

# Evaluation of Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession

Summary of Synergistiq's evaluation report

August 2020



# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>Background</i> .....	5
<i>Purpose and scope of the evaluation</i> .....	5
<i>Outcomes framework</i> .....	6
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>Data sources</i> .....	7
<b>Evaluation findings</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1. <i>Awareness of the Guidelines, tools and resources</i> .....	9
Guidelines .....	9
Tools and resources .....	9
2. <i>Application</i> .....	9
To what degree do sector level policies align with the Guidelines? .....	9
To what degree do school level policies and/or programs align with the Guidelines? .....	10
3. <i>Experience</i> .....	10
What is mentor experience of induction programs? .....	10
What is ECT experience of induction programs? .....	11
Do ECTs experience induction that is consistent with the Guidelines? (Were these elements present during induction?) .....	11
4. <i>Impact</i> .....	12
Is teacher experience of the four guidelines elements assisted by induction? .....	12
<b>Conclusion and recommendations</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>Planned actions</i> .....	15

# Executive summary

Published in 2016, the *Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession* ('the Guidelines') support early career teachers as they transition into the classroom, with a view to ensuring teachers are retained for longer and schools develop a culture of continuous learning and improvement for both beginning teachers and mentors. In May 2020, Synergistiq was commissioned to undertake an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Induction initiative in achieving its intended outcomes as of 2020. Findings are based on the initiative's monitoring and evaluation framework; AITSL data, namely the 2016 and 2019 Stakeholder Surveys<sup>1</sup>, 2016 and 2020 Professional Growth Network<sup>2</sup> (PGN) surveys, and web analytics on key digital resources; and new data from a brief satisfaction survey administered by the evaluator on teachers' perceptions of their induction experience. Recommendations for future action draw on the Guidelines and feedback from a Reflections Workshop facilitated by the evaluator and attended by AITSL staff.

## Evaluation findings

- In 2019, 74% of surveyed AITSL stakeholders were aware of the Guidelines. Awareness was high among early career teachers (87%), education sector organisations (86%), school leaders (81%), and mentors<sup>3</sup>, specifically middle career teachers who had 6-15 years' experience as a teacher (72%) and experienced teachers who had 16+ years of experience (69%).
- Of the four key areas identified as important for induction (i.e. Professional Practices, Professional Identity, Wellbeing, and Orientation), early career teacher (ECT) respondents considered wellbeing to be the least supported during their induction. In 2019, there was a significant difference between ECTs reporting their school induction processes included a focus on teacher wellbeing (56% reported to 'some extent' or 'large extent') and agreeing that their school induction experience supported their personal wellbeing (39% of ECTs agreed, selecting 6 or above on a 0-10 rating scale, with 10 being 'strongly agree').
- While 81% of school leaders were aware of the Guidelines in 2019, there has been a decrease between 2016 and 2019 in school leaders reportedly offering formal induction to ECTs on short term contracts (down to 70% in 2019 from 77% in 2016) and casual relief teachers (CRTs) (down to 39% in 2019 from 45% in 2016). In 2019, only 38% of staff on short term contracts and 20% of CRTs reported receiving a formal induction.
- Mentors ranked below school leaders and ECTs in both their awareness of the Guidelines (72% in 2019) and in their perception of the support offered by AITSL for the Guidelines. 62% of mentors rated AITSL's performance in supporting the Guidelines as good (selecting 6 or above on a 0-10 rating scale, with 10 being 'very good') compared with 80% of school leaders and 68% of ECTs.
- Between 2016 and 2019, there was an increase in the proportion of school leaders reporting they allocated time for induction, which is one of the strategies and supports identified in the Guidelines as contributing to its effective implementation; however, this increase was not observed by mentors and ECTs.

---

<sup>1</sup> AITSL administers a Stakeholder Survey that collects information in relation to awareness of, engagement with, and effectiveness of national frameworks and resources, and perceptions of AITSL. For the evaluation, only complete responses were used in the analysis (n=4,181, 2016; n=3,393, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> The professional network consists of individuals from 24 education systems and sectors in Australia with responsibility for the professional learning and/or the development of school leaders and teachers.

