Education Services Australia

Education Services Australia Response to the Productivity Commission Review of the National School Reform Agreement – Interim Report.

October 2022

Contents

Introduction

Education Services Australia (ESA) is a not-for-profit company owned by all Australian education ministers.

Formed in 2010, ESA works in collaboration with all Australian education jurisdictions to provide technology-enabled education resources, tools and services, with a focus on advancing nationally agreed education initiatives, programs and projects.

ESA's strategic objective is to support improved student outcomes, enhanced teacher impact and stronger school communities.

With a focus on equity and quality, our experience includes the development, delivery and/or ongoing management of projects and services that support teachers, students and parents. Our current projects include the Student Wellbeing Hub, Phonics Check and Literacy Hub, Mathematics Hub, the national career information service, myfuture and the Online National Assessment Platform.

ESA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion and endorses the Interim Review's position that the next National School Reform Agreement (the Agreement) needs "to move beyond system architecture and drive real improvements on the ground."[1]

As outlined in the Interim Report, much has been achieved through the first Agreement. This sets in place the systems and lays the groundwork for the urgent task of improving student outcomes, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged cohorts.

The current Agreement has been implemented during a time of significant disruption and adaption. COVID-19 required teachers and students to rapidly respond and adjust to new learning environments and systems. During that intense period of change and uncertainty, we have seen a new appreciation for the teaching profession and witnessed the significant role that digital technology can play in supporting quality teaching and student outcomes.

Against the backdrop of an evolving education landscape and increasing reliance on digital technologies to complement teaching and student support services, ESA provides products and services that are valued for their practical and effective contribution to the student learning experience.

ESA looks forward to continuing its work with all Ministers and with the myriad of stakeholders who make up our dynamic education sector. Together, we can close out some of the outstanding items from the current agreement, as well as construct a new agreement that captures the lived experience of education leaders, teachers and governments. Together, we can apply a new Agreement in a way that moves Australian education forward and lifts student outcomes.

Response to specific chapters

This response specifically focusses on the information requests, draft findings and draft recommendations where ESA is best equipped to provide meaningful insights.

The following submission responds to three specific sections of the Interim Report – the high-level assessment of National Policy Initiatives (chapter 2), Student wellbeing (chapter 4) and supporting teachers (chapter 5). It does so with a lens to improving student outcomes.

Our submission taps into the vast opportunities presented through digital transformations and solutions, including the ways that digital tools can help alleviate the pressures of over-worked teachers to support quality teaching. In doing so, this submission draws on ESA's expertise in developing digital teaching and learning resources for teachers and students and systems more broadly.

---

[1] Productivity Commission, *Review of the National School Reform Agreement Interim report*, September 2022 p22

High level assessment of the National Policy Initiatives

The vast majority of National Policy Initiatives (NPIs) set out in the first agreement are underway or have been completed. If we are to continue to build on our policy base, then the next agreement must leverage the work of the first, including the initiatives that have not yet been completed. This applies equally to the Unique Student Identifier (USI), the Online Formative Assessment Initiative (OFAI) and responses to the Senior Secondary Pathways work. Each of these ambitious items were initiated because they hold significant potential to improve student outcomes, and each must be continued for that same reason. The following provides some ideas and solutions on how these matters can be progressed more efficiently.

The principle of national cooperation is sound and should remain

It is a reality of our federated model that education policy is agreed by all governments. ESA recognises frustrations around the challenges and costs associated with joint national projects[2] but notes that these frustrations would be far exceeded by the longer-term inefficiencies that arise from duplication of effort. Investment in areas where national collaboration can achieve the desired outcomes for all students across the country should be encouraged.

The inability to finalise the USI and the OFAI are disappointing, but indicate an opportunity to collectively improve the governance, processes and systems behind the Agreement.

Rather than eliminate the "one in, all in approach"[3] for the next Agreement, local differences should be identified, recognised and incorporated into solution design. Flexible system design should enable consistency across school systems and sectors across the country, with local adaptions where needed. Differences between jurisdictions should not be a reason to abandon, or restrict, our ambitious national effort.

In order to be consistently and effectively implemented, national reform requires strong and effective governance and process. Ministers work under enormous pressure, across multiple areas of policy and on tight deadlines. It is not fair or reasonable to expect that Ministers can address the myriad of local needs across eight jurisdictions when they come together to work through a crowded agenda at Education Ministers Meetings. While this can sometimes be addressed through additional special-purpose meetings, more can be achieved at and below the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC).

