

## PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS RECOVERY FROM THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

COVID-19 changed the way education is delivered in Australia and made the work of teachers more visible. Given the duration and scale of the disruption to schooling, there will be lasting effects on students, teachers, and schools in a post-pandemic world. For Australia's education system to recover from the pandemic, further focus and investment is required in three key areas.

#### ABOUT US

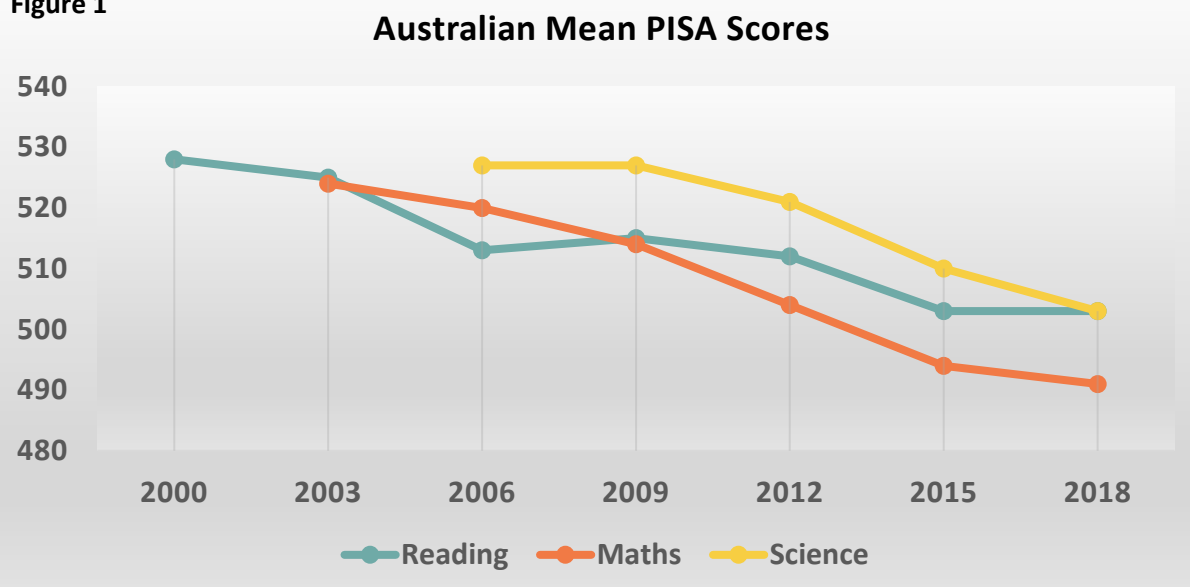
The Teachers and Teaching Research Centre (TTRC) is part of the University of Newcastle. Established in 2013 by Laureate Professor Jenny Gore, the TTRC is the only research group in the country with a holistic focus on pedagogy across schools, ITE and tertiary education. The TTRC is known for rigorous, large scale and impactful research. The TTRC recently launched the [Quality Teaching Academy](#) (QTA) which translates our research into high-quality, evidence-backed professional development and other services for teachers and school leaders across Australia. Our goal is to support a community of educators connected by a shared vision of quality teaching for every student, every day.

#### KEY PRIORITIES 2022-2025

##### PRIORITY 1. Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools

Australia has seen academic results in maths, reading and science fall consistently over the past two decades against international benchmarks such as PISA (Figure 1). NAPLAN scores have stagnated and outcome gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students have persisted.

Figure 1



Quality of teaching is the greatest in-school factor influencing students' academic outcomes (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012). Significant investment in improving quality has been made and should continue, especially for interventions with clear evidence of impact from rigorous studies.

Quality Teaching Rounds is teacher professional development with robust evidence of improved teaching quality, teacher morale, and school culture. Most importantly, a recent randomised controlled trial demonstrated that QTR improved student achievement in mathematics by 25% and a Deloitte Access Economics cost benefit analysis found QTR to be a "very low-cost intervention" that returned between \$40 and \$150 to gross state product uplift for every dollar spent.