<sup>3</sup> Mentors were stakeholder survey respondents who identified as mid- to late-career teachers (i.e. over 6 years' experience) and indicated they had acted as a mentor or coach for early career teachers.

- Perspectives regarding the degree to which the rest of the strategies and supports identified in the Guidelines (including mentoring/coaching, classroom observation and feedback, and professional learning communities) are included in induction were relatively consistent among ECTs, mentors, and school leaders. These respondent groups collectively cited networking within and outside schools as the least common activities present during induction. ECTs also reported low levels of contact with teachers in leadership roles.
- Education sector organisations reported high levels of training for mentors (67%) and mentor support (73%). Conversely, less than a third of mentors reported having received training.
- In 2017, AITSL released the My Induction app for beginning teachers needing support and advice. In 2019, 40% of early career teachers (ECTs) were aware of the My Induction app, with 16% reporting having used it. Most app users rated it positively including in relation to its ability to link early career teachers with useful resources; however, the gap between awareness and usage is high.
- Besides the app, AITSL produced video resources to support implementation. Certain topics have enjoyed a level of popularity, such as on a collaborative approach (case study video) and key elements of effective induction (long version of a video on induction).

## Recommendations for AITSL

Synergistiq provided recommendations for AITSL to continue to support induction for early career teachers, summarised below:

- Provide resources for early career teachers including: a focus on improving the quality of wellbeing support, activities to increase awareness of the My Induction app and its features for ECTs, and improving the relevance of the app for ECTs.
- Support induction for casual/relief teachers, ECTs in remote locations, and early childhood teachers. Consider strategies for increasing engagement with schools, and with professional and sector networks, as well as promotion in pre-service teacher settings around Guidelines requirements.
- Mentor capability and support: build awareness of the Guidelines amongst mentors, as well as improve sector awareness of the mentor role, including best practice approaches to training and support.
- Build on the relative success of certain resources, which may indicate an informational need among target stakeholder groups. Integrate monitoring mechanisms or continue to collect user feedback to better understand why and how particular resources have better uptake than others.

## Planned actions

Based on the findings of the evaluation conducted by Synergistiq, AITSL plans to undertake the following actions:

- Progress roll-out of My Teaching Advice, supporting early career teachers to seek advice from experienced colleagues.
- Continue to promote relevant resources through the My Induction app.
- Progress roll-out of revised Supervising Pre-Service Teacher modules to better support initial teacher education students undertaking professional experience placements in schools.

# Introduction

## Background

Released in July 2016, the *Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession* (the “Guidelines”) support early career teachers (ECTs) as they transition into the classroom, with a view to increasing teacher wellbeing, retention and improving student outcomes. The Guidelines frame processes for induction under four focus areas: Professional Practices, Professional Identity, Wellbeing and Orientation. These are complemented by explicit strategies or practices for improvement that include mentoring, leadership contact, networking and collaboration, targeted professional learning, study of teaching, practical information, and time allocation.

The AITSL Induction initiative aims to:

- influence the adoption of good induction practises across school systems/sectors
- improve awareness of good induction practises across school systems/sectors
- improve the retention of graduate teachers in primary and secondary schools, as well as early childhood education

Publication of the Guidelines was accompanied by a range of communications and support activities designed by AITSL to increase the reach and adoption of the Guidelines (the “Induction initiative”). These included:

- promotion on digital channels including the AITSL website
- stakeholder consultations and workshops
- production of tools and resources to support understanding of the Guidelines (namely Case Study videos, two induction videos, the My Induction app, a My Induction app animation).

