

Submission on Draft Recommendation 1.1: National Lesson Planning Platform

The proposal to create a single national platform of lesson planning resources is well-intentioned and reflects a genuine desire to support teachers. However, both evidence and practitioner feedback suggest that centralising lesson plans will not reduce teacher workload and risks undermining professional autonomy.

Teachers already access multiple repositories, yet workloads remain unsustainable because the challenge lies in systemic pressures—compliance demands, administrative burdens, and lack of time—not in the availability of resources. The experience of Queensland’s Curriculum-to-Classroom (C2C) initiative demonstrates the dangers of such approaches: it became de facto mandatory, constrained teacher professionalism, and failed to deliver workload relief.

Any investment in a national platform must therefore be voluntary, supplementary, and teacher-driven. More importantly, resources should be directed towards addressing structural workload drivers and enabling teachers to engage in meaningful curriculum design and collaboration.

Key Issues

1. Workload

- Teachers already have access to numerous repositories (state-based and commercial).
- Research shows these do not save time; teachers still spend hours curating and adapting materials (Hu et al., 2018; Curcio et al., 2024; Shelton et al., 2024).
- A national platform risks adding another layer of work rather than alleviating pressures.

2. Professional Autonomy

- Curriculum design and adaptation are central to teacher identity.
- C2C in Queensland shows that “optional” repositories quickly become compliance tools, especially in disadvantaged schools (Hardy, 2013).
- Teachers reported feeling constrained, deskilled, and mistrusted.

3. Quality Frameworks

- National definitions of “quality” risk narrowing pedagogy and privileging standardised approaches (Harris et al., 2023).

- Materials must allow for differentiation, address the needs of diverse learners (including neurodivergent students), and include strategies for classroom and family engagement.

4. Professional Learning

- Training teachers to “use” centralised resources risks positioning them as passive implementers.
- Research shows curriculum making itself—designing, adapting, reflecting—is valued professional work, linked to job satisfaction and retention (Priestley et al., 2021; Stacey et al., 2023; Mockler & Stacey, 2024).

Recommendations

If this proposal proceeds, it should be designed with the following safeguards:

- **Voluntary, supplementary use only:** The platform must not become a de facto national curriculum or compliance tool.
- **Resourcing and sustainability:** Lessons must be learned from Scootle—currency, alignment, and reliability require ongoing investment.
- **Respect for jurisdictional diversity:** Materials must remain compatible with different state curriculum requirements.
- **Universal, free access:** A single sign-on and open access for all teachers.
- **Teacher-driven design:** Resources should be adaptable, inclusive, and responsive to diverse classrooms, rather than “one-size-fits-all.”
- **Investment in time and collaboration:** Priority should be given to reducing systemic workload pressures and enabling teachers to collaborate, reflect, and adapt curriculum together.

In conclusion the intent behind Draft Recommendation 1.1 is commendable. However, the evidence shows that centralising lesson planning resources will not reduce workload and risks repeating failed initiatives such as C2C.

The Australian Government should prioritise:

- tackling the structural drivers of workload,
- supporting teacher collaboration and autonomy, and
- ensuring any resource platform remains strictly voluntary, flexible, and teacher-led.

Without these safeguards, a national platform risks becoming another compliance mechanism that erodes professional practice rather than supporting it.

Lead national efforts to ensure equitable access to educational technology (edtech) and artificial intelligence (AI)

The intent of Draft Recommendation 1.2 is welcomed, particularly its focus on reducing inequities and duplication of effort in educational technology and artificial intelligence (AI). However, the proposed approach risks repeating historic patterns of over-promising and under-delivering in edtech reforms. Tools alone do not transform education; genuine impact depends on pedagogy, equity, ethical safeguards, and teacher capability. A more decentralised, critically informed, and educator-driven approach is required.

Key Issues

1. Frameworks for “quality” and “evidence-based practices”

- Risk of capture by commercial vendors who define “evidence” narrowly.
- Frameworks may privilege data-driven accountability over pedagogy, equity, and privacy.

2. Stocktake and assessment of tools

- Stocktakes quickly become outdated due to the pace of technological change, particularly in AI.
- Cataloguing tools risks bureaucracy with limited practical value.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on building teacher and school leader capacity for critical engagement with technologies.

3. National procurement and acquisition

- Centralised purchasing risks vendor lock-in and over-reliance on multinational corporations.
- International experience shows “platformisation” can undermine curriculum autonomy, pedagogy, and data sovereignty.
- Data governance and long-term adaptability must be prioritised.

4. Guidelines and trials

- Context matters: tools “successful” in one setting may fail elsewhere.

- Edtech trials often overlook the hidden labour of teachers in adapting and troubleshooting technologies.
- Risk that tools increase workload rather than reduce it.

5. Decentralised innovation and educator involvement

- Current models risk government “picking winners,” stifling grassroots innovation.
- Educators and researchers should be resourced to co-design edtech with developers.
- International models (e.g. China’s collaboration between edtech companies and universities) show the benefits of embedding educational expertise in design.

6. Ethical leadership and low-tech alternatives

- AI adoption is outpacing governance frameworks.
- Australia should lead globally with a strong ethical framework for AI in education.
- Pedagogy should remain central, with recognition of the value of unplugged, low-tech teaching strategies.

7. Teacher support and professional development

- Confusion and uneven knowledge about AI and edtech are widespread.
- Professional learning and clear, accessible guidance are essential.
- National tools should be free and opt-in to respect local autonomy while ensuring baseline access.

8. Resourcing priorities

- Funding for edtech must not displace investment in human teaching supports.
- Priority should be given to professional learning, equity, and governance rather than procurement alone.

Recommendations

- 1. Develop a national ethical framework for AI in education,** focused on pedagogy, equity, privacy, and data sovereignty.

2. **Embed educators and researchers in edtech design processes** through dedicated funding to bridge the gap between technological development and classroom realities.
3. **Shift from cataloguing tools to building teacher capacity** for critical engagement with AI and edtech.
4. **Adopt decentralised innovation mechanisms**, avoiding government “picking winners” while still providing baseline national supports.
5. **Design procurement strategies with safeguards** against vendor lock-in, prioritising adaptability and strong data governance.
6. **Resource professional development as a central priority**, ensuring teachers feel confident, supported, and critically informed.
7. **Ensure tools provided nationally are free and opt-in**, respecting diversity across jurisdictions, systems, and schools.
8. **Maintain balance between technological and human investment**, ensuring that funding for AI and edtech supplements, rather than replaces, investment in teaching staff.

In conclusion, Draft Recommendation 1.2 is a valuable step toward improving equity and reducing duplication in Australia’s education system. However, success depends on moving beyond procurement of tools to focus on pedagogy, teacher capacity, ethical governance, and decentralised innovation. National leadership must avoid vendor dependency and over-centralisation, while empowering teachers and researchers as active participants in shaping edtech and AI adoption. With these refinements, the recommendation has the potential to provide meaningful, equitable, and sustainable support for Australian schools.