### **Strategy: Widescale implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds for preservice and in-service teachers**

#### **Benefits:**

- a) **Improving the quality of teaching:** QTR is a high-impact, low-cost initiative that is applicable to all subjects and stages of schooling. It significantly improves the quality of teaching and has been shown to improve student achievement by 25%. It also rapidly enhances school culture and boosts teacher morale. Widescale implementation of QTR would help lift the quality of teaching in every classroom in Australia and make substantial, sustainable headway on improving educational outcomes.
- b) **Addressing disadvantage:** Strikingly, the impact of QTR on student achievement is greater in disadvantaged settings. By supporting QTR implementation in schools in low SES communities, with a greater proportion of Indigenous students, and/ or in small, rural and remote schools, QTR can help narrow achievement gaps. Our QTR Digital approach enables teachers from different schools to come together and collaborate using the powerful QTR processes. This mode of engagement in QTR addresses such issues as the lack of casuals, low staff numbers, and access to quality PD, that often hamper professional learning in disadvantaged, small and remote schools.
- c) **Enhancing initial teacher education:** Clarifying what constitutes quality teaching is fundamental to ensuring the preparedness of ITE graduates. QTR provides ITE students with a clear quality teaching roadmap that increases their confidence in their ability to teach and continuously improve their practice independently and in collaboration with colleagues. Widely implemented during ITE and in their early years of teaching, QTR would address concerns about the quality of beginning teachers and play a role in ameliorating excessive attrition, especially at this time of worsening workforce shortages.

## Recommendations

- i. The Federal Government, in collaboration with the state and territory governments and respective departments of education, implements Quality Teaching Rounds across all school systems K-12 with the aim of every teacher participating in one set of Quality Teaching Rounds every three years.
- ii. To maximise impact, this rollout should target schools in the ICSEA bottom quartile. This approach would reach more than 2,500 schools with 62,000 teachers improving outcomes for over 700,000 children in disadvantaged contexts.
- iii. To provide schools with a stream of job ready teachers who can sustain the lift in quality teaching standards, all ITE graduates should be supported to undertake professional development in the Quality Teaching Model and Quality Teaching Rounds before the completion of their program and, within six months of commencing employment in a school, participate in Quality Teaching Rounds incorporated into new teacher onboarding / induction.

## Budget Implications:

- The budgetary impacts should be split between the Federal, State and Territory governments. If targeted at all schools in the ICSEA bottom quartile, this would cost approx. \$21M p.a. over the four year forward estimates. Alternatively, a highly targeted approach focusing on 82 schools located in the 14 local government areas with the lowest ICSEA would cost \$750,000 p.a. over four years.
- \$935,000 for a large-scale multi-state pilot and evaluation of the integration of Quality Teaching Rounds into initial teacher education programs.

## **PRIORITY 2. Supporting student pathways into tertiary education**

To meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Australia requires high rates of engagement in university and vocational education. We are already witnessing [workforce shortages](#) in key industries and areas such as STEM, health, and teaching; trades like metal workers, electricians, bakers, and butchers; and across the agricultural sector.

Higher education policy and outreach, as well as business and trade recruitment efforts have long targeted key equity groups such as Indigenous Australians, people from low-SES backgrounds and those living in rural and remote locations to ensure equitable access to education and employment. However, inequalities in access to and completion of tertiary education remain, have been exacerbated by COVID, and are likely to worsen amid looming labour market shortfalls.

Broadening the traditional focus of policy and research on the aspirations of young people, our research also focuses on the significant role of teachers, parents and communities in shaping and nurturing post-school futures. Our substantial program of research on school student aspirations provides a solid foundation for evidence-backed approaches to widening participation in tertiary education.

## Strategy: Support schools and communities to nurture student aspirations

### Benefits:

- a) **Equipping educators and careers advisers with tools to support student aspirations:**  
The everyday role of teachers in supporting access to higher education has often been overlooked. Our freely available professional development course '*Aspirations: Supporting students' Futures*' ([www.aspirations.edu.au](http://www.aspirations.edu.au)), commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education, provides teachers, school leaders and careers advisers with practical tools, conceptual language and robust evidence to better understand and nurture student aspirations.
- b) **Empowering community members to create change:** Parents, families and communities play a powerful role in shaping the aspirations of young people. '*When I grow up: Supporting Children's Aspirations*' (<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/online-learning/when-i-grow-up>) is a free online course that helps parents, carers and community members gain confidence in understanding post school destinations and equips them with tools to assist young people in navigating desired pathways.
- c) **Informing tertiary education equity policy:** The Aspirations Longitudinal Study (2012-2018) is one of the most comprehensive examinations of students' career and educational aspirations in the world. We are uniquely positioned to provide insights to shape policy and decision making for improving access to post-school opportunities in university and vocational education. Extending the longitudinal study would yield fresh insights for policy pertaining to the impact of COVID.

### Recommendations

- i. Improve access to existing Federal government-commissioned teacher development and community resources that support student aspirations through widescale marketing, communication, and engagement activities.
- ii. Update existing and develop context-specific resources that can be used by schools and communities to nurture student aspirations.
- iii. Expand and update the research that underpins the Aspirations professional development resources by extending the longitudinal study and measuring the effectiveness of the courses.

### Budget Implications:

- \$350,000 to improve access to and updating school and community resources.
- \$250,000 to expand the research base and extend a unique longitudinal study of the aspirations of students from year 3 to year 12.

### **PRIORITY 3. Improving teaching at the tertiary level to better prepare job-ready graduates**

Producing job ready graduates is a national priority. Improving teaching in the higher education and vocational education sectors is fundamental to ensuring better prepared and highly trained graduates join the workforce and provide a boost to industry and the wider community.

While Australian universities often provide some training in teaching, and vocational educators are required to complete a Certificate IV in Vocational Education and Training (or similar), teaching-focused professional development is scant across the Australian tertiary sector.

The TTRC is leading the way with a research-backed, self-paced online professional development course, called *Quality Teaching in Higher Education*, currently available to all teaching staff at the University of Newcastle. The course introduces practical and conceptual tools for analysing practice, guiding course planning and improving student learning experiences. Since its launch in May 2021, 153 university staff have completed the course and of the 35 participants who completed the optional evaluation, 100% indicated the course will have a positive effect on their teaching.

**Strategy: Provide widescale professional development in teaching for tertiary educators**

#### **Benefits:**

- a) **Improving teaching in universities:** The *Quality Teaching in Higher Education* course is a simple and effective evidence-based initiative designed to support and improve the quality of teaching in higher education. The course provides conceptual clarity about 'good pedagogy' along with practical strategies to support analysis and improvement of practice. The course can act as a springboard to meaningful peer review of teaching and even the implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds within universities and other tertiary education providers (see point 1).
- b) **Improving teaching of vocational education:** Given the importance of ensuring positive learning experiences in the TAFE/vocational education sector, the *Quality Teaching in Higher Education* course can readily be adapted for use in vocational education. QTR in this sector would provide a strong mechanism to support collaborative analysis and refinement of practice.

### **Recommendations**

- i. The Federal Government encourages the wide scale adoption within universities of the Quality Teaching in Higher Education course for current teaching and teaching and research academic staff.
- ii. That all students enrolled in postgraduate research degrees be given the opportunity to participate in the Quality Teaching in Higher Education course in preparation for their teaching/ knowledge translation roles in academia and/or industry.
- iii. The Federal Government, in collaboration with the state and territory governments and the University of Newcastle, adapts the Quality Teaching in Higher Education course for the vocational training sector.
- iv. That new vocational teachers and academics in publicly funded institutions be provided the opportunity to participate in a set of Quality Teaching Rounds as part of the onboarding / induction process.

### **Budget Implications:**

- \$250,000 to engage University Teaching and Learning Units, host and market the course (Points i, ii ).
- \$360,000 to adapt the Quality Teaching in Higher Education Course for the vocational training sector (Point iii).
- Point iv is budget neutral with the expenditure incorporated into existing the TAFE professional development budget.

## **CAPACITY TO DELIVER**

Too often, in Australia, we look to the experiences of other nations to solve the major educational concerns of the day. The necessary experience and expertise to make a difference on a grand scale in Australia is here. The TTRC, together with its for-purpose, non-profit Quality Teaching Academy, has the capability to address these thorniest of issues facing Australian education today. And the capacity to deliver.