## Purpose and scope of the evaluation

In May 2020, Synergistiq was engaged by AITSL to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Induction initiative in achieving its intended outcomes as of 2020. The intended outcomes by target group are mapped in the program logic below. The key evaluation questions speak broadly to levels of the awareness, application, experience and impact of the initiative:

1. **Awareness.** How effective was the Induction Initiative in influencing adoption of good induction practice across systems/sectors and schools? (What were the key activities and outputs and what was the reach of the outputs).
2. **Application.** To what extent have the Guidelines been adopted across jurisdictions and sectors (e.g. jurisdiction/sector policy aligns with the Guidelines, resources/programs within the sector align with Guidelines)?
3. **Experience.** To what extent have education settings adopted the Guidelines in their induction practices (as defined under four focus areas: Orientation, Professional Practices, Professional Identity, Teacher Wellbeing)?
4. **Impact.** To what extent has the initiative resulted in positive changes in awareness, perception and/or attitudes toward induction processes among target beneficiaries (such as school leaders, mentors and graduate teachers)? Did the initiative have any unintended effects?

## Outcomes framework

The evaluation was based on AITSL's Induction outcomes framework developed in 2016. The framework outlines intended outcomes for the Guidelines' target audiences, example indicators and planned data sources.

Target audience	Outcomes	Example indicators	Planned data sources -- time series				
			Pre-intervention 2015	Immediate post 2016	1 year post 2017	2 years post 2018	3+ post
System and sector	Guidelines used in systems, sectors and regulatory authorities for policy, programs and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of educational organisations with a specific induction policy</li> <li>Number of policies aligned to the Guidelines</li> <li>The language of the Guidelines is used in system and sector policies, programs and resources.</li> </ul>	Scan of current practice (desktop scanning and professional network surveys)				
Schools: School Leaders; Teachers; Mentors	Increased awareness and positive perception of importance of induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of awareness, agreement on importance of induction that supports the transition from Graduate to Proficient career stage</li> </ul>	N/A	Quantitative measures from the AITSL Stakeholder survey			
	Increased awareness of induction best practice as provided in the Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of awareness of the Guidelines document, digital resources</li> <li>Level of awareness of the elements of good practice induction</li> </ul>	N/A	Quantitative measures from the AITSL Stakeholder survey			
	Increased induction practice in accordance with the Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of uptake of the Guidelines document, digital resources</li> <li>Behaviour or intended behaviour to use the Guidelines</li> <li>Evidence of a specific policy/school based approach on induction</li> </ul>	N/A	Quantitative measures from the AITSL Stakeholder survey			
Graduates	Positive experience of induction in accordance with best practice in the Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction experiences for new graduates are aligned with the Guidelines</li> <li>Perceptions of classroom readiness is enhanced in teachers with Guidelines-based induction experiences</li> </ul>	No national data available	Graduate Outcomes Survey			
	Increased Graduate career intentions to remain in profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduates with improved experiences of induction are more positive about their career longevity</li> </ul>		Graduate Outcomes Survey	Wellbeing data collection through induction app		

# Methodology

This section describes the data sources and analytical approach for the evaluation.

## Data sources

### AITSL Stakeholder Survey

AITSL administers a Stakeholder Engagement Survey (SES) that collects information in relation to awareness of, engagement with, effectiveness of and perceptions of AITSL. Included in this are questions about induction, which have been analysed for the evaluation. Similar versions of the survey were administered in 2016 and 2019, although the 2019 version contained additional questions based on new work initiated since 2016. In relation to distribution and response rates:

- An opportunity (non-sampling) methodology was employed which entailed distribution of the survey via direct invitations, AITSL Mail, the AITSL website and social media, with requests for AITSL stakeholders to share to their networks.
- The 2016 survey was administered from 30 March to 15 May 2020. The survey was completed by 4,959 people, with a total of 4,181 completes used for the analysis in this report.
- The 2019 survey was administered from 27 March to 12 June. 5,561 people responded to the survey, and a total of 3,393 completes were used for the analysis in this report.

Inverse probability weighting was used to enable comparisons between 2016 and 2019 responses to determine change, requiring several key demographic responses to be used in a logistic regression<sup>4</sup>. Significance was tested through application of a chi-squared test. Data was collected from education professionals working in early childhood education and care services (ECECs), noting no comparable data was collected in 2016.

