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National School Reform Agreement Review
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East
Melbourne Vic 8003

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Review of the National School Reform Agreement – Response to the interim report

The Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Productivity Commission's interim report on its Review of the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA).

Key points in our initial submission to the Review (17 June 2022) were:

- While governments quite rightly set an agenda for education that reflects the interests of the state, it is Australian educators who have been successfully leading the ongoing transformation of Australian school education within the bounds of government regulation.

- If the nation is to capitalise on the opportunities created by COVID-19 disruption to review, 'reset' and reform Australian school education, it is important that the innovative capacity of schools is recognised.

- National education policymaking must also be reviewed and reset. AHISA proposes that a strengths-based approach to policymaking has the potential to build on the gains already made by schools over the last two-and-a-half years and to provide the collaborative platform that will power further development.

AHISA's initial submission presented a policy manifesto setting out the rationale for a strengths-based approach to policymaking in education. It is through the lens of such an approach that we offer comment on issues raised or recommendations made by the Productivity Commission in its interim report.

Should you require further detail or clarification of the points raised, please contact me at telephone or via email.

Yours faithfully,

(Ms) Beth Blackwood

AHISA Chief Executive Officer

About AHISA

AHISA Ltd is a professional association for Heads of independent schools.

The primary object of AHISA is to optimise the opportunity for the education and welfare of Australia's young people through the maintenance of collegiality and high standards of professional practice and conduct amongst its members.

AHISA's 450 members lead schools that collectively account for over 450,000 students, representing 70 per cent of total independent sector enrolments and over 11 per cent of total Australian school enrolments. Some 20 per cent of Australia's Year 12 students attend AHISA members' schools.

AHISA's members lead a collective workforce of over 45,000 teaching staff and some 28,700 support staff.

The socio-economic profile of AHISA members' schools is diverse. Over 20 per cent of our members lead schools serving low- to very low-SES communities.

AHISA believes that a high-quality schooling system in Australia depends on:

- Parents having the freedom to exercise their rights and responsibilities in regard to the education of their children

- Students and their families having the freedom to choose among diverse schooling options

- Schools having the autonomy to exercise educational leadership as they respond to the emerging needs of their communities in a rapidly changing society.

Key points and recommendations

- To facilitate teacher mobility, a commitment by jurisdictions to the streamlining of teacher registration could be considered for inclusion in the next NSRA. (Page 4)

- Resources for educators produced by National Education Architecture organisations are highly regarded. These may need to be regularly reviewed and even reconfigured in the light of emerging demands for digital delivery of content, hybrid education delivery models and increased personalisation of learning. (Page 6)

- Given the requirement of some jurisdictions that teachers undertake accredited professional learning to qualify for re-registration, wherever possible National Education Architecture organisations should seek accreditation of any professional development offerings. (Page 6)

- Schools cannot stand alone in addressing students' health and wellbeing needs. There is a case for government effort that is both national and cross-portfolio in application. (Pages 7-10)

- Any development of a national student wellbeing measurement tool or consequent data collection should support schools' and jurisdictions' existing efforts and minimise any additional administrative burden, with consideration given to sample testing. (Page 9)

- Teacher-mentors can make a significant contribution to the development of teachers at any career stage but particularly during teachers' early careers. Initial steps toward a national approach to the training and certification of teacher-mentors should include:

  - A review of teacher-mentor training and certification already offered in Australia, and their supporting standards or frameworks and related tools/resources.

  - A review of international teacher-mentor training and certification programs and/or related standards, tools or resources and any evidence of their impact.

  - Development of draft standards for Australian teacher-mentors for consultation among ITE providers and the profession.

