



The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

The Board of Directors
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP LETTER OF EXPECTATION 2011 and 2012

Dear Directors

The Letter of Expectation sets out the priorities and expectations of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in 2011 and 2012 for the organisation to continue to drive national reforms in support of teacher quality and excellence in school leadership.

It is understood that AITSL has a work plan for 2011 and has been reporting its progress to Council on that plan throughout 2011. It is expected that AITSL will update its work plan for 2012 against this Letter of Expectation for endorsement by the Standing Council in early 2012.

Priorities for Teachers and Teaching

National Professional Standards for Teachers

The Standards form the basis of many of the elements of the *National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality*.

Implementation of the Standards by jurisdictions commenced in 2011 and it is expected that AITSL will work with jurisdictions to further promote and support the implementation of the Standards during 2012.

The approach adopted should lay foundations for the ongoing development of the Standards and national consistency in the application of the Standards. AITSL will develop and source evidence based resources, including support for professional learning, to support all four levels of the Standards: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

These resources must meet the needs of teachers from early career to experienced primary, secondary and special education teachers. The elements of the Standards that

will most expediently improve the quality of teaching should be identified and support resources prioritised accordingly. Work in this area should include the identification and repurposing of existing effective materials, as appropriate, as well as identifying gaps for future development.

In addition, AITSL will work with the states and territories to report to the Standing Council on progress on the adoption of the Standards.

Indigenous Australians

It is important that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are taught by high quality teachers in schools led by dedicated principals. This can be achieved by supporting teachers through effective initial teacher education programs and professional development incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

It is expected that AITSL will play an integral role in the implementation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* and that its work will directly support the objectives of that Plan.

The requirements for teachers to have knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are included in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Standards 1.4 and 2.4 specifically refer to higher quality teaching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the teaching of Indigenous cultures, histories and languages.

AITSL will undertake work that supports the implementation of these Standards to ensure that the teaching workforce, both new and existing, is well prepared to meet these standards. This work will focus on identifying and sharing practices that best illustrate these standards.

National Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Courses

The national accreditation of initial teacher education courses aims to increase the quality of teachers graduating from Australian universities and higher education providers through nationally agreed and applied processes.

At the 15 April 2011 meeting of MCEECDYA the program standards and procedures for a national approach to accreditation of initial teacher education programs were endorsed. At this meeting further work to support implementation of the standards and procedures was flagged, particularly:

- determining jurisdictional equivalence levels of literacy and numeracy for entrants to initial teacher education programs that represent the top 30% of the population;
- appropriate program structure and content;
- strengthening the practicum component of initial teacher education; and
- supporting teaching in non-school settings.

AITSL will continue to engage higher education institutions and other providers of teacher education courses to define, establish, commence and ultimately review processes for implementing the Program Standards from 2011. In 2012, AITSL will work with providers to develop an agreed schedule to achieve the accreditation of all teacher education courses, for example within five years.

Nationally Consistent Teacher Registration

AITSL will continue to work with jurisdictions, sectors and regulatory authorities to develop a nationally consistent registration process based on the proficient standards for implementation at jurisdictional level. The National Partnership aims to improve the status of teaching, community confidence in the profession and the mobility of the Australian teaching workforce through the implementation of a consistently applied, nationally agreed and endorsed teacher registration process. It is agreed that the professional requirements for registration will be based on the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

The work to date has identified those areas of the registration process that will require legislative amendments in order to align with a national process. AITSL will work closely with registration authorities in each jurisdiction to progressively implement the alignment of registration requirements for teachers in areas that do not require legislative change. At the same time AITSL should progress work on the more complex elements of registration that are likely to require legislative changes, with a view to achieving resolution to allow implementation of a nationally consistent approach to registration from 2013. This will include articulation of the roles, responsibilities and implications for regulatory bodies, employers and individual teachers, and their associated accountabilities.

Voluntary Certification of Teachers at the Highly Accomplished and Lead Levels

With ministerial agreement to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, a nationally agreed certification process for teachers at the highly accomplished and lead levels can progress. In 2011 and 2012, AITSL is asked to consult extensively with jurisdictions and other key stakeholders to develop, trial and validate a process by which teachers can undertake voluntary certification at the highly accomplished and lead levels.

Underpinned by the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, AITSL must identify the components of the process as well as clarify the role of jurisdictions, regulatory bodies, AITSL and the teaching profession in the process. AITSL will also develop a plan for implementation and a process for ensuring consistency of application.

The development of supporting materials, such as guidelines and appropriate training, should be undertaken with a view to implementation to commence from 2013.

National Framework for Teacher Development and Performance

At the 14 October MCEECDYA meeting, Council agreed that AITSL would develop a national framework for teacher development and performance to form part of the *Reward Payments for Great Teachers* initiative. It is expected that AITSL will report on progress on the framework to Council at its first meeting in 2012.

