacher. There is also a significant lack of uniformity around the language used to describe early-entry ITE students in each of the States.

Action 23

The potential solutions to be explored in this strategy should include “teacher access to funding and time release to participate in professional learning and networks of their choosing”. Evaluations conducted by teachers’ associations show that this is a sustaining, motivating force in teachers’ professional lives. Many schools and school sectors are severely limiting this access and prescribing ‘whole-school’ professional learning that does not have the same effect on subject/specialist expertise or teacher morale.

Priority Area 6: Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession (24-28)

Do you have feedback on the actions proposed for 'Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession'?

YES/NO

This action aims to improve career pathways, including through streamlining the process for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation, and providing better professional support for teachers to retain them in the profession.

The proposed actions will improve career pathways, including through streamlining the process for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) accreditation, and providing better professional support for teachers to retain them in the profession.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Would you like to provide feedback about these actions?

Action 24

APTA commends the Western Australian "LEAP" initiative. Professional Teacher Associations would be well positioned, if funded, to provide the short courses suggested to retrain teachers in additional specialist areas of teaching.

Action 25

APTA believes this action does not sufficiently address teacher retention and ignores the work already underway by teacher associations to provide subject/specialty-specific support to early career teachers and teachers teaching out-of-field, as well as networking opportunities that are so important for new teachers in regional or remote settings.

Professional teacher associations play a valuable role in providing subject-specific support while also building communities of practice. Bringing together like-minded subject practitioners in collaborative communities enhances wellbeing, deepens subject knowledge and effective pedagogy and reduces the sense of isolation that many subject-specific teachers can experience, particularly in rural and remote locations. The professional support and encouragement provided by professional teacher associations is essential for the wellbeing and quality of the teaching workforce and for retaining teachers beyond the first five years in the profession.

A number of teachers' associations offer free membership for pre-service teachers and reduced membership fees for graduate teachers. Some offer mentoring programs, and professional learning and networks that specifically target new and out-of-field teachers. This provision could be expanded and more consistently offered with greater financial support for teacher associations.

Many small and rural schools do not have a trained specialist in all subject areas. This may be true in at least one subject area in almost every school. In addition, the sole teacher in a particular specialist subject area usually cannot be provided with subject-specific mentoring within the school. The impact of this on the efficacy, confidence and growth of new teachers is significant. The guidelines proposed in Action 25 should reflect this and require the school to facilitate access to subject-specific specialist expertise – internal or external - in all subjects in which the new teacher has been appointed to teach.

Professional Teachers Association of the Northern Territory (PTANT) has established an early career teacher working group and is currently working with the Department of Education on how professional teacher associations can work with the department's Wellbeing Strategy, which sees a significant role for professional teacher associations.

APTA's South Australian member, Educators SA, has established an Early Career Educator Hub providing resources of interest to teachers new to the profession, including those related to teaching, learning and classroom management, as well as support in establishing professional networks and securing permanent employment. In some cases, associations have been incorporated to specifically support early career teachers, such as the Beginning and Establishing Teachers Association in Queensland.

Schools should be encouraged to connect early career teachers with the associations that support the subjects in which they are teaching, and school systems should guarantee access to subject/specialty professional learning that enables these teachers to accelerate their early career development.

The Federal government should consider funding the teaching associations to provide quality professional learning. State-based teacher associations are best placed to design and deliver quality micro-credentials for teachers. Their members have the subject/specialty expertise, and they are experienced teachers who are working in the field and know how to best support teachers.

Action 27

While APTA supports the notion of streamlining the process of achieving HALT accreditation, thorough research into the disparities between implementation models across (and within) the states and territories needs to be considered. APTA proposes that there are many teachers for whom alternative avenues other than HALT accreditation are more desirable, e.g. post-graduate degrees or other certification processes.

Action 28:

Enhancement of teachers' access to quality professional development does not appear to consider the vast array of quality, targeted and highly valued professional learning that teacher associations provide for their members.

The offerings mentioned in Action 28, form an important part of a complex and extended ecosystem of teacher professional learning. However, more teachers each year take part in

the short-form professional learning offered by teachers' associations because this is more accessible to most teachers (and schools) in terms of cost and time, and can be undertaken year after year to build skills and knowledge progressively in areas selected by the teacher to fill perceived expertise gaps or pursue professional interests. It can also be accessed easily by out-of-field teachers.

One example is that the Victorian teachers' associations, in the 21/22 year, offered around 450 professional learning activities ranging from one-hour webinars to three-day conferences, and more than 22,000 teachers chose to participate in them. (Please note, the same teacher may appear multiple times in this figure if they registered for multiple events.) These events and programs also provided many teachers with the opportunity to provide peer-led, subject-specific professional learning to others, adding another string to their professional bow. Over the course of a teachers' career, the expertise gained from this continuing professional development contributes to their status as a subject expert within their school and their appointment to roles such as Head of Department/Learning Area Leader, Head of Curriculum, and Head of Teaching and Learning. These promotions may be assisted by, but they are not reliant on, the achievement of a university qualification or external accreditation.

Support for the diverse, valued and widely utilised professional learning provided by teachers' associations and other non-university providers, and a more sophisticated understanding of what contributes to teacher career progression, should therefore be included in the Action Plan.

Concluding statements:

As APTAs member associations operate across Australia and in all schooling sectors, we are well-placed to support the development of respected, experienced, expert teachers with proven skills in pedagogy and a strong understanding of curriculum implementation. We recommend that policy makers actively consult with professional teacher associations when developing policies and strategies relating to the teaching workforce and consider the role professional teacher associations can play in giving a practitioner perspective that is directly connected to classroom practice.

APTA strongly supports the need for a nationally consistent approach to address issues impacting on quality teaching. We note that issues relating to time, resourcing and funding require the commitment of systems and governments but know that professional teacher associations can provide a valuable contribution to supporting issues regarding out-of-field teaching, developing and providing professional development, mentoring those new to teaching and resourcing teachers. In addition, professional teacher associations are long-standing, productive, effective, and sustainable professional networks that already exist and already provide active support to educators across Australia. The teacher workforce you wish to elevate needs to be included at the table if the objective is to recognise the value teachers bring to students, communities and the economy. APTA proffers that not including the collective teacher association voice has the unintended consequence of disempowering the profession and producing less effective government policy.