  - Identification of resources or tools for teacher-mentors that could be developed nationally and which, along with existing resources or tools, could be linked via a dedicated page on AITSL's website. (Pages 11-12)

- Consideration could be given to making teacher-mentor certification a pre-requisite for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification. (Page 12)

- Given the current critical teacher shortage, Australian governments should consider a limited-life project to offer experienced teachers considering leaving the profession the opportunity to first train and then work as teacher-mentors across a group of schools. (Page 12)

- To support the practice of school leadership, governments should consider trialling a national mentorship or coaching scheme for first-time principals, to be funded by government grants. The trial could be developed with and delivered under the auspices of principals' associations to ensure variance in leadership contexts are adequately addressed. (Page 13)

- A national policy focus on middle leadership in schools would have a tangible and progressive impact on the quality of leadership in Australian schools, and strengthen the leadership pipeline. (Page 14)

- To encourage the development of and enrolment in accredited post-graduate certificate and diploma courses for middle leadership roles, the Australian Government could increase the number of Commonwealth Assisted Places available for such courses. (Pages 14-15)

1. Holding governments to account

The Commission's interim report raises the question of the integrity of the NSRA if jurisdictions fail to progress agreed national initiatives. As examples of stalled initiatives, the Commission points to the proposed Unique Student Identifier (USI) and the Online Formative Assessment Initiative (OFAI). The Commission recommends, in regard to the USI, that jurisdictions explain any failure to deliver the USI if design and privacy protections are agreed.

Like so many other organisations, AHISA has contributed to consultations around these initiatives in good faith. It is vitally important that educators are consulted over initiatives that may substantially affect any aspect of their work. If public policy engagement is valued by governments, it is also important that stakeholders and the wider public are kept informed of progress of nationally agreed initiatives or the reasons why they are not pursued.

In consultations on the USI proposal, AHISA expressed several concerns, including how the USI would be issued and whether schools or a separate body would be responsible for uploading and/or holding data associated with the USI. Given the potential of an introduction of a USI to significantly increase the administrative burden on schools, affect digital platform requirements and ramp up cyber security challenges, AHISA recommended that Education Ministers issue a guarantee that a draft model and a discussion paper would be produced and used for a further round of consultations. No such guarantee was forthcoming and there have been no further stakeholder communications.

While national teacher registration is not an issue that has been driven by an NSRA, it is a further example of the failure of jurisdictions to progress national initiatives of value. In spite of federal and state/territory Ministers of Education endorsing the implementation strategy for recommendations made by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in the report of its 2018 National Review of Teacher Registration, submissions by jurisdictions to a consultation undertaken by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Deregulation Taskforce on coverage of the teaching profession under Commonwealth legislation for automatic mutual recognition of occupational registrations showed little will to move toward such recognition or a national registration model.

Given the Commission's interest in Australia's teacher workforce, and the increased mobility of Australian teachers due to COVID-19 concerns such as proximity to family or the search for positions offering greater work-life balance, the Commission might consider adding – if not national teacher registration – a commitment by jurisdictions to streamlining of teacher registration to its suite of recommendations around teacher workforce issues for inclusion in the next NSRA. As AITSL found in its review, 'Interpretation and administration of teacher registration requirements vary across jurisdictions. Work needs to be done to streamline and enhance existing processes to improve teacher mobility across the nation [and] ensure rigour and consistency in judgements'.

2. Maximising the impact of Australia's National Education Architecture

The Commission's interim report requests information on 'realising the full potential of evidence-based research through the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)' (Information request 2.1, page 27).

Along with AITSL, Education Services Australia (ESA) and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), which together with AERO form the National Education Architecture, AERO has released a range of resources to support adoption and implementation of evidence-informed practices in schools.

There is tremendous value to schools and to the profession in continuing the role of the National Education Architecture in the development of high-quality, research-based resources for teaching, learning and professional development. The shift to remote learning during COVID-19 has, however, highlighted the complexity that digital delivery modes are bringing to the context of learning and teaching, and therefore to the nature of the resources teachers require. We should not be surprised if teachers and schools look to a range of commercial and other avenues to source lesson plans and other materials as well as resources available via the National Education Architecture.

As mentioned in the introduction to this submission, it is Australian educators who are leading the ongoing transformation of Australian school education. Resource development must therefore support teachers' professional autonomy to shape lessons and learning and teaching materials, not only to ensure that teachers are able to meet the needs of their students in a way that is relevant to students' lived experience, but to enable the fast adaptation of resources to what has become a rapidly changing environment for education provision.