Early Childhood Teaching Workforce

AITSL will work closely with the Early Childhood Development Working Group, AEEYSOC and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to:

- provide advice on a common approach to procedures and processes for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs preparing teachers for both

schools and early childhood education and care settings to ensure preparation for both settings is adequate;

- assist the early childhood sector to map and analyse current practice and develop options for the registration of early childhood teachers in early childhood education and care settings;
- test the relevance of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* for application in early childhood education and care settings; and
- develop supporting material for the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, as they might apply to early childhood education teachers.

Assessment for Migration

It is expected that AITSL will continue to undertake the function of designated assessing authority under the *Migration Regulations 1994* for the purpose of skilled migration to Australia of the stated categories of teaching professionals: pre-primary, primary and secondary school teachers. It is acknowledged that as a result of changes to the Skilled Occupations List, announced by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), AITSL has undertaken assessments against four new categories of special education teachers from 1 July 2011.

AITSL will also work with ACECQA to ensure a consistent approach to assessment of qualifications of early childhood teachers for migration purposes.

All assessment for migration functions are to be undertaken on a cost recovery basis.

For Principals/School Leaders

National Professional Standard for Principals

AITSL will provide national leadership and direction to support the development of aspiring and practising principals by improving the quality of teaching and school leadership as outlined in the *National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality*.

The *National Professional Standard for Principals* sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do and provides a nationally accepted and accessible understanding of the role of principals in their school and wider community.

AITSL will continue to work collaboratively and visibly with leadership institutions within states and territories, to promote and support the implementation of the Standard to attract and develop a high quality, continuous supply of school leaders and aspiring principals, and to support the professional learning of aspiring and practising principals, including improving and building leadership and management capability and practices.

AITSL should also continue to offer support to school leaders through flagship programs and by sourcing contemporary support materials aligned to the Standard.

AITSL will report to the Standing Council on the use of the Standard in contributing to the building of leadership of principals.

Empowering Local Schools

The objective of the *Empowering Local School* initiative is to deliver greater local empowerment to more schools to enable them to better respond to local school

community needs and provide the services to ensure their students achieve the best educational outcomes. As agreed by education ministers at the meeting of 8 July 2011, AITSL will support the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative through ensuring national access to high quality professional development for principals aligned with the *National Professional Standard for Principals*. In addition, AITSL will strengthen the provision of research and evidence to support principals to lead and manage schools with greater levels of local empowerment and support communities of practice.

School Leadership Development Strategies – Clearinghouse website

Following allocation of funds as part of the six key reform projects agreed to by MCEECDYA in 2009, AITSL created an interactive web-based clearinghouse which provides easy access to current research and information on effective school leadership development strategies. The site is a resource for aspiring and practising school principals.

AITSL should ensure that the Clearinghouse site remains current and accessible by teachers and school leaders and the wider education community and continues to evolve, and in particular, that it includes relevant materials developed by jurisdictions following specific Australian Government funding to the states and territories for principal professional development.

Teachers and School Leaders

Professional Development for Teachers and School Leaders

In 2011, AITSL is to continue the development of 'An Australian Charter for Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders'. The Charter, in conjunction with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *National Professional Standard for Principals* will promote the central role of professional learning in improving teacher and school leader practice and will inform and influence the design, delivery and sustainability of high quality professional learning, including online learning.

Throughout 2011 and 2012, AITSL will engage extensively with key stakeholders involved in the use, provision, oversight or management of professional learning to promote a strong learning culture.

AITSL will continue to develop and implement the *Leading Curriculum Change* Flagship Professional Development Program. It is expected that AITSL will continue to work with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and Education Services Australia (ESA) to oversee the program.

AITSL should continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education by building links with the work of key stakeholders through other projects such as *Stronger Smarter*, and *More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers*, to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders and ensure all teachers are adequately equipped to effectively teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

AITSL will participate in strengthening principal professional development using funds available under the National Partnership. The funds will be directed to state and territory

jurisdictions for the development and delivery of high-quality professional development programs for principals and emerging principals that address national and local priorities; and to AITSL to perform a national coordination role for activities funded under this allocation.

Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership

AITSL will administer the annual Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership on behalf of the Australian Government, with the new structure as agreed to by all education ministers in March 2011.

The Awards will celebrate and recognise the contribution of outstanding teachers and school leaders in delivering high quality education for young Australians. The five categories are:

- Australian Primary Teacher of the Year
- Australian Secondary Teacher of the Year
- Australian Primary Principal of the Year
- Australian Secondary Principal of the Year
- The Australian Government Minister's Award for Excellence - in 2011 this was awarded for excellence in teaching or leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education).

AITSL will arrange the Awards ceremonies in consultation with DEEWR. It is expected that the experience of the 2011 awards will inform the planning process for the awards in 2012.

In 2012, it is expected that an additional category be established to recognise the Australian Early Childhood Teacher of the Year.