Officials need to have the authority and incentive to work pragmatically together to identify areas of common agreement, and to design dynamic responses to key differences, in close coordination with Ministers and their offices.

This could include targeted working groups at the levels below AESOC, with a clear expectation of delivering a flexible range of options to Ministers, rather than a once-size-fits-all approach that cannot be agreed by all.

In response to Information Request 2.2, ESA would argue that adjustments to governance, process and an increased focus on consultation would go a long way to addressing the concerns expressed that "Relying too much on NPIs that are a single solution to common issues has delayed reform outcomes."[4]

ESA acknowledges (as per Draft Finding 2.2) that the Agreement has weaknesses but would submit that its objective to achieve NPI's as "a single solution to common problems" is not one of them. While not all objectives have been met and delivered as planned, there are some successes that lay the groundwork for further achievement in the next agreements. For example, the establishment of the Australian Education

---

[2] Ibid, p71
[3] Ibid, pp22 and 71
[4] Ibid, p28

Research Organisation, while admittedly in its early days, lays the basis for addressing common issues with responses informed by the evidence, and by best practice.

The Agreement also rightly sought to support student learning and improve national and local data sets through the development of a USI. The fact this has not yet been achieved does not mean it cannot be achieved, particularly if governance and process issues are addressed. The fact that USIs are already in place in many jurisdictions and for higher and tertiary education indicates that the case for a national USI is strong and that the objective is achievable.

Process design for the next agreement must include a strategy for addressing roadblocks, such as the data and privacy elements of the USI. While correctly described in the Interim Report as a "thorny issue,"[5] the next Agreement must revisit the original reasons for this collective commitment, as well as address the design and privacy concerns in a way that moves this important national tool forward. Looking to other areas where these issues have been addressed will assist progress, including the National Data Sharing Agreement that underpins the NAPLAN Online project and the bilateral agreements proposed to support utilisation of the Longitudinal Data Store.

Along with the OFAI, a renewed focus and determination would help deliver necessary tools to track and understand student performance. These were both initially agreed because of the valuable data they would provide to inform teaching practice and to instruct policy design going forward. These tools remain key to building the evidence needed to maximise learning growth and improve student outcomes in the next Agreement.

Recommendation 1: That the Productivity Commission further explores governance opportunities to drive consistency, flexibility and specifically address roadblocks. There is an opportunity to review and revise processes behind Education Ministers Meetings in ways that foster progress and accountability, with the objective of providing Ministers a range of flexible solutions for discussion at their meetings.

Outstanding initiatives from the first Agreement need to be resolved

ESA supports the Commission's view that governments need to address the design of the USI or explain "why the project has failed."[6] The case for collaboration remains strong on the USI and the OFAI.

Similarly, there remain opportunities to be realised through the implementation of recommendations put forward by Peter Shergold's Review into Senior Secondary Pathways. The Report, *Looking to the Future,* rightly drew on the experience of online learning during COVID to inform its findings and recommendations on accessible career advice and work experience. It recognised that up-to-date online information, from a trusted source, can help inform student career deliberations and decision making[7].

The ambition to help address gaps in career advice, exploration and experience through digital technologies is achievable. ESA can support governments to implement this by expanding the purpose, reach and utilisation of myfuture.edu.au, which is an important part of the existing national career guidance ecosystem and plays a significant role in assisting career practitioners, students and their parents.

ESA has also explored the requirements and options for advancing the use of the virtual work exposure in Australian secondary classrooms. After gathering a deep understanding of the requirements and needs of policy makers, department coordinators career practitioners, students and parents in a discovery phase, ESA is also exploring the opportunity to undertake a pilot of WorkXP. This would provide a virtual work exposure platform to connect Australian school students with selected virtual work experiences. The program would be designed to cater for individual student aspirations, regardless of location or socio-

---

[5] Ibid, p2

[6] Ibid, p7

[7] Peter Shergold, *Looking to the Future – Report of the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training*, June 2020 p18

economic status. ESA has explored the potential options for implementation in an Alpha (Prototyping) phase and tested a potential solution with Career practitioners and students.

The Report's ambition to provide accessible career advice and work experience can be achieved through an expansion of existing ESA infrastructure.

Recommendation 2: That Governments address the Senior Secondary work and revisit practical steps to realise its recommendations, particularly around delivering digital career advice and experiences to increase equity and accessibility.