In September 2022, Zoom released a commissioned report prepared by Intelligence Business Research Services (IBRS), *The future of education: Lessons for educators*. Drawing on a series of interviews with educators undertaken in 2020-21, the report describes lessons learned on how teaching and learning resources can best be adapted for digital delivery if they are to support the work of both students and teachers. Of special interest in regard to resource development by National Education Architecture organisations is the evolution of content development:

> This evolution in content development that was boosted by the necessity of COVID will result in highly granular, bite-sized, educational content that can be reused across multiple curricula and upgraded frequently. Both K-12 and higher education reported that supporting hybrid learning required changes to how content was being created, even with the youngest students. Breaking learning content into smaller, singularly focused items became the essential approach, though there is still much experimentation into exactly how content is to be presented. (Page 12)

A further finding was that bite-sized digital content also supports equity of access to online learning when students may have connectivity or bandwidth challenges or are working from a mobile phone. The Zoom/IBRS report also notes that digitised content enabled sharing of content among teachers, which promoted collaboration on the creation of content and in turn encouraged peer review of content.

These findings suggest resources produced by all National Education Architecture organisations – already highly regarded – may need to be regularly reviewed and even reconfigured in the light of emerging demands for digital delivery of content, hybrid delivery models and increased personalisation of learning. To support rapid upskilling of Australia's teachers for digital delivery, consideration could also be given to producing online professional learning modules on use and adaptation of resources.

Given the requirement of some jurisdictions that teachers undertake accredited professional learning to qualify for re-registration, wherever possible National Education Architecture organisations should seek accreditation of any professional development offerings to support teacher uptake of offerings.

3. Support for national effort on student wellbeing

AHISA acknowledges the ongoing efforts of federal and state and territory governments to address the health and wellbeing of children and young people, including through the development of frameworks and teaching and learning resources to support school-based effort.

As noted by the Commission in its interim report (page 120), whether student wellbeing is designated a new priority reform area in the next NSRA or incorporated as a sub-component of existing reform categories, defining a national obligation 'to identify and implement measures addressing wellbeing alongside other reform priorities' could ensure governments' accountability for implementing wellbeing initiatives and achieving outcomes. The Commission further recommends the development and introduction of a national measure of student wellbeing, to be applied across all schools to enable annual reporting (draft recommendation 4.1, page 122).

AHISA suggests that a first step before such a recommendation is adopted would be to determine what measures of wellbeing would provide the data sought. Only then would it be possible to judge whether current state-based measures – with or without adaptation – are sufficient to provide the required data, or whether the development of a national measurement tool would be necessary. Such a step would also help to determine whether universal or sample measurement was required. This is an important consideration for schools given that, as it stands, the Commission's recommendations would add to schools' reporting burden and that schools are already deeply engaged in addressing student wellbeing and measuring outcomes of specific approaches they are undertaking. Australian governments are also heavily invested in this aspect of education provision.