The Australian Government Minister's Award for Excellence in 2012 will again focus on excellence in teaching or leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Research

AITSL will engage with national and international research to support innovation and best practice within the teaching profession. Through the regular publication of this research and continued refreshment of the Clearinghouse website AITSL will continue to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession and demonstrate commitment to improving the quality of teaching and school leadership.

The continued participation of AITSL in national and international forums on innovative educational practices is encouraged and the benefit of this involvement is expected to be visible in informing further work and research opportunities for the organisation.

Governance

It is expected that AITSL will implement the recommendations from the review into the size and composition of the Board of Directors, undertaken by *dandolopartners* in November 2010, and agreed by the Australian Government Minister for School Education in January 2011.

As a result of the review, the organisation is expected to move to a smaller board structure by 1 April 2012. In the interim, the current Board of Directors have been reappointed to 31 March 2012.

AITSL Standing Committees may need to change in line with the recommendations of the review. The Board committees and working groups should be designed to harness the appropriate intellectual input and experience within the education sector in order to develop robust and practical initiatives for implementing the policy priorities set by the Standing Council.

In response to the recommendations of the review it is expected that AITSL will present a final plan for the transition to the new governance model in early 2012.

Reporting and work plans

AITSL will continue to manage its financial affairs and reporting in accordance with its legislative requirements under the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, *Corporations Act 2001* and the Finance Ministers' Orders.

Reporting required under the Funding Agreement with the Australian Government (represented by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) can be found at Schedule 1, Item L, of the Agreement. Under this Agreement AITSL must:

- provide the Standing Council with annual forward work plans on a financial year basis setting out key deliverables, budget and timelines for strategic directions and priorities set out in this Letter;
- report to the Standing Council in progress reports against this Letter of Expectation and work plan twice a year to correspond with the scheduled Standing Council meetings; and
- communicate significant changes to budgets, forward work plans and/or timelines in a timely manner, and engage the Standing Council regarding these changes.

In response to this Letter of Expectation, AITSL will present a work plan, through the Minister for School Education and sole member of the company, to the Standing Council for endorsement in early 2012.

In developing reports for the Standing Council, it is expected AITSL will give consideration to the collection and presentation of data; in particular, quantitative data on the implementation of the elements under the National Partnership developed by AITSL.

The Standing Council asks that AITSL continue to build on the current productive relationships with ACARA and ESA in order to contribute to the strength of the national educational architecture.

Working with the Australian Government Minister for School Education

AITSL should seek the prior agreement of the Australian Government Minister for School Education before taking on any significant new work during the period of time covered by the Letter of Expectation.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has the responsibility for providing the Minister for School Education with advice on all portfolio matters relating to school education.

It is expected that DEEWR will be invited to participate in the work of AITSL's committees and working groups, particularly those that are progressing the work under the National Partnership and new initiatives as a result of election commitments.

Stakeholder Engagement

The engagement of stakeholders is vital in ensuring that the work of AITSL is understood in the context of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) education reform agenda including the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality. The Standing Council looks to AITSL to build networks with all stakeholders and work collaboratively to achieve education reforms at the national and regional level. It is expected that AITSL will support teachers and school leaders in the implementation of these reforms both directly and through their professional associations and state and territory structures.

AITSL is asked to continue to implement processes to maintain a high level of jurisdictional engagement, including through the membership of AEEYSOC, as well as the wider stakeholder engagement required to support and progress its work. AITSL must ensure appropriate engagement from all relevant stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

- government and non-government education sectors;
- the teaching profession (including key peak bodies, leadership institutes, professional associations, principal associations, practising teachers and principals);
- teacher regulatory bodies;
- universities and higher education providers;
- the education unions;
- the Australian Government;
- parents and the wider school community.

Stakeholder views must be considered extensively during development, testing, implementation and evaluation phases of the work of AITSL. This engagement should be appropriate, regular and may use a wide variety of modes.

Any new materials to support the work of AITSL for local implementation must be developed in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, taking into account current research, and be delivered in a timely manner.

Funding

The Australian Government will continue to support AITSL to deliver the priorities set by the Standing Council as detailed in the current Funding Agreement between AITSL and the Australian Government (represented by DEEWR). Core operational funding for AITSL is made available under the joint national component of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program to undertake the priorities listed in this Letter. It is expected that AITSL will manage resources appropriately across the priorities in order to meet expectations.

As agreed by MCEECDYA at the meeting of 28 September 2009, the sources of financial support for AITSL will be examined after two years of operation (in 2012). The examination will consider the most appropriate balance of Australian Government and state/territory contributions for its future role. It is expected that initial work will be scoped by the DEEWR, in consultation with AITSL.

I look forward to continuing to work with AITSL on these national reforms to support teacher quality and excellence in school leadership.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke that ends in a small flourish.

Peter Garrett