### Professional network survey and desktop scan

AITSL's professional network was established in March 2014 and comprises individuals from 24 education systems and sectors in Australia with responsibility for the professional learning and/or development of school leaders and teachers.

In 2016 and 2020, AITSL administered surveys to members of the network to ascertain the degree to which induction policies across sectors in each state/territory reflect elements of the Guidelines. Of the 24 network members, 14 responded to the 2016 survey, representing all states/territories except Tasmania, and 15 members in 2020, representing all states/territories.

A comparative analysis was undertaken of responses to questions across the two time points. Not all questions were answered by all respondents – percentages reported have been calculated from total number of responses for each question, excluding non-responses.

Several network members also provided weblinks to more detailed elements of their policies. In total, nine respondents provided one or more links. These links either led to explicit induction-related policies or to websites providing a generalised description of induction policy or programs. The evaluator drew on keywords from the focus areas and strategies, and other activities that clearly reflected the focus areas and strategies, to ascertain alignment of published policy links with the Guidelines.

---

<sup>4</sup> Responses without required demographic details due to blank responses were omitted from the final data set.

## **Web and resource analytics**

Web and resource analytics were provided to the evaluator from diverse AITSL sources<sup>5</sup>. Raw data in relation to number of downloads of the Guidelines, Case Study videos, two induction videos, a My Induction app animation, My Induction app installations and account creations were analysed by the evaluator. Comparative data from the Wellbeing Tracker in the My Induction app and My Induction app Resources for Teachers were provided to the evaluator in pre-analysed form.

## **Brief satisfaction survey**

A review of data gaps based on the outcomes framework indicators suggested that more data on mentors and ECTs' experiences of induction would complement current data. A brief survey ("Brief Satisfaction Survey") was distributed via social media (Facebook) to five relevant teacher groups. The survey was open for 14 days and received 29 complete responses. Comparative analyses were undertaken between question types to identify whether participant perceptions of their induction experience correlated with any aspects of the induction.

---

<sup>5</sup> Raw data for accessing the Guidelines, website Case Study videos, an induction animation, the My Induction app animation, My Induction application installations and account creations were provided in a spreadsheet. My Induction App wellbeing summary and analysis were taken from AITSL's internal My Induction app report prepared in 2020. My Induction app Resources for Teachers were taken from AITSL's internal document, "My Induction Mobile App: Resource Usage and Demographics."



# Evaluation findings

This section summarises key themes in relation to the evaluation questions, based on Synergistiq's findings.

## 1. Awareness of the Guidelines, tools and resources

### Guidelines

In 2019, 74% of respondents to the AITSL Stakeholder Survey were aware of the Guidelines: 87% of early career teachers (ECTs), 72% of mentors and 81% of school leaders. There were more mentors unaware of the Guidelines (over a quarter) than ECTs (13%). No statistically significant differences were found between response patterns based on metropolitan, regional, and remote locations. The 2016 SES was dispatched prior to release of the Guidelines; thus no question was asked of respondents about their levels of awareness.

Web analytics indicate 4,260 downloads of the Guidelines since April 2019.

### Tools and resources

Over five years, a long version of the Induction video received 12,575 views, while the shorter version received 4,301 views. During this period, viewings of the long version decreased to approximately half (except for a small bump in 2019), while inversely, viewings of the short version increased, dipping slightly in 2019. A total of 3,417 visits were made to the Case Studies homepage. Visits rose substantially from 2017 to 2018 and 2019, and then dipped in 2020 (which did not have data for all months). 'A Collaborative Approach' was the most popular Case Study video, with almost three times the number of views than the next most popular video. A Focus on Mentoring and Induction to School and Community were the next most popular.

Between 2016 and 2020, 4,721 iOS users and 9,646 Android users downloaded the My Induction app. Teachers (52%) and pre-service teachers/students (29%) make up most users. Nearly 7,000 users work full time, with 1,425 working part time and 1,268 casually. Nearly 80% of users are women.

