

Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) submission to the Productivity Commission's interim report on *Building a skilled and adaptable workforce*: 9 September 2025

Introduction

The Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) (<https://www.petaa.edu.au>) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Productivity Commission's interim report on improving the availability of high-quality curriculum resources for teachers.

As a national not-for-profit association with 50+ years of supporting more than 40,000 individual and organisational members, PETAA has a long-standing role in supporting teachers across all sectors and jurisdictions to deliver high-quality English and literacy teaching. PETAA develops curriculum-aligned teaching units, provides professional learning, and conducts nationally significant research, such as the National Teaching of Reading Survey (2024). Our reach extends across metropolitan, regional and remote schools including Australian international schools, with a strong track record of producing evidence-informed resources that are widely used in classrooms.

Response to Draft Recommendation 1.1

Draft Recommendation 1.1 proposes that the Australian Government invest in a single national platform that houses a comprehensive bank of curriculum-aligned lesson planning materials, assessed against a national quality framework.

PETAA is broadly supportive of the intent to ensure all teachers have access to high-quality, curriculum-aligned resources and indeed this is a fundamental part of our own remit as a membership organisation. We strongly agree that supporting teacher workload and ensuring consistent access to quality materials is an important national priority. However, we have significant reservations about the proposed model, which we outline below.

Existing Investment and Teacher Uptake

- There are already millions of dollars invested by state jurisdictions (e.g. New South Wales and Victoria) into lesson planning resources, with mixed success.
- PETAA's *National Teaching of Reading Survey Report* revealed that only 35% of teachers report using government-produced lesson plans. The majority create their own or rely on trusted third-party providers such as PETAA. This suggests that large-scale government investment in lesson plan development may not align with teacher practice or preference. PETAA's National Teaching of Reading Survey (2024) provides unique, contemporary evidence of how teachers select and use resources. Any national system must be informed by teacher practice and preferences, with design decisions grounded in real classroom data.

Risks of a Centralised Quality Control Agency

- A national quality control body raises concerns about who would arbitrate definitions of “quality” and “evidence.” In education, evidence is often contested and evolving, and different schools of thought hold legitimate perspectives on effective practice with teachers as professionals needing to draw on multiple sources of evidence to guide quality practice in diverse contexts. A central authority determining “quality” and “evidence” risk promoting teachers as technicians rather than knowledgeable and informed professionals.
- Employing staff to audit every digital resource at scale would be costly, creating a risk of financial unviability for the entire project.
- In a country as diverse as Australia, lesson resources must reflect varied cultural, social, linguistic and economic contexts. A centralised quality control agency would face significant risks of reproducing bias or narrowing perspectives. Without strong safeguards, such a system could unintentionally privilege certain approaches while overlooking the need for inclusivity, cultural responsiveness, and adaptability — all of which are essential if resources are to serve the realities of classrooms across the nation.
- Professional associations with national reach, such as PETAA, have established networks across metropolitan, regional and remote contexts. Their involvement can help mitigate the risk of centralised systems overlooking the diversity of Australian classrooms.
- A platform of this nature may also contribute to a shift in teacher identity, framing professionalism around compliance rather than inquiry, reflection, and curriculum-making. Opportunities for professional growth may be limited, particularly in areas such as curriculum design, critical pedagogy, and collaborative planning. Ultimately, this model risks reframing teacher professionalism as fidelity to standardised resources rather than as critical engagement with curriculum and pedagogical decision-making.

PETAA’s Alternative Recommendations

To achieve the Productivity Commission’s objectives in a more cost-effective and teacher-responsive way, PETAA proposes two alternatives:

- 1. Survey and leverage existing high-quality units**
 - Conduct a national audit of existing curriculum-aligned resources, and work with not-for-profit teaching organisations such as PETAA to adapt and adopt units that are already widely embraced.
 - This model would significantly reduce duplication of effort and cost, while still ensuring national consistency.
 - PETAA recommends that Education Services Australia, with their significant experience providing government-approved resources and their deep connections to the sector, be tasked with overseeing this work, coordinating stakeholders, and managing timelines and resourcing.
- 2. Develop a national resource directory (digital database)**
 - Instead of producing all lesson materials centrally, create a digital platform that indexes and curates existing resources.

- Providers would be required to meet quality accreditation standards before being listed (similar to NESA’s previous model for accrediting professional learning providers in NSW).
- Once approved, providers would maintain their own entries and metadata within the directory.
- A quality accreditation process could be overseen by a volunteer panel (drawn from education departments, professional associations, and initial teacher educators and education researchers) representing a broad range of pedagogical perspectives, to avoid narrow or prescriptive definitions of “evidence.”
- Professional associations such as PETAA, with established reach and trusted relationships across the teaching profession, should play a central role in onboarding and supporting teachers to engage with the national database. Leveraging these associations ensures teacher confidence, practical uptake, and culturally responsive implementation.
- Beyond providing resources, associations such as PETAA also deliver professional learning on how to use them effectively. Embedding professional learning pathways into the database model will be essential for sustained teacher uptake and impact.
- The UK provides a successful precedent through the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) model: <https://www.besa.org.uk/>.

Conclusion

PETAA supports the Commission’s aim of improving teacher access to quality curriculum resources, while cautioning against large-scale, centralised lesson plan development and quality control mechanisms. More scalable, sustainable and teacher-trusted models are already in place and should be built upon.

With over 50 years of expertise and a strong track record in developing research-informed, curriculum-aligned resources, PETAA is ready to contribute to this work and collaborate with government, jurisdictions and national bodies. Professional associations such as PETAA already enjoy deep trust and wide reach among teachers; by partnering with these organisations to onboard and support educators in using a national database, government can ensure strong uptake, teacher confidence, and practical implementation in classrooms.

Signed on behalf of PETAA and the PETAA board by:

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