

# WACSSO Submission to the Review of Teacher Registration Legislation

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Like WACSSO's own policies and purpose, the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) must continue to *make the best interests of children its paramount consideration in all decision-making*. To do this, WACSSO unequivocally supports the requirement for teachers to be registered and to be vetted through this process.

As the peak body representing parents and carers of public school students in Western Australia, on the State and Federal stage, we believe every child should have equitable access to the best education possible. The TRB has an important responsibility to ensure the educators of our state are fit and proper candidates for the role and are diligently working towards delivering quality educational outcomes.

We have provided feedback on behalf of our affiliates regarding the following:

- Who is a fit and proper person
- Pre-service teacher training
- Existing research
- Public and professional registers
- Disciplinary matters

## **Who is a fit and proper person**

The fit and proper requirements should also include a requirement to hold a Working with Children assessment notice (i.e. a card) as a prerequisite to registration. Despite resultant delays inconveniencing some schools, particularly those in remote areas, evidence of applying for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) should be mandated. WACSSO encourages the review team to look into the findings of the Royal Commission into Child Abuse and adopting the best practice as given in those recommendations, when they are available.

## **Pre-service teacher training**

In recent times, pre-service teacher training is a topical, actively discussed and contested space in Australia. While it is an active topic, this is an important opportunity for WACSSO to ensure we are promoting the importance of compulsory parental engagement in pre-service teacher training.

While we recognise that this is not a review into initial teacher training, the discussion paper (p34) touches on the question of whether Western Australia should continue to register its own courses or enter a Memorandum of Understanding with TESQA. WACSSO recommends that pre-service teacher training in WA should include a

compulsory focus on parental engagement. If this is not in the TESQA accreditation criteria, then we should ensure it is well covered in WA and we should continue to have our own focus.

Similarly, preparation for rural and remote teaching should be an important part of pre-service teacher training. If this is more effectively achieved by WA accreditation of pre-service teacher training, then that should guide the decisions about how much WA retains its independence.

In saying this, WACSSO recognises that there could be a logical pairing between the National Curriculum and a National Teacher's Registration. If it were to enhance educational outcomes, we would not be opposed to the national coordination of teacher registration. The more alignment, the better the outcomes for students, their families and teachers who travel between states.

### **Existing research**

WACSSO encourages the review to look at the findings of current reviews, such as the Independent review into regional, rural and remote education and the Inquiry into the delivery of the Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) program.

Currently VET trainers and assessors in schools are exempt from needing to be registered teachers. If the VETiS review finds that personnel delivering VETiS are meeting the needs of students effectively, then this area wouldn't require any change. However, if the review finds trainer or assessor quality to be an issue, then it would be logical to assess the possibility of instating fully qualified teachers for students studying VET in a school context.

Similarly, if the Independent review into regional, rural and remote (RRR) education finds that the current option to use provisionally registered teachers in RRR schools is effective and delivers decent flexibility and good outcomes, then it would be suggested that these provisions remain, or even be further opened up to further improve flexibility. However, if the review finds that RRR schools are being staffed by people without the adequate training and experience they need for quality provision of education, then that would suggest the TRB need to tighten these options.

WACSSO has an expectation that the findings of those reviews, and similar reviews, will be taken into consideration to ensure that the TRB's processes and outcomes are supporting - not undermining - the outcomes we want for our system.

### **Public and professional registers**

WACSSO questions the inclusivity of the Teacher Registration Act 2012 and its compliance with our progressive society's collective understanding of gender identity. We are specifically referencing the additional information, added by regulation, that requires teachers to outline their gender. WACSSO would like to see the requirement for registered teachers to have their gender identified and listed reviewed.

## **Disciplinary matters**

A regular concern raised by our affiliates is the issue of underperforming teachers in schools. WACSSO requests that where serious concerns exist around the capacity of a teacher to perform their duty to a satisfactory standard the employer should be obliged to pass this information onto the Teacher Registration Board (TRB). Concerns should be met by additional support or training. Alternatively, the TRB should be giving serious consideration to whether ongoing registration is appropriate.

## **In summary**

- The fit and proper requirements should also include a requirement to hold a Working with Children assessment notice (i.e. a card) as a prerequisite to registration.
- WACSSO recommends that pre-service teacher training in WA should include a compulsory focus on parental engagement. If this is not in the TESQA accreditation criteria, then we should ensure it is well covered in WA and we should continue to have our own focus.
- Preparation for rural and remote teaching should be an important part of pre-service teacher training.
- WACSSO encourages the review to look at the findings of recent and current reviews. WACSSO has an expectation that the findings of these will be taken into consideration to ensure that the TRB's processes and outcomes are supporting - not undermining - the outcomes we want for our system.
- WACSSO would like to see the requirement for registered teachers to have their gender identified and listed reviewed.
- WACSSO requests that where serious concerns exist around the capacity of a teacher to perform their duty to a satisfactory standard the employer should be obliged to pass this information onto the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) and appropriate action pursued.