The number of Mood Tracker users fell only slightly between 2018 (1,314) and 2019 (1,280). The demographic characteristics of those who used the tracker between 2017 and 2019 were almost identical and there were no differences between the responses in demographic groups.

## 2. Application

### To what degree do sector level policies align with the Guidelines?

Professional network respondents reported induction of beginning teachers was either a high or moderate priority for their sector in both 2016 and 2020, with none of the network respondents indicating it was not a priority. The professional network respondents who reported whether they had a policy for induction (n=13, 2016; n=9, 2020) indicated they were in various stages of their policy development, with about one-third reporting they had a policy, one-third indicating their policies were still in development and one-third reporting they did not have a policy in both years.

The majority of network respondents reported that their policies included all four focus areas in both years. Of the 22 induction 'supports' network respondents were asked to identify as being available to ECTs in their sector, 'general professional learning that is available to all teachers (i.e. workshops/seminars, online resources)' was identified as the most common induction support in both 2016 and 2020. Mentor training (face to face or online) was identified as another common support in 2016 (86%, n=12), along with face to face events for beginning teachers (86%, n=12), whereas in 2020, beginning teacher specific/targeted professional learning was more common (93%, n=14).

A desktop scan of sector-level policies provided as part of the professional network surveys suggests that policies align with the Guidelines to some extent. There has been little change in this position between 2016 and 2020. Nine professional network respondents provided links to their policies. In total, 11 publicly available policies were provided, representing all states/territories with two of the professional network stakeholders each providing two policy documents.

### **To what degree do school level policies and/or programs align with the Guidelines?**

There appears to be little change in the view of school leaders between 2016 and 2019 as to elements and strategies of the Guidelines being contained in their induction programs and practices. A vast majority report that the Guidelines are reflected in their programs. Almost all school leaders consider 'Orientation' to be present to some or a large extent, with 90% saying the same for 'Professional Practices', 86% for 'Teacher Wellbeing', and 94% for 'Professional Identity'.

With regard to strategies identified in the Guidelines as contributing to effective induction, there has also been little shift in views about their inclusion in school induction programs from the perspective of school leaders, except for a statistically significant increase in "allocation of time" (4.9 percentage point increase between 2016 and 2019). Possible explanations are that after an initial response to or uptake of the Guidelines, school leaders' responses have plateaued, or schools were largely already incorporating many of these elements and continue to do so.

In both 2016 and 2019, the majority of school leader respondents to the SES indicated that their school provided formal induction for ECTs on permanent and short-term contracts. However, there was a significant decrease between 2016 and 2019 in the proportion of school leaders reporting they provided formal induction to ECTs on both permanent and short-term contracts, as well as casual/relief teachers:

- A total of 89.7% of respondents in 2016 indicated that their school provided formal induction for ECTs on permanent contracts, which dropped to 85.8% in 2019, a statistically significant decrease of 3.9 percentage points.
- For ECTs on short term contracts, 76.8% of respondents indicated their school offered formal induction in 2016, compared with 70% in 2019, a statistically significant decrease of 6.9 percentage points.
- Less than half of school leader respondents indicated that they offered formal induction to casual relief teachers, with the proportion decreasing from 45.2% in 2016 to 39% in 2019, a significant decrease of 5.9 percentage points.

## **3. Experience**

### **What is mentor experience of induction programs?**

There was a significant increase between 2016 (49.1%, n=1001) and 2019 (55.8%, n=806) of mid to late career teachers acting as mentors and coaches. Respondents who had indicated they had been a mentor or coach were asked if they had received any training when adopting this role. In 2016, 31.7% (n=317) indicated that they had, with this percentage remaining unchanged in 2019 (n=255).

