Independent Education Union of Australia

Speaks on...

29 July 2025

The Australian Teacher Workforce Data highlights the importance of mentoring for a sustainable teacher workforce

The Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) collates survey responses from higher education providers, teacher regulatory authorities and teachers across sectors on topics of crucial importance to the national teacher workforce.

The **National Trends: Teacher Workforce Data 2025** identifies the characteristics of the teacher workforce and trends in demographics, employment conditions, and specific workforce experiences. Among the issues identified as significant for workforce sustainability are the prevalence, or otherwise, of mentoring and induction programs for early career teachers.

Teaching is highly complex, requiring proficient selection of strategies and deployment of skills, often while dealing with demanding classroom or playground situations and responding to students with diverse needs. When early career teachers commence their duties in front of a class, the capacity to acquire experience is compressed by the need to respond appropriately to students from the first lesson.

Regular and structured access to experienced mentors and a genuine induction program can provide meaningful support while early career teachers acquire experience, thus avoiding unnecessary burnout or other detrimental effects.

The ATWD shows that access to induction and mentoring varies widely. For many teachers the experience of induction has been superficial and limited, lacking the structure and regularity needed for steady development of skills. Those who had participated in an induction program ranked mentoring as the most useful activity, followed by a reduction in face-to-face teaching time, the opportunity to observe experienced teachers and an orientation program.

Teachers working in early childhood services are confronted by additional challenges resulting from complexities in the sector. In their report **National Early Career Teacher Mentoring and Induction Support** the Australian Education Research Organisation recommended that funding be allocated to ensure that both new teachers and their mentors have allocated time, expectations are clarified, and professional development programs for mentors are established.

The IEU will continue to advocate for recognition of the essential foundations of effective mentoring programs, including release time, professional development and remuneration for mentors, as integral elements of national policy that should be enshrined in industrial agreements.