In AHISA's submission to the Productivity Commission's Mental Health Inquiry, we drew the Commission's attention to the history of engagement of independent schools in what is sometimes called 'pastoral care' and to the emergence of research-based whole-of-school approaches to pastoral care and student wellbeing in the first decade of this century. The submission demonstrated that 'schools have not been passive in either perceiving or developing responses to the health and wellbeing needs of students' and that for some time schools' interest in student wellbeing has been multi-dimensional:
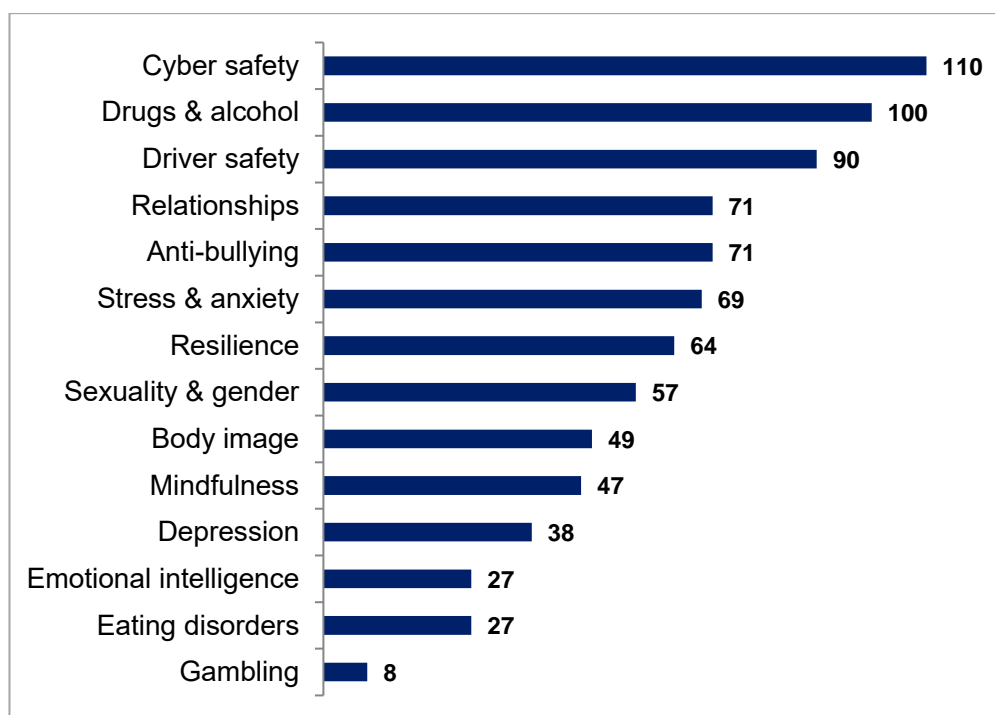
> [T]he evidence of past and current practice [. . .] points to schools as innovators and leaders in student health and wellbeing, adopting or drawing on research-based programs and committed to ongoing evaluation and adaptation of their programs to ensure the needs of their students and school communities are met. (AHISA submission, 22 January 2020, page 4)

AHISA presented a range of evidence to the Mental Health Inquiry drawn from a survey of its members undertaken in 2019. Of relevance to the NSRA Review are the following findings:

a. Almost 80 per cent of respondents to the survey reported that their school's approach to student health and wellbeing is based on or incorporates a specific philosophy or research base. A wide range of influences on programs was mentioned, including:

- The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- Positive psychology/positive education
- Yale's RULER program
- CASSE (for remote and marginalised Aboriginal communities)
- Montessori philosophy
- Academic care

- Round Square Group
- Strengths-based education
- Stephen R. Covey's work
- Emotional Intelligence
- Growth mindset
- Walker Learning pedagogy (play and inquiry-based pedagogy)
- Be You
- Social emotional learning, including the work of the US-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

- Character education
- Healthy Minds program
- Mindfulness
- Yoga and movement
- 5 Ways to Wellbeing Framework
- Green's Precede/Proceed model of health promotion
- Culturally appropriate knowledges and belief systems
- Faith-based approaches, such as the Lutheran theology of the whole child
- You Can Do It! online programs.

b. 78 per cent of respondents reported their schools had developed their own curriculum relating to student health and wellbeing and physical education, embracing federal/state/territory mandates but going significantly beyond them. Only 10 per cent of respondents reported that their school's curriculum offerings on student health and wellbeing were limited to the requirements of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education for Years 1-10 and any state/territory curriculum mandates.

c. Nearly all survey respondents reported that their school uses external providers to deliver within-school or out-of-school health and wellbeing courses or programs for students. In order of number of mentions, topics addressed by external providers included:

Topic	Mentions
Cyber safety	110
Drugs & alcohol	100
Driver safety	90
Relationships	71
Anti-bullying	71
Stress & anxiety	69
Resilience	64
Sexuality & gender	57
Body image	49
Mindfulness	47
Depression	38
Emotional intelligence	27
Eating disorders	27
Gambling	8

d. While external providers are typically used to deliver formalised topic-centred programs, other individuals or staff of government and other agencies might be brought in to augment health and wellbeing provision. One Head reported that a number of caseworkers are onsite

with the school community each day. Another Head commented that while 'formal western agencies' were not used for program delivery, Indigenous Elders and Authorities who are in kin relationships or custodial relationships with students and their countries are engaged by the school to help build the depth and strength of students' identity: 'Over nine years we have not had one student commit suicide or self-harm. I believe it is because we invest authentic and reinforced authority and leadership in our Elders.'