Co-design can align policy intentions with practical implementation

The reform priorities in the next agreement must be drawn from the lived experience of education leaders, teachers and the broader school sector and communities.

The Terms of Reference for this Review rightly set high expectations for consultation, which have yielded valuable insights throughout the Interim Report (particularly with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and students with a disability).

This focus on consultation needs to continue as the Agreement, and its reform priorities, are progressed, refined and defined. Reflecting the increased emphasis on co-design that has occurred since the last agreement in 2018, consultation should continue throughout policy design. The next agreement should include opportunities for co-design, along with place-based policies, particularly amongst targeted cohorts.

In ESA's experience, working alongside First Nations communities is essential. ESA has partnered with the Stronger Smarter Institute to deliver the Australian Government's English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) trial to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschool children for whom English is an additional language or dialect. The project involves developing a series of play-based apps for children in the year before full-time school, together with resources for educators, families and communities that are co-designed and aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum: Foundation. Integral to the project is building cultural awareness and safety, examining bias, co-design and shared responsibility for change, privileging Indigenous research methodologies and Indigenous ways of being, doing and knowing.

Another strong example of co-design can be seen with the development of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). The challenge was a data collection that did not enable comparisons between sectors, or even between states and territories. Sponsored by the Australian Government, ESA undertook co-design with teachers, principals and data managers to bring consistency to valuable and informative data about the adjustments needed to support disability in the classroom. ESA worked through case studies, developed e-learning courses and created simple tools to ensure the data collection is now consistent.

In addition to the reviewed governance arrangements proposed above, the next agreement must include processes by which governments can capture the views and experiences of practitioners. Participation in the process leads to a sense of ownership, which benefits implementation. Implementation will be significantly more achievable if the approach has been informed by practical insights throughout the design process.

Recommendation 3 – Incorporate co-design into the exploration and development of new reform initiatives.

Student wellbeing

ESA wholeheartedly supports a new and explicit focus on student wellbeing in the next Agreement.

Doing so builds on the current Agreement's acknowledgement that wellbeing "is fundamental to successful education outcomes"[8] and recognises the enormous impact that COVID has had on student wellbeing. The connection between wellbeing and outcomes is of significant interest in priority groups, such as low socio-economic status students, students with disabilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

This initiative is also in step with the new national focus on wellbeing in the forthcoming Federal Budget.

There are opportunities for meaningful policy reform and intervention in this policy area. The impact of these interventions is amplified where digital technologies are designed and deployed effectively. For example, the Student Wellbeing Hub (Student Wellbeing Hub | Home) provides quality assured materials on a freely available website. Greater investment would allow a more significant curation of quality resources from a range of experts.

Draft recommendation 4.1 to "incorporate wellbeing in the next intergovernmental agreement" as an outcome, backed by actions and data collection is a significant step forward in acknowledging the increasing challenges to student wellbeing, in response to COVID and in response to the rise and rise of social media.

As outlined in the Interim Report, there is strong in-principle support for the benefits of a National Wellbeing Indicator, noting that the indicator need not (and should not) be reported publicly at school level. Doing so would create distracting league tables that would not serve individual schools, their students or their broader school communities.

Student wellbeing is also an important place for greater collaboration between governments, school sectors and portfolios.[9] In response to Information Request 4.1, there are two "common steps" that governments can take. One is to finalise the work underway to establish a nationally consistent definition of student wellbeing and the second is to establish a nationally consistent infrastructure that allows schools to collect data for reporting purposes. This needs to be carefully considered and designed to ensure data collection does not add to their administrative burden.

In the context of the next Agreement, a commonly accepted definition would help link the work around student wellbeing to student outcomes. Social and emotional skills have been found to be good predictors of educational outcomes and educational outcomes have been shown to impact social and emotional wellbeing. For example: resilience and optimism are traits that make it easier to cope with difficulties such as social isolation or feelings of insecurity; intellectual curiosity and creativity lies at the heart of a young person's motivation to learn and explore new ideas; the willingness to cooperate, trust and accept others is crucial for children and young adults to be able to fully and meaningfully participate in their education; and our students need to be able to think independently and take responsibility. Individual wellbeing is the foundation from which we develop these important traits and capabilities. If we accept that social and emotional wellbeing is aligned with resilience, optimism, trust, motivation and self-confidence, we can lift wellbeing to identifiable skillsets that we want to develop in Australian students.

