



## **ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP : ISSUES PAPER**

### **RESPONSE OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION OF AUSTRALIA**

#### **1.0 Preamble**

- 1.1 The IEUA represents teachers and support staff across all of Australia's 2,500 non-government schools, as well as teachers in early childhood centres in some states, and teachers in private language and training colleges.
- 1.2 The IEUA wishes to register its concerns over the short and poorly timed consultation period. There is an unfortunate sense of predetermination of outcomes in the disinclination to allow proper involvement of the profession in the consultation.
- 1.3 The IEUA's general position in relation to the Institute reflects the following elements:
  - Teachers' work is deeply structured by syllabuses, work programs, industrial instruments and processes, state and institutional cultures, as well as research and received/best practice approaches to pedagogy – accordingly any Institute must work sensitively with the existing and emerging organisations, structures and processes which govern teachers' work.
  - There exists an opportunity for co-operative work across states and systems to be facilitated by such an Institute, in agreed focus areas to support the emergence of common nationwide frameworks.
- 1.4 This submission has been prepared by the IEUA's federal office, but given the grossly inappropriate timing of the 'consultation', it has not been possible to gain the input from the branches of the union; accordingly the IEUA reserves the right to provide further, and modified, input.

#### **2.0 Context**

- 2.1 The IEUA believes that any decisions about the roles, functions and governance of a national Institute must be informed by, and sit

appropriately within, the current context and structures which have emerged over recent time in respect to the teaching profession.

2.2 The most significant recent development in respect to the teaching profession in Australia has been the continued establishment of Institutes of Teaching (Boards of Teacher Registration) at each State and Territory level. The general functions of Institutes include:

- to register (and de-register) teachers
- to assess and approve preservice teacher education courses
- to develop standards for professional practice and conduct/codes of ethics
- to develop policy on professional issues such as professional learning and induction

In many states these functions are well established. In others, the functions have more recently been developed through the legislative establishment of the Institutes of Teaching. The current framework for mutual recognition obligations provides the mechanism for ensuring national consