

## Submission for the Australia 2020 Summit on 19-20 April 2008

Summit Topic 2. The productivity agenda – education, skills, training, science and innovation

### STATUS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The evidence presented to stimulate discussion on the question “What can we do to ensure the highest quality teachers at all stages of the system and for all subjects” states that no professional body has been established for the teaching profession, as in other professions.

The professionalisation of teaching is an important policy objective. OECD research recognises the benefits of a strong, well regarded teaching profession with the standing to influence policies and strategies for schooling.

I would like to draw participants’ attention to the establishment of Teaching Australia in December 2005 to be the national body for the teaching profession, encompassing the professional practice of teaching and school leadership in all settings, sectors and jurisdictions. The purpose of setting up a single body was to address the fragmented nature of the profession, divided by government and non-government school sector, states and territories, as principals and teachers, between pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and among teaching disciplines.

Teaching Australia is a Commonwealth-owned company with an independent Board of Directors drawn from the profession, operating at arms length from Government. It is funded by the Australian Government.

In the past two years, Teaching Australia, working mainly through the many national professional teaching and principal associations, has made significant progress towards establishing the essential elements of a coherent national professional framework.

Most recently, in April 2008, a Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession was launched. The Charter sets out the values and commitments of teachers and principals across the country, wherever they work. More than 30 national professional associations developed and “own” the Charter which is a first step in a system of national professional standards.

Teaching Australia has engaged with professional associations, teachers and principals in developing national professional standards, which will set out in detail the knowledge

and skills required for accomplished practice. By 2009, separate standards will be developed for specialist areas of teaching and for principals, with a common frame of values and capabilities.

Recognising the central importance of high calibre new entrants to teaching, Teaching Australia has consulted widely to design a national system of accreditation of initial teacher preparation, to provide assurance that teacher education programs across the country meet rigorous and nationally consistent high standards.

Teaching Australia is setting up a formal link with national professional associations, the Teaching Australia Network. The Network, to come together for the first time in June 2008, will bring over 30 professional associations together to strengthen the profession as a whole. The aim of the Network is “to sustain a vigorous teaching profession, able to play a key role in shaping directions for education and in meeting the challenges of quality teaching and school leadership into the future.”

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Chair

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