

## RECOGNISING ACCOMPLISHED TEACHERS

The Independent Education Union of Australia has long supported the recognition of accomplished teachers in schools. For two decades, the IEUA has argued for recognition arrangements that provide teachers with opportunities for more varied, fulfilling and better paid jobs and improvement in the educational opportunities and collegial support in schools

Such a package should involve a well supported program of teacher skill development – which the union views as a professional right – that is integrated into a democratically managed program of whole school development.

The IEUA believes that what is required in Australia is the development of an integrated career structure for teachers that is reflective of the work currently underway in Australia around accomplished teacher standards, including the work of teacher registration authorities and subject associations. Such a career structure requires a substantial commitment of resources by employers and governments. The integrated career structure should take into account the many phases in a teacher's career including early career, experienced, highly accomplished and leadership.

- The IEUA believes that appraisal of accomplished teachers must be on the basis of agreed criteria, and that the appraisal must be conducted fairly and impartially by trained personnel.
- The IEUA notes that international research reveals that quotas undermine the collaborative approach which characterises teachers' work. Teachers find themselves competing with colleagues which can lead to an unproductive work environment and adversarial relationships among staff. Therefore any notion of arbitrary quotas should be rejected.
- The IEUA expects that an indication of genuine commitment to recognising accomplished teachers by employers and governments

requires a commitment to ongoing funding for the plan.

- The IEUA notes that research evidence points to the success of any such initiative being dependent on the support of all who will participate or are affected. This includes teachers and their unions, employing authorities, administrators and the community. All these groups should therefore be included in the planning process.
- The IEUA rejects the notion of 'rewarding' teachers on the basis of student outcomes. The IEUA notes that such an approach has been tried and has failed in other countries. Further, such an approach undermines the collegial and supportive team environment critical for quality teaching and learning
- The IEUA also rejects the quite naïve notion of 'rewarding' teachers based on popularity or ranking measures as divisive, lacking in any objectivity and subject to patronage.

The IEUA has long supported the concept of professional career pathways underpinned by the right to professional learning and the development of an objective framework that supports, encourages and focuses on teachers' professional development. Such a framework recognises not only the complex nature of the work undertaken by teachers but also the collegial, cooperative and supportive environment that is critical to the 'full' educational interests of students

The development of objective frameworks or standards must reflect recognition for commitment through professional learning, active engagement in the life of the school, as well as the teacher's commitment to and provision of opportunities in the learning environment of students. This reflects the community's expectations that a full and positive school experience provided by accomplished teachers for students is manifestly more substantial and broader ranging than the overly simplistic notion of assessing teachers

through student outcomes on the national testing benchmark agenda.