

AITSL National Review of Teacher Registration

Response of the Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania (IEU Vic Tas) represents Teachers, Principals and Education Support Staff employed in Catholic and Independent schools in Victoria and Tasmania. IEU Vic Tas also has membership coverage of staff employed in private Vocational Education and Training Colleges in both states. IEU VicTas is pleased to respond to the AITSL consultation paper.
- 1.2 IEU VicTas strongly supports the registration of teachers employed in both school and early childhood settings. It believes that the governance structures of teacher registration bodies, in particular the governing Boards or Councils, should consist of a majority of members drawn from the teaching profession. The teacher unions as the largest representative bodies of teachers in Australia, should quite appropriately nominate representatives of the profession to those governing bodies.

2.0 Consistency of Registration Across Australia

- 2.1 IEU VicTas believes that in both Victoria and Tasmania the eight elements of the teacher registration framework are working reasonably well.
- 2.2 The union also believes that the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Teacher Standards) and the key elements contained in the Consistency Framework have fostered consistency of standards and processes across the states and territories, as well as allowed for important local level input of the profession and other stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and review of the main elements and processes of registration. The location of registration at the state and territory level has fostered greater buy-in by both the profession and other stakeholders, including employing authorities, parents and tertiary institutions.

2.3 Suitability to Teach

IEU VicTas believes that the current suitability criteria which are focused on character references and criminal history provide sufficient information upon which to assess suitability.

2.4 Movement from Provisional to Full Registration

While the standards provide a framework for the movement of teachers from Provisional Registration to Full Registration, the process for achieving full registration should remain flexible to accommodate different contexts and experience.

Support for provisionally registered teachers should be encouraged and fostered throughout the process, with collegial approaches encouraged, as in the Victoria model. It is important that processes are not onerous and are sufficiently flexible to enable the significantly large number of provisionally registered teachers who are employed in casual/temporary positions in schools to be supported and enabled to undertake processes while on temporary contracts. Casual/emergency forms of employment should not hinder the movement from provision to full registration because of the ways in which teachers are required to demonstrate they meet the standards for full registration, that is, standards at the proficient career stage.

2.5 Fixed period of registration

IEU VicTas supports in principle the current elements listed, but supports a degree of flexibility in implementation/phase in.

2.6 Alternative Authorisation to Teach

IEU VicTas understands that the concept of alternative authorisation to teach is to allow, in clearly defined circumstances and under special conditions, permission to teach for those who would otherwise not meet registration requirements.

Currently the categories are generally limited to:

- addressing workforce shortages where a qualified and registered teacher is not available; and
- providing pathways to registration for individuals who are working towards an accredited initial teacher education qualification, within a specified period of time.

IEU VicTas is not supportive of approaches that would broaden the use of limited authority to teach, particularly in respect to providing pathways to registration which include granting authority to teach to persons involved in initial teacher education who have not concluded their qualifications. IEU VicTas believes that the promotion of quality teaching requires stringent teacher shortage tests to be applied in all instances of application for alternative authorisation to teach.

IEU VicTas is unsure of what is meant in the consultation document by the term **Pre-registration**, and what is meant by a means to promoting '*early engagement*'. Pre-registration for ITE students is not necessary in respect to undertaking placements. The Working with Children Check coupled with supervision by registered teachers is appropriate.

2.7 Mutual Recognition

IEU VicTas believes the national consistency framework has assisted in this process. With all currently employed NSW teachers now being registered, IEU VicTas believes the process should be simplified. IEU would be concerned however if mutual recognition arrangements weakened current registration requirements.

3 Early Childhood Teachers

IEU VicTas is supportive of registration of Early Childhood teachers. In both Victoria and Tasmania Early Childhood teachers are registered. It is important that implementation of registration for this group of teachers is phased in and that their unique circumstances are recognised and accommodated. For example, many Early Childhood teachers are the only teacher in the particular service and thus need to be supported by employing authorities, teacher registration bodies and government in relation to induction, and progression from provisional registration to full registration. This accommodation also needs to acknowledge the historic qualification patterns of this group. IEU VicTas believes that deeming provisions should apply in relation to any implementation of Early Childhood Teacher registration.

4 VET Teachers in School Settings and RTOs

Most jurisdictions provide an authority to teach or equivalent registration category for VET trainers who do not meet the teacher registration requirements. While genuine teacher shortages should guide the granting of authority to teach or other equivalent registration processes, it is important that the essential element of quality teaching is promoted and maintained in such processes.

5 Registration as a state or federal issue

IEU VicTas is supportive of the current state-based process which engages more fully the teaching profession, as well as all other stakeholders including employing authorities, and parents is important. The concept of a consistent framework to achieve comparability across states is supported by the IEU VicTas as the more appropriate process.