However, there was a decrease in perception, amongst this same group, of the degree to which the four focus areas and the induction strategies from the Guidelines were encapsulated in induction programs. Between 2016 and 2019, there was a significant decrease in mentors agreeing 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent' that the 'Orientation' (from 94% to 89%), 'Professional Practice' (from 88% to 77%), 'Teacher Wellbeing' (from 77% to 66%), and 'Professional Identity' (from 90% to 81%) focus areas were present in their school's induction program. Similarly, according to mentors, induction strategies used by schools to support ECTs decreased (statistically) significantly, with the exception of 'networks (outside of school)' (down 2.1 percentage points but not a statistically significant change). The largest drops were targeted professional learning opportunities (16.4

percentage points), leadership contact and interactions (13.7 percentage points), reflection on practice (13 percentage points), allocation of time (10.7 percentage points) and collaboration with colleagues (10 percentage points).

Two thirds of mentor respondents (n=17) to the Brief Satisfaction Survey indicated they were satisfied with their school's induction process offered to ECTs. There was a collective view that formal mentoring programs are important for ECTs. However, a considerable number of mentors (38%, n=10) did not believe the induction process at their school was meeting the need of ECTs.

### **What is ECT experience of induction programs?**

Most ECTs in 2016 (52%) and 2019 (58%) reported they did not receive a formal induction. Of those who did not, in 2016 most were on contract, while in 2019 this shifted to permanent-full time employees. No statistically significant differences were found between response patterns based on metropolitan, regional, and remote locations. It is of concern that close to 60% of respondents in 2019 considered a formal induction was not part of their entry to teaching. This contrasts with the views of school leadership respondents to a question about the four focus areas, 99% of whom consider 'Orientation' to be present in inductions. Several unknown variables may influence ECT response to this question. Some respondents may consider their induction was not 'formal'; some may not recall a range of activities as being 'induction'. However, school leadership feedback does confirm that in more than 50% of cases, casual relief teachers are not offered formal induction.

For early career teachers, there was no statistically significant difference between 2016 and 2019 with regard to activities they participated in as part of induction at their first school. The following four strategies showed increases: classroom observation and feedback (7.1%), participating in school networks (6.4%), collaboration with colleagues (0.6%) and being mentored/coached (0.2%). The remainder of the strategies showed decreases. None of the observed changes were significant.

Finally, there has been a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of ECTs reporting the inclusion of a focus on wellbeing in their inductions in the AITSL Stakeholder Surveys, with 69% (n=154) of ECTs in 2016 agreeing to some or a large extent that wellbeing was an aspect of their induction compared with 56% (n=73) in 2019. Further, when asked in the 2019 SES whether their induction experience supported their wellbeing, only 39% (n=54) of respondents agreed.

The small number of ECT respondents to the Brief Satisfaction Survey make it difficult to draw conclusions as to ECT experiences of induction. Two respondents indicated that their inductions did not meet their needs, nor did the inductions build a sense of belonging or professional identity. Two did however consider that induction was a priority at their schools. In common with their mentor colleagues, they considered that a strong induction was important to incoming ECTs.

### **Do ECTs experience induction that is consistent with the Guidelines? (Were these elements present during induction?)**

ECT's perspectives as to whether 'Professional Practices', 'Wellbeing', and 'Professional Identity' were included to some or a large extent in their inductions has significantly reduced between 2016 and 2019. 'Orientation' remained the same. 'Professional Practices' dropped from 82% (2016) to 74% (2019), 'Wellbeing' from 69% (2016) to 56% (2019) and 'Professional Identity' from 86% (2016) to 75% (2019). The percentage of ECTs selecting 'to a large extent' fell across all categories. No statistically significant differences were found between response patterns based on metropolitan, regional, and remote locations. The overall picture is that, over time, the extent to which ECTs consider they are experiencing an induction that includes Guidelines elements is diminishing.

