

WA Teacher Registration Act Review
Attention: Mr Terry Werner
Department of Education
151 Royal St
EAST PERTH WA 6004

10 November 2017

Dear Mr Werner

Terry,

Re: Statutory Review of the Teacher Registration Act 2012 (WA)

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is wholly committed to improving teacher expertise nationally. AITSL supports the need for teacher regulatory authorities to have appropriate legislative backing to manage all aspects of accreditation of initial teacher education programs and teacher registration, and welcomes the statutory review of the Teacher Registration Act 2012.

AITSL will continue to work closely with the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRB WA) in the provision of stronger standards-based support for the development of quality teaching and leadership in Western Australia, and will look to build on existing success to consolidate and extend national initiatives.

AITSL's submission focusses on two areas of relevance, national consistency of teacher registration and coverage of the Act with regard to the ability of the TRB WA to collect and report workforce data.

National consistency of teacher registration

Regulating the teaching profession is particularly important because it ensures minimum standards, defines development pathways for teachers, communicates expectations between the community and the profession, and protects children. Currently however, there is a patchwork approach to teacher regulation with different practices in each state and territory.

Whilst different teacher regulatory practices across States and Territories allows for contextual sensitivity, this approach is more expensive than necessary, the inconsistencies create potential gaps in safety and quality, and it makes teacher mobility harder to achieve.

At the 15 September 2017 meeting, Education Council noted AITSL, in consultation with states and territories and other key stakeholders, will undertake a national review of teacher registration to consider its rigour and quality, with a view to improving national consistency. Council agreed to participate in the review process; agreed to the draft Terms of Reference of the review and noted that the review report will be provided back to Education Council for consideration. South Australia proposed an amendment to the scope of the review, to include consideration of the current function of regulatory authorities with regard to their legislated responsibility to ensure that registered teachers fulfil the fit and proper person requirement. This was agreed by Council.

The terms of reference include consideration of all of the elements of the current national framework for teacher registration:

- Initial period of registration;
- Fixed period of registration;
- Alternative authorisation to teach;
- Discipline and de-registration;
- Suitability;
- Qualifications;
- English language proficiency; and
- Mutual recognition [portability of registration across jurisdictional borders].

The terms of reference indicate a strong focus on investigating how the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are used in registration. Consideration of early childhood teacher registration and VET teacher registration is in scope, as is the transition of initial teacher education students into the profession.

This review, expected to be complete during 2018, will provide recommendations for improving. AITSL encourages the TRB WA to participate in, and support the outcomes of, the national review.

Coverage of the Act – collection of workforce data

As the agency responsible for implementing the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy (ATWD), AITSL is also looking forward to working with TRB WA on the collection and analysis of data about the teaching workforce to enable effective research, decision making and program implementation.

With the ATWD being implemented during 2017–2021, AITSL is particularly keen to ensure the Teacher Registration Board has the legislative imprimatur to fully participate in the project. The current Teacher Registration Act 2012 (WA) does not permit the TRB WA to provide teacher workforce data to the ATWD and although other measures can be put in place to source teacher workforce data directly from teachers in WA, this approach is likely to yield less comprehensive data and is intended only as an interim measure until the legislative changes are made.

To ensure TRB WA is able to fully participate in the ATWD and contribute to this important, national body of work, some information is offered for your consideration in the context of the statutory review of the Teacher Registration Act 2012.

The purpose of the ATWD is to provide a comprehensive, national database of registered teachers and students undertaking initial teacher education (ITE) programs in Australia. The ATWD will not track teachers individually, but will look for trends in teacher supply and careers across the entire Australian teacher workforce.

While the database will hold details about individual teachers and ITE students, the privacy of these individuals is paramount. They will not be identified in the database, and any reports based on their data will ensure teachers remain anonymous. Data will be managed by an accredited Commonwealth Linkage Authority, which will provide the highest possible degree of security and privacy protection.

When considering changes to the Teacher Registration Act 2012 (WA) to permit the disclosure of personal information collected by the TRB WA you may wish to refer to the following:

- Section 53 of the Teachers Registration Standards Act 2004 (South Australia)
- Section 16 of the Education Standards Authority Act 2013 No 89 (New South Wales)

AITSL wishes the Department of Education of Western Australia every success with this review and looks forward to continuing to work closely with the TRB WA.

Should you require any further information please contact Edmund Misson, Deputy CEO on 03 9944 1209 or at edmund.misson@aitsl.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Rodgers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lisa Rodgers
CEO, AITSL