e. Nearly all respondents reported their schools were already engaged in or were in the process of introducing some form of evaluation of their approach to student health and wellbeing, including student feedback.

f. Some 67% of respondents reported that an external framework or survey had been used to evaluate the school's student health and wellbeing program or aspects of it. The most frequently mentioned external framework used was the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, followed by the relevant state or territory document (eg NSW Wellbeing Self-Assessment Tool for Schools, Victorian Framework for Improving Student Outcomes: Health and wellbeing dimension, Queensland Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework, South Australian Wellbeing for Learning and Life Framework). (See footnote.) Other evaluation tools mentioned included:

    – ACER's Social-Emotional Wellbeing Survey

    – Mission Australia Youth Survey

    – Flourishing at School Survey

    – Gallup Essential Elements wellbeing survey

    – South Australia's Wellbeing and Engagement Collection.

The last finding suggests that research into schools' use of existing national and state/territory frameworks and evaluation tools could prove valuable in devising a student wellbeing measurement tool that could both augment existing school practice and deliver national data requirements:

Consideration might also be given to outsourcing a sample survey approach to data collection to providers such as the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). ACER's Social-Emotional Wellbeing Survey has already delivered significant time series data on Australian students' wellbeing.

Priority should be given to data collection methods which support schools' and jurisdictions' existing efforts and minimise any additional administrative burden.

A further finding from AHISA's 2019 survey is that factors such as school size and location and the unique needs of school communities influence schools' approaches to and delivery of programs aimed at supporting student wellbeing, and the human resources they choose to

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The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework is a multi-dimensional resource for schools, offering aligned components such as a school wellbeing check, illustrations of practice on ways to use the Framework and free professional learning courses for educators and pre-service teachers on use of the Framework. In its March 2022 *Spotlight*, Wellbeing in Australian schools, AITSL lists a range of state/territory government student wellbeing evaluation surveys (Resource List 2).

devote to student wellbeing. For example, some schools are more likely to prioritise investment in school nurses or mental health nurses, depending on the needs of students, or may arrange for health practitioners such as speech therapists to visit the school if demand warrants it. The autonomy of schools to decide how they are to use available resources to benefit their communities is crucial if schools are to achieve the best outcomes for those communities.

Survey respondents also pointed to the need for community health and wellbeing resources and professionals for student and family referral, including telehealth services. This is particularly important in regional and remote areas.

Schools cannot stand alone in addressing students' health and wellbeing needs, and AHISA appreciates the Commission's recognition of the need for cross-portfolio action on student welfare.

4. Ongoing teacher development through teacher-mentors

In its [submission to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review](#), AHISA noted that the release by AITSL of _Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession_ has informed jurisdictions' frameworks and guides for the induction of initial teacher education (ITE) graduates in schools. The guidelines also establish the contribution of mentoring to graduate professional development.

AHISA has been advocating the value of a national teacher-mentor training scheme for several years, including preparing a paper on mentoring, one of several developed by national principals' associations and commissioned by AITSL as an outcome of a review conducted by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG). Key points reiterated since 2015 include:

- In interviews conducted in preparation for the TEMAG project paper, AHISA members reported that mentoring and/or observation and feedback are considered successful models for professional development of teachers at all stages in their careers.

- Among AHISA's members' schools there is increasing adoption of peer-to-peer models of teacher professional learning such as learning circles, action research projects and peer observation models, including pedagogical rounds and learning walks. Peer-to-peer models promote collaborative professional learning, which can accelerate the adoption of and help embed new and/or improved practices far more readily than attendance at external professional development courses. Trained teacher-mentors are seen as enriching this process.

- A system of trained teacher-mentors in schools has the potential to support alternative pathways into teaching, for example for career-change professionals, including practitioners in the visual and performing arts or from VET-related industries, and for those in targeted areas of teacher shortage, including native speakers of languages other than English, or with a background in physics and chemistry or higher-level mathematics.