The use of digital technologies can assist the integration of data collection for a national purpose, with the measures already deployed by many schools. It would also support the nuanced reporting that serves the dual purpose of informing policy development and intervention design at system level, while providing meaningful and consistent data at school level. There is an opportunity to model this collection on the work already undertaken on the NCCD collection referred to earlier. That model, and its associated support resources have improved the quality of NCCD data and improved teacher understanding of the adjustments available to support students with a disability. It has done so through an equitable and accessible format that

---

[8] Council of Australian Governments, *National School Reform Agreement*, 2018, p4
[9] Productivity Commission, p21

resulted from a detailed co-design process that can be replicated to support the achievement of agreed goals for student wellbeing.

Robust wellbeing data at local, state and national levels could also produce a really important early warning system. Quality early warning systems collect data directly from a school or groups of schools, including enrolment demographic information, assessment results, records of disciplinary events, library activity, attendance, participation in extracurricular activities, and wellbeing surveys, among other sources. These systems can communicate findings and data in ways that identify which students are at risk, and which factors contribute to that appraisal. A well-designed system will recommend specific actions and provide resources to ensure interventions are appropriately targeted.

ESA supports Draft Recommendation 4.1 to incorporate wellbeing in the next intergovernmental agreement as an outcome, backed by actions and data collection. ESA stands ready to support this work through digital platforms and data collection.

Supporting teachers

Addressing the issue of teacher shortages is a shared responsibility. ESA's goal is to draw on its experience and knowledge to support efforts to attract, develop and retain quality teachers for Australian schools now and for the future.

The Interim Report rightly emphasizes the negative impact resulting from high teacher workload – it undermines attraction strategies, increases attrition rates for teachers, reduces the impact of teachers in the classroom and places student outcomes at risk.

Recent research undertaken by the Grattan Institute highlights the urgency for policies, practices, and actions to address teacher workload, as well as the opportunity for national collaboration to support these actions.

According to research undertaken by the Grattan Institute:

- A majority of teachers (86 per cent) do not get enough time for high-quality lesson planning.[10]
- Half (53 per cent) reported that teachers "spend a great deal of time reinventing the wheel."[11]
- Nearly half (49 per cent) are planning for classes mostly on their own.[12]
- Over half (55 per cent) are not satisfied with their school's approach to curriculum planning and this increases to 61 per cent for teachers at disadvantaged schools."[13]

The Grattan Institute also finds that an overwhelming majority of teachers believe that "shared high-quality instructional materials"[14] would support them with their workload and help them deliver stronger benefits in the classroom.

- 90 per cent said it would give them "more time to focus on improving their classroom practice."[15]
- 88 per cent said it would give them "more time to evaluate and respond to individual student learning needs."[16]
- 93 per cent said beginning teachers should be "provided with shared high-quality instructional materials that they can use in their classes."[17]

---

[10] Jordana Hunter, Amy Haywood and Nick Parkinson, *Ending the Lesson Lottery – How to Improve Curriculum Planning in Schools*, Grattan Institute, October 2022, p11
[11] Ibid
[12] Ibid, p28
[13] Ibid, p32
[14] Ibid
[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid
[17] Ibid

Teachers also believed that high-quality teaching tools result in more consistent learning and greater teacher satisfaction.[18] A comprehensive bank of high-quality materials would save individual teachers 3 hours a week, and Australian teachers collectively 20 million hours a year.[19]

The good news is that Australia has a strong track record in developing shared national assets in the form of quality assured, curriculum-linked digital teaching and learning resources that are freely available to all teachers in all Australian schools. As outlined in the following sections, the policy and technical infrastructure that enables this sharing to occur is in place and can be leveraged to quickly and cost effectively achieve this objective.

An important, and timely, role for digital technologies

Education technology is not new to Australia's teachers. Since the early 2000s, the education sector has been willing to explore ways in which technology can help students to learn better, help teachers to teach better and reduce the administrative burden in schools. Not all our efforts on this front have been successful, but there is no doubt that the role and impact of technology in education has grown exponentially.

These education technologies – new and emerging – are important assets in our efforts to support teachers and allow them to focus on what they do best, shaping the learning of young Australians. It is also worth noting that providing consistent, safe, high-quality resources and tools online, without the difficulty of procurement enhances equity and accessibility, particularly for our most disadvantaged schools.

