

# Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership

## National Review of Teacher Registration

### Submission by [REDACTED]

**Main Idea:** Establish a pool of accredited and trained, former (e.g. retired) teachers and executive school leaders as volunteer (or remunerated) mentors to compliment the existing support of pre-service and beginning teachers in their transition from university through to their first year of teaching and professional registration.

#### Relevant Issues:

1. Transition of pre-service teachers from university (especially in final year) to classroom:
  - Lack of clarity and consistency around the advice provided by universities to pre-service teachers regarding application for employment with employing authorities, and teacher registration processes.
  - Inconsistency of formalised support, including mentoring programs, offered by universities for pre-service teachers regarding engagement with employing authorities regarding application for employment processes, and with teacher registration authorities regarding registration processes.
2. Beginning Teaching Career (first weeks / months / year):
  - Inconsistency (or duplication/overlap) between confirmation of appointment processes of employing authorities, in particular state departments of education, and teacher registration process.
  - Most practising teachers, including teachers in specialist support and leadership roles, and executive school leaders, are committed to supporting and mentoring beginning teachers and colleagues, and generously give of their time (over and above any remunerated role) and share their experience. However ...
  - The role of teacher and executive school leader is becoming increasingly more complex. Depending on the size and complexity of the school and it's setting, as well as the size and experiential background of the staff, the capacity of established colleagues to support and mentor beginning teachers may be either enhanced or compromised. Even the most committed mentors find themselves time-poor with tight budgeting and resource allocations resulting in restricted flexibility and opportunity to engage in collegial support. Overall, the situation is variable with induction of beginning teachers inconsistent in quality.
  - There are unique Challenges presented in supporting teachers appointed to small schools and/or remote locations.
3. Increasing national cohort of retired or former, experienced teachers and executive school leaders:
  - Many remain passionate about their profession, learning, and Education in general.
  - Presently, there is a risk that their accumulated and collective knowledge and skill will be significantly under-utilised or become a lost resource – at least to their former profession.

- Many are keen to share their experience, skills, knowledge and capabilities – much of which is widely transferable beyond teaching in a school setting. As well, many currently and enthusiastically seek to invest back into their communities in a voluntary role through a range of roles and organisations.
4. Technology is providing ever-expanding opportunities for collegial networking, including professional support and mentoring.

#### Proposed Strategies:

1. Work toward ensuring national consistency of professional registration processes across all state or territory authorities. Registration should be readily transferable across state/territory boundaries.
2. Work toward establishing consistent guidelines to which universities should adhere in providing advice to pre-service teachers regarding the process of professional teacher registration.
3. Work toward ensuring that, as much as possible, confirmation of (permanent) appointment processes across state employing authorities are aligned with registration processes i.e. aim to minimise duplication of paperwork and reporting.
4. **Focus Strategy:** Establish a pool of former (e.g. retired) teachers and executive school leaders as volunteer (or remunerated) mentors to compliment the existing support of pre-service and beginning teachers in their transition from university through to their first year of teaching and professional registration. General principles around recruitment, practical deployment and operation could include:
  - A policy and role description is developed.
  - Applicant mentors would need to be currently registered and selected based on a set of criteria;
  - Successful applicants would be provided with appropriate orientation and training, and receive accreditation. Ongoing support and professional development would be offered, with successful participation essential for ongoing accreditation;
  - The “mentoring program” would be implemented nationally and be offered through all universities and employing authorities/schools;
  - The program would not replace any pre-existing programs implemented by universities or schools, but would be an additional, available resource;
  - Mentors would need to liaise closely with universities and host schools to ensure integrity as well as aligned and purposeful collegial support practices;
  - Participation by pre-service and beginning teachers (mentees) would be optional. Mentees would be free to opt in or out at any time;
  - Mentees would be invited to submit routine reviews on the quality and effectiveness of mentoring support;
  - Matching of mentees and mentors would be based on a range of factors and take account of, for example, geographic location; education sector; school setting; and experiential background and profile of mentors;
  - Matching (and the duration of support) could potentially extend across the mentee’s final year of study to the end of their first year of teaching;
  - While face-to-face contact between mentor and mentees would be ideal, other modes of networking and engagement could be explored.

**[Please Note:** For many years, the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has implemented a very successful Career Mentoring Scheme which is offered to students across all faculties, predominantly in their final year of study, to support students in their transition to work. This program provides an excellent model upon which to build and adapt.]

Intended Outcomes:

1. Support for pre-service teachers to more confidently focus on completing their studies and positioning themselves for employment; and beginning teachers to more confidently focus on transitioning to the classroom, being the best teacher they can, and launching their professional careers.
2. Enhanced consistency and opportunities for supporting and mentoring aspiring and beginning teachers at perhaps the most critical phase of their career.
3. Recognising and capitalising on the rich resource offered by former and long-standing members of the teaching profession who remain passionately committed to the value of quality teaching and learning, and who have a drive to share and give back.

██████████ – Background:

- 39 years experience as classroom teacher, deputy principal and principal, with the Queensland Department of Education, and mostly in primary schools;
- Queensland College of Teachers, Reg. # ██████████
- Experience in a wide range of education settings and communities from an isolated and remote, small, one-teacher school; multi-age teaching in small schools (as a teaching principal) in rural communities; to large and complex urban schools;
- Extensive experience in teacher supervision, mentoring and support, and including management of pre-service field experience programs in liaison with universities; recruitment; induction; supervision of professional registration reporting, and confirmation of appointment processes;
- Post-retirement - engagement on a casual, contract basis with the QUT, Faculty of Education in the role of University Supervisor during Field Experience blocks, providing, support for and liaising between the University; pre-service teachers, host schools (coordinators); and supervising teachers.
- Participating as a volunteer mentor with the QUT Career Mentoring Scheme (noted previously), supporting final year Education students.
- Retired in 2014, though currently in transition between careers.