- The introduction of Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) arrangements for ITE students suggests a further benefit of teacher-mentors would be to assist ITE students on practicum placements develop and demonstrate the attributes and skills to be assessed.

- School-based mentors are the most appropriate model for maximising the effectiveness of school-based practical experience for a range of programs (such as clinical teacher education programs and internships) and for particular stages of ITE students' development, as well as to support the ongoing professional learning of graduates to achieve Proficient status and to support experienced teachers.

- Mentoring of ITE students on practicum placement signals a greater commitment of time and expertise to students on the part of schools and teachers than supervision, and demands specialist training for the mentor.

- Selection of mentors should recognise that mentors need to be outstanding adult educators, not just outstanding child and adolescent educators.

- The selection, training and support of teacher-mentors demand a considerable commitment of time and financial resources from schools.

AHISA advocates for a formalised approach to the training of teacher-mentors, through accreditation of teacher-mentor training courses:

- As with accreditation of ITE providers, accreditation of teacher-mentor training courses gives assurance to those undertaking the courses as well as to their future mentees.

- Accreditation recognises the importance of the contribution of teacher-mentors to the profession.

- Consistency in mentoring approaches supports Teacher Performance Assessments.

- Consistency in mentoring education and certification assists recognition of teacher-mentor training courses as professional development counting toward teachers' re-registration requirements.

AHISA's submission to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review recommended several initial steps toward a national approach to the training and certification of teacher-mentors:

1. A review of teacher-mentor training and certification already offered in Australia, and their supporting standards or frameworks and tools/resources. For example, the Victorian Department of Education and Training's Effective Mentoring Program encompasses a two-day mentoring course as well as online modules and is supported by a Mentoring Capability Framework, and Queensland University of Technology offers an online certificate course, *Mentoring Beginning Teachers*, rated for 13 hours of certified professional development.

2. A review of international teacher-mentor training and certification programs and/or related standards, tools or resources and any evidence of their impact. (It is worth noting that the Teacher Registration Board of South Australia commissioned such a review in 2016-17.)

3. Development of draft standards for Australian teacher-mentors for consultation among ITE providers and the profession.

4. Identification of resources or tools for teacher-mentors that could be developed nationally and which, along with existing resources or tools (such as AITSL's mentoring guide), could be linked via a dedicated page on AITSL's website. AITSL is well-placed to establish and host an online professional support group for teacher-mentors.

AHISA also suggests that consideration be given to making teacher-mentor certification a pre-requisite for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification, given the role HALTs are expected to play in developing their teaching colleagues.

Given the current critical teacher shortage, Australian governments might consider a limited-life project to offer experienced teachers considering leaving the profession the opportunity to first train and then work as teacher-mentors to early career teachers. The teacher-mentor could work under contract to the relevant state or territory and be funded by governments through a matched grant scheme. The teacher-mentor would not necessarily attached to one school, but be available to a group of schools in all sectors within one area. Such a scheme might have the added benefit of persuading experienced teachers to retain their registered status and return to the classroom.

A national teacher-mentor scheme would also have the advantage of supporting the Commission's draft recommendation 5.3, 'to encourage highly effective teachers and maximise their value'.

5. Strengthening school leadership

In its commentary on the role of principals in Chapter 6 of the interim report, the Commission rightly points to the variance in both principalship roles and the expression of broader leadership roles within schools. The role of a principal of a non-systemic school and hence the nature of distributed leadership within non-systemic schools can be substantially different to the roles and responsibilities of leaders in systemic schools. In responding to the Commission's request for information (Information request 6.1, Fostering school leaders, page 177), AHISA therefore describes its own contribution to the development of principals and senior and pastoral care leaders, which is specific to the independent sector. In section 5b we also discuss the value of a national focus on middle leadership.

5a. The power of collegiality

Much of the ongoing professional development of Australian school educators is collegial in nature, that is, depends on peer-to-peer exchange. In recent years, schools and systems have sought to harness the power of peer learning with formalised support for peer exchange, such as within-school learning circles and class observations. Profession-driven exchange, however – through subject associations, online networks and TeachMeets, for example – remains a vital contributor to the spread and uptake of good practice and new approaches in school education, especially as it undergoes transformation.