Education technologies can never replace the expertise of teachers and the personal connections they develop with their students, but they can help inform, complement and supplement good teaching practice. A combination of mature and emerging technologies can improve the social status and relative attractiveness of the teaching profession, play a valuable role to reduce the administrative burden on teachers and support them to develop and hone their expertise as practitioners.

The attractiveness of a technology-rich teaching career

Education technologies can help unlock dynamic solutions to the challenges of attracting and retaining a high-quality teaching workforce.

A technology-rich teaching career totally changes the perceptions (and misperceptions) many prospective teachers hold of the profession. The opportunity to integrate mature and emerging technologies as part of a highly rewarding teaching career would give pause to pre-existing notions on the status and relative attractiveness of the profession. Technology can help elicit curiosity on how the contemporary classroom has changed and continues to evolve.

Digital tools could also provide a valuable support for early career teachers and lead to a lower attrition rate.

Building on existing resources designed specifically for this purpose, these programs could supplement program content to increase confidence, effectiveness, impact and consistency. This could include teaching and learning practice support in numeracy (Mathematics Hub), literacy (Literacy Hub), STEM teaching (The GiST - Home), digital pedagogy (Digital Technologies Hub Homepage), digital safety (Safer Technologies 4 Schools – Supporting Schools, Teachers and Parents (st4s.edu.au)) and support student wellbeing and diverse cohorts (Student Wellbeing Hub | Home). New materials and tools could also be developed to address the range of topics that graduates traditionally find challenging or wish they had known.

Digital tools could also play a vital role in reducing the obstacles that prevent too many mid-career professionals from transitioning to teaching. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions are often inflexible in responding to the needs of mid-career-changers, including juggling family and work commitments. There is

---

[18] Nick Parkinson, "I forever feel guilty for not being good enough," *The Conversation*, 17 October 2022
[19] Hunter, Haywood and Parkinson, p34

also inconsistency in how institutions recognise career changer's prior experiences and related knowledge and skills.[20]

ESA welcomes the Interim Report's Information Request (5.5) regarding the costs and benefits of moving from a two-year Masters to a Diploma of Education, as previously proposed by *The Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review*, chaired by Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM. The move from a Masters to a Diploma of Education could be managed carefully through accelerated digital innovation in teaching and learning. This presents a valuable opportunity to reframe the value of the teaching profession for transitioning career professionals. Doing so will not only help attract professionals, but it would support and streamline their transition into the profession in ways that better acknowledge and accommodate their stage of life.

Digital tools to address the workload pressures on teachers and school leaders

In light of their findings, the Grattan institute recommends that Governments and sector leaders should ensure that "all teachers have access to a suite of high quality, comprehensive curriculum materials."[21] ESA would go further and argue that there is a timely opportunity to include this objective in the next Agreement.

Delivering these tools via specifically designed web portals would ensure equity and accessibility for all teachers, as well as consistency across all jurisdictions and sectors. An audit of existing materials against the newly agreed Australian Curriculum has identified gaps. An investment to address those gaps and a "rigorous, independent, quality-assurance mechanism to continually evaluate and report"[22] is required.

Education technologies can also help plug the gap in hard-to-teach subject areas. With available data showing that up to 40 per cent of teachers are teaching in out-of-field subjects,[23] it is time to consider how education technology can help fill this void, particularly in STEM.

For example, ESA recently partnered with the University of Adelaide to deliver the Australian Government funded *Maths in Schools: Teaching and Learning Resources to Support Mathematics (Maths in Schools) project*. This project includes a series of mathematics Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for teachers supporting face-to-face professional learning and providing a repository of teaching and learning resources through an online Mathematics Hub and a Year 1 online numeracy check. The Mathematics Hub brings together existing quality, evidence-based resources and provide quality assured learning resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum to support teachers, school leaders, students, parents and carers. The Hub provides high-quality resources to teachers and students from all backgrounds, including underrepresented cohorts in STEM fields (girls and women, those living in rural and remote locations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Innovative tools such as these need to be considered as supplements for relief teachers, especially while the sector undertakes the longer-term task of attracting and training teachers in these traditionally difficult-to-staff subject areas.

One early step forward in this direction would be to create a single portal where teachers can access the range of existing online resources, which are currently hosted on their own individual websites. The current arrangements make it difficult to profile the tools amongst teachers, and difficult for teachers to locate when they are preparing lesson plans. The simple step of creating a single portal would mean that teachers can visit the portal and discover what is already there to support them.

