



Teaching Australia

A statement by the Independent Education Union.

Over the last 15 years the IEU explicitly expressed support for a national professional body for teachers that is underpinned by a collaborative approach, involving various members and key organisations within the profession, that is accountable to teachers and has a capacity to work cooperatively to help build the status and standing of teachers.

Unfortunately the recently re-badged Commonwealth Government's Teaching Australia (TA), is not that body. (previously NIQTSL – National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership)

Teaching Australia does not appropriately represent teachers or school leaders despite its “by the profession for the profession” rhetoric.

- No member of TA's board or any other aspect of its governing structure has been directly elected by the profession;
- Individuals from teacher unions have been explicitly excluded from its governing structure by the Commonwealth Minister despite recommendations from the 'interim committee' and despite the expert advice provided by teacher unions during the consultation phase of the institute's development;
- It is not a requirement that there be any current practising classroom teachers on the board at all;
- TA is a company owned wholly by the Commonwealth Minister. Its 'constitution' is implemented at the discretion of the Minister as the sole owner and is therefore not an “independent body”;
- Its current three year funding has been redirected from funds previously targeted for teachers' professional development, QTP monies (Quality Teacher Programme since 1999).

The current structure and consequent disengagement of the teaching profession puts at risk the substantial work being undertaken in other jurisdictions around teacher standards, induction, professional development and pre-service training requirements and potentially misappropriates the genuine voice of the profession.

There is a real risk that the decisions and directions taken by TA will create an 'apparent' public voice on behalf of teachers and establish political momentum that aligns with political priorities of the Commonwealth government but not necessarily with the interests of teachers including school leaders.

Within the scope of TA's policy ambit there is potential for the board to:

- Implement accreditation or endorsement processes of teacher education courses and processes, including resource allocations, that do not recognise the realities of schools but reflect the Commonwealth government's education and industrial agenda;
- Legitimise the allocation of scarce education resources to government priorities rather than priorities arising from school based implementation and the priorities of school communities;
- Create waste and confusion by duplicating existing state and national processes which are currently constructively addressing the same agenda identified by TA;
- Appropriate the authority and credibility of the teaching profession to legitimise political priorities that do not align with or are contrary to the interests of teachers and school leaders.

Consequently the IEU expresses its disappointment in the Australian Government's decision to structure Teaching Australia in its current format and joins with other stakeholders to call on the Federal Education

Minister to review the structure and governance of Teaching Australia, including but not limited to the inclusion of teacher unions and elected teacher representatives on the TA board.

The IEU will continue to remain strategically engaged in and committed to the broad agenda of building the status and standing of teachers, through its affiliations with education stakeholders at a State, Territory and National level.