While AHISA offers its members access to external expert opinion via webinars and conferences, the core of our development offerings is collegial. These offerings include face-to-face or virtual state and regional-based Branch meetings of members, face-to-face or virtual conferencing and online networking. Our online network, HeadNet, offers members access to sharing of resources and in-time support on specific issues.

For first-time Heads, we also have an adviser program, in which recently retired and experienced Heads are available to companion Heads in the critical first years of principalship. While Heads of independent schools typically come into the principalship with long experience across a range of senior leadership positions and post-graduate qualifications in education – including educational leadership – the full force of the responsibilities and challenges of principalship is difficult to prepare for in advance. In-time support and coaching assists new principals to quickly establish confidence in their leadership capacity and capabilities.

AHISA's annual New Members Conference has not only proven to be a highly successful venue for exchange between experienced and new principals but is a means of establishing professional friendships across jurisdictional boundaries, avoiding any potential confidentiality conflicts.

Given the strength of Australia's principals' associations, it is possible for governments to consider funding the trial of a national mentorship scheme for first-time principals under the auspices of principals' associations to ensure variance in leadership contexts are adequately addressed.

To address the development of future principals, AHISA has an Aspirant Member category. Our Aspirant program includes the opportunity to shadow Heads as well as attend targeted workshops covering issues of school management not traditionally covered by post-graduate courses, such as governance and school financial management. AHISA's biennial Leading,

Learning & Caring conference is attended by Aspirant members, as well as Heads and senior school leaders, including pastoral care (wellbeing) leaders. A highlight of the conference, as with our National Biennial Conference for members, is the collegial sharing of successful programs and practices through short 'EdTalk' presentations.

5b. A focus on middle leadership roles

A consistent theme in AHISA's submissions to government and government agencies has been the pro-active nature of the teaching profession in leading shifts in education provision and professional development. This does not negate the need for government leadership or action but does signal a need for caution in the adoption of policies based on deficit models. AHISA's recent policy manifesto advocating a strengths-based approach to policymaking in education, including examples of its application, was attached to AHISA's first submission to the Commission's NSRA Review.

As discussed in the policy manifesto, the disruption of schooling in 2020 and 2021 revealed the importance of school leadership structures to effect the fast 'pivots' to online delivery and to ensure the ongoing health and wellbeing of both staff and students. In particular, the role of the middle management tier of school leadership in implementing and embedding changes in practice came into sharp focus. Cultural change within schools is also more difficult and can become a lengthy process unless there is alignment of middle management with the goals of senior leaders.

Senior leadership roles have also undergone significant change, at least in the independent sector. Over the last decade it has become increasingly common to see titles such as Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Learning Analytics and Director of Wellbeing, or variants on these titles, appearing on the delegate list for our Leading, Learning & Caring conference and in the biographies of contributors to AHISA's journal, *Independence*.

As outlined in AHISA's policy manifesto, governments have a role to play in enlarging leadership capacity within schools. We propose that a national policy focus on what is generally referred to as 'middle leadership' in schools will have a tangible and progressive impact on the quality of leadership in Australian schools. Such a focus would also strengthen the leadership pipeline and offers a means for governments to have a substantive impact on school leadership with immediate and long-term benefits.

AHISA recommends:

- To help build leadership capacity in Australian schools, the Australian Government should task AITSL to undertake a rapid literature review of effective professional learning for middle and upper school management and to scope current professional learning options for Australian school leaders.

- These projects could support extension of the Australian Professional Teaching Standards and Australian Professional Standard for Principals to create a map of excellence in school leadership to support leadership progression, and would also inform the creation of resources, short courses and post-graduate qualifications to support that progression.

- The development of post-graduate certificates and diplomas for beginning stages of leadership and for middle leaders could support teachers' confidence in taking on year-level coordinator roles, for example, and progressively broader roles such as subject coordinator or faculty coordinator and emerging areas of school leadership. Currently, the number of

Commonwealth Assisted Places (CAPs) for a Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership, for example, is limited. To encourage the development of accredited post-graduate certificate and diploma courses for middle leadership roles, the Australian Government could expand the number of CAPs available for graduate courses. ◼