There was also a divergence in SES stakeholder views about the presence of strategies in induction programs, with at least 50% of school leaders considering 8 of 9 strategies were present, mentors considering 5 of 9 were present, and ECTs considering 3 of 9 were present. Consistent with the more positive view of school leaders, professional network respondents identified 15 of 22 'supports' listed in the professional network survey as available to ECTs in their sector. There is a strong correlation between the strategies ECTs, mentors, and school leaders consider are most present during induction (classroom observation and feedback, being mentored/coached, collaborating with

colleagues, and the allocation of time for induction). These differ from those cited by professional network respondents (specific targeted professional learning and general professional learning). Notably, professional learning was also in the top 5 for SES school leaders. The least included strategy cited by ECTs, mentors, and school leaders were networks within and outside schools. Amongst PGN respondents, 'mobile applications for beginning teachers' was the least common type of support available for the induction of beginning teachers within their system/sector.

## 4. Impact

### Is teacher experience of the four guidelines elements assisted by induction?

Over half of the ECT respondents to a 2019 AITSL stakeholder survey question about the degree to which their induction experience contributed to improved outcomes related to the four focus areas indicated their agreement in relation to improved knowledge and teaching practice (58%, n=80), feeling part of the profession (59%, n=82), and supporting their transition to registration (51%, n=70). Thirty-nine percent (n=54) agreed their induction experience supported their personal wellbeing. These findings speak to the degree induction practices were seen to bring about the outcomes that are the focus of effective induction programs. If improving ECTs' experiences of these focus areas is a core objective of the Guidelines, then the objective would appear to be partly met.

# Conclusion and recommendations

This section is drawn from Synergistiq's summary of reflections and recommendations for future action, organised by theme in section 6 of the evaluation report. Conclusions and recommendations for AITSL, which are labelled 'actionable insights' in the report, drew on the findings and feedback from a facilitated Reflections Workshop hosted by the evaluator and attended by AITSL staff.

## Support resources for early career teachers

While 87% of early career teachers are aware of the Guidelines, only 24% are aware of the My Induction app, with an even smaller percentage (16%) reporting usage of the app. Most app users rated it positively; however, the gap between awareness and usage is high.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Undertake activities to increase awareness of the app and its features for early career teachers.
- Explore and improve upon relevance of the app for early career teachers.

## Wellbeing of early career teachers

There is a difference between early career teachers who consider wellbeing was an element of their induction (56% in 2019) and those who consider their induction experience supported their wellbeing (39%). Wellbeing ranked lowest among the four focus areas early career respondents considered to be supported during their induction. Some qualitative feedback from the Brief Satisfaction Survey also points to poor experiences of wellbeing support.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Focus on increased support for early career teachers and their wellbeing.

## Mentor awareness

Mentors ranked below school leaders and early career teachers in both their awareness of the Guidelines (nearly 30% of mentors were unaware of the Guidelines) and in their positive perception of the support offered by AITSL for the Guidelines (62% rated it as good, selecting 6 or above on a 0-10 rating scale with 10 being 'very good'). Mentors should be aware of the Guidelines, not least because mentoring is a critical strategy of the Guidelines, but also because of the capacity and knowledge building role mentors play for early career teachers.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Build awareness of the Guidelines amongst mentors, including an understanding of elements, strategies, and supports.

## Mentor capability and support

Sector level organisations reported high levels of training for mentors (67%) and mentor support (73%). Conversely, less than a third of mentors report having received training. Seventy-four per cent of mentors were not aware of the My Induction app, with only 5% having downloaded and used it.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Improve sector awareness of the mentor role, including best practice approaches to training and support.
- Improve understanding of user experiences of the My Induction app, including why users access the app, and the relevance or usefulness of the tool in supporting the implementation of the Guidelines among target cohorts.

## **Guidelines strategies uptake**

Perspectives regarding the degree to which Guideline strategies are included in induction were relatively consistent among early career teachers, mentors, and school leaders in the SES. These respondent groups collectively cited networking within and outside schools as least present during induction. Early career teachers also rated low levels of leadership contact. Professional network respondents cited the use of mobile applications as the least included support.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Develop approaches to supporting early career teachers regarding least used strategies, such as networking and access to leadership. This might take the form of AITSL information to school leaders on the importance of connection with early career teachers or information to early career teachers on networks.
- Examine differences in perspectives between sectors and schools as to the most and least common strategies, with a view to better understanding the discrepancy, and improving promotion of and support for least used strategies.