Now that version nine of the Australian Curriculum has been agreed, another timely step forward would be a fresh investment in the national collection currently available via [Home - Scootle](). Updating the national collection of free, quality assured and curriculum-aligned digital learning resources for teachers, parents and

---

[20] Meera Varadharajan, John Buchanan, Sandy Schuck, "Changing course: the paradox of the career change student-teacher," *Professional Development in Education*, 15 January 2018
[21] Hunter, Haywood and Parkinson, p44
[22] Ibid.
[23] Productivity Commission, Footnote 6, p133

students would be an invaluable step to addressing the concerns highlighted by the Grattan Institute. Updating, tagging and linking existing and new resources would ensure this can be achieved as efficiently as possible. This would improve the discoverability of existing publicly funded, quality-assured, curriculum-linked digital learning resources to save teachers' time.

These two steps would work to support teachers as quickly as possible, while also enabling governments and the sector to get a clear picture of what is already there and what still needs to be developed.

ESA fully supports Draft Recommendation 5.2. Addressing the workload issues will help address challenges around attraction and retention of teachers, as well as ensure that more time can be devoted to student outcomes. Draft Recommendation 5.2 outlines a number of steps that can be taken to achieve this outcome, but does not consider the key role that education technology can play (as outlined above). On that basis, ESA proposes an additional point to the Draft Recommendation.

Recommendation 4 – incorporate a fifth step to Draft Recommendation 5.2 to incorporate the ways that digital resources and technologies can help reduce teacher workload during the life of the next agreement. Digital tools would complement the other steps already captured in this draft recommendation, as well as ensure equity and accessibility amongst teachers in all jurisdictions and sectors.

Conclusion

ESA's strategic objective is to support improved student outcomes, enhanced teacher impact and stronger school communities. It is through this lens that ESA has responded to specific chapters of the Interim Report.

Improving student outcomes should be central to all that we do in the next Agreement. To improve student outcomes, we need to address student wellbeing and we need to support teachers. We also need to close out the USI, OFAI and the Senior Secondary Pathways work commenced in the current agreement. The USI and OFAI were initially agreed because of the valuable data they would provide to inform teaching practice and to instruct policy design going forward. These tools remain key to building the evidence needed to maximise learning growth and improve student outcomes in the next Agreement. ESA's first recommendation strongly encourages the Productivity Commission to consider how processes and governance models can help address this.

Our second recommendation highlights that the ambition to help address gaps in career advice, exploration and experience through digital technologies is achievable. ESA can support governments in this work, which is vital if we are to help students translate their school education into a fulfilling career path.

Based on our experience working with the Stronger Smarter Institute on the ELLIC program, and in developing the NCCD alongside teachers and school leaders, our third recommendation places an emphasis on co-design. The next agreement must include processes to capture the views and experiences of practitioners. Participation in policy design leads to a sense of ownership, which benefits implementation.

ESA fully supports the Interim Report's Draft Recommendation 4.1 to include student wellbeing as an outcome, backed by actions and data collection. Student wellbeing is fundamental to improving student outcomes and setting Australia's young people on a path to fulfilling and happy lives.

Recent research released by the Grattan Institute demonstrates the urgent and compelling case to address teacher workload. ESA fully supports the Productivity Commission's Draft Recommendation 5.2 and proposes an important additional point to capture the ways that digital resources and technologies, such as a single portal, can help reduce teacher workload in the next Agreement, as well as bolster attraction and retention strategies.

ESA congratulates the Productivity Commission on a thorough, thought-provoking Interim Report and welcomes any further opportunities to provide input.

References

Council of Australian Governments, *National School Reform Agreement*, 2018

Hunter, Jordana, Haywood, Amy and Parkinson, Nick, *Ending the Lesson Lottery – How to Improve Curriculum Planning in Schools*, Grattan Institute, October 2022

Paul, Lisa, *Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review*, 29 October 2021

Parkinson, Nick, "I forever feel guilty for not being good enough," *The Conversation*, 17 October 2022

Productivity Commission, *Review of the National School Reform Agreement Interim report*, September 2022

Shergold, Peter, *Looking to the Future – Report of the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training*, June 2020

Varadharajan, Meera, Buchanan, John and Schuck, Sandy, "Changing course: the paradox of the career change student-teacher," *Professional Development in Education*, 15 January 2018
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19415257.2017.1423369