



Quality Initial Teacher Education Review July 2021

The IEUA has made submission into the Quality Initial Teacher Review; particularly highlighting that quality initial teacher education cannot be supported in a situation where staff and schools are considerably time poor and struggling with inadequate resources

Background

Instead of engaging with IEU members on the issues significantly impacting the profession, the Federal Government has once again sought to make political gain from education policies.

On 11 March 2021, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, Australian Government Minister for Education and Youth, delivered a speech which announced his intention to launch a review looking at the next evolution of reforms to initial teacher education (ITE).

In his speech, Minister Tudge focussed on Australia's, "*declining Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) outcomes in both absolute terms and relative to other countries and identified quality teaching as one of the key areas of focus to return Australia to the top group of nations*".

Minister Tudge expressed that this review would build upon the significant reforms arising from the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) report.

Introduction

The IEUA over decades has seen a continued approach by governments to avoid their responsibilities to engage with the profession or provide the committed resources.

This is having considerable workload implications for classroom teachers facing an ever increasing, imposed, political agenda.

Quality initial teacher education cannot be supported in a situation where staff and schools are considerably time poor and struggling with inadequate resources.

The timing and limited timeframe for this review has restricted consultation with practitioners and once again, the IEUA highlights the disconnection between such reviews and the profession.

IEUA Submission to Quality Initial Teacher Review

The review seeks to broadly address two keys areas for engaging students into the teaching profession;

**Part A- Attracting and selecting high quality candidates into the teaching profession and
PART B – Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers.**

The IEUA provided a comprehensive and concise submission this month by answering the following questions.

How can we further encourage high-performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter ITE and choose teaching as a career?

The IEUA strongly believes that programs and/or policies which are aimed at attracting and retaining a high-quality teaching workforce :

- need to recognise there are **significant issues around public perceptions of teaching**.
- should **deliver a range of high-quality pathways into initial teacher education (ITE)** to ensure that disadvantage is not a barrier to entry.
- include models of initial teacher education that **are rigorous and of sufficient length** to ensure that students who graduate can meet the Graduate Professional Teaching Standards before commencing employment as teachers.
- **should address the issues of Teacher shortage problems** in both the short and long-term, specifically retention beyond the two-year placement for the alternative pathways graduates in disadvantaged schools and schools experiencing subject shortage problems.
- **acknowledges a quality practicum component** of ITE is crucial in the development of preservice teachers' professional skills, abilities, and confidence in responding to different educational contexts.
- **acknowledges the workload involved in taking on a preservice teacher far exceeds the time and resources allocated.**
- requires **meaningful investment in incentives for graduates to move to rural and regional areas** and/or development of rural/regional training facilities.
- **must address the underlying professional and industrial issues.** The retention of quality education professionals can only be ensured through greater provision of additional supports (beyond classroom teachers and education support staff) which can be accessed to engage students from disadvantaged and challenging backgrounds.

What more can ITE providers and employers do to ensure ITE students are sufficiently prepared to be effective teachers?

The IEUA:

- notes the introduction of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification was supposed to recognize quality classroom practitioners. **Care is needed to ensure that these excellent practitioners remain in schools**, where they can guide less experienced colleagues to develop and improve their own practice.
- acknowledges TEMAG reforms have brought about significant changes in the way ITE programs are accredited but **now is not the time to destabilise this by introducing further change.**
- is **opposed to the idea of creating specialist 'teacher training schools,'** as this runs counter to what the profession knows about context- dependent practice.
- recommends **ITE providers** continue to provide background knowledge and quality practicum experiences for pre-service teachers, and **not diversify into the provision of post-graduation PD.**

Conclusion

Both politicians and the general public underestimate the intelligence, creativity and resilience required of teachers. The timing and limited timeframe for this review has restricted consultation with practitioners and once again, the IEUA highlights the disconnection between such reviews and the profession.

The IEUA is calling for real and ongoing consultation with the profession in a timely manner.