## **Guidelines strategies – Mentoring and time allocation**

Mentoring and time allocation are valued elements of strong induction practice. The allocation of time for induction processes was emphasised by early career teachers and mentors in the Brief Satisfaction Survey; appropriate allocation of time was described as an enabler to an effective induction, allowing the formation and development of mentor–mentee relationships, and inadequate allocation led to stress and poor induction experiences. It is positive to note that, since the introduction of the Guidelines, there has been an increase in reporting of the allocation of time as part of induction (in professional network responses and school leader responses to the SES); however, this increase was not observed in SES responses from mentors or early career teachers.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Boost resources to the sector and to schools regarding best practice in relation to the Guidelines strategies, particularly strategies most valued by early career teachers and mentors.

## **Casual/relief teachers and staff at the margins**

While 81% of school leaders are aware of the Guidelines, there has been a decrease between 2016 and 2019 in school leaders offering formal induction to early career teachers on short term contracts (70% in 2019) and casual relief teachers (CRTs) (39% in 2019), compared with 77% and 45% in 2016, respectively. In 2019, only 38% of staff on short term contracts and 20% of CRTs reported receiving an induction. Formal induction is a support that should be provided for all teachers.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Bolster education for school leaders on recommendations of the Guidelines in relation to induction provision. Explore barriers to implementation with schools.
- Increase promotion in pre-service teacher settings of induction supports that are widely available, such as the My Induction app

## **Early childhood education**

Data collection activities attracted small response rates from those working in the early childhood education (ECE) sector. This may be symptomatic of broader challenges in the sector as well as poor sector knowledge/understanding of the Guidelines. The data available from early childhood educators suggests lower levels of awareness and engagement with induction than in the schooling sector.

### *Recommendations for AITSL:*



- Engage through professional and sector networks to build awareness and capacity among early childhood educators of induction policy and practice, including providing tailored resources.

### **Remote locations**

Data collection activities attracted small response rates from those living in rural and remote locations. Though not statistically significant, it is nonetheless noteworthy that the only four respondents from 'very remote' locations did not report receiving an induction.

#### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Consider strategies for increasing engagement with schools, and especially early career teachers, in remote locations to ensure consistency of induction experiences.

### **Systems integration**

The Guidelines have now been in place since 2016. Professional network data has remained largely consistent across years, with only a small change in the number of sectors aligning work with the Guidelines. There may be value in advocating for a culture of champions at the school level focused on best practice, to complement efforts towards compliance. Cultivating ownership of this culture amongst school leaders may increase the pace of change.

#### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Encourage and support school leaders to foster and promote a culture of best practice induction champions.

### **Continuous improvement of resources**

The My Induction app has enjoyed some success, including in relation to its ability to link early career teachers to useful resources. Certain video topics, such as on a collaborative approach (case study video) and key elements of effective induction (long version of a video on induction), have received more views than any other video resource. A better understanding (perhaps through a feedback system) of why and how particular resources are most popular would be beneficial.

#### *Recommendations for AITSL:*

- Build on the success of products and resources through expanding on continuous improvement practices, such as running focus groups with teachers who have between one- and two-years' experience to examine what aspects of the products have been most useful and why.

## **Planned actions**

AITSL plans to undertake work to implement several of Synergistiq's recommendations, which focus on increased support for early career teachers and mentors, and promotion of research and resources that support high-quality induction. Planned actions include:

- Progress roll-out of My Teaching Advice, supporting early career teachers to seek advice from experienced colleagues.
- Continue to promote relevant resources through the My Induction app.
- Progress roll-out of revised Supervising Pre-Service Teacher modules to enhance the mentoring and guidance pre-service teachers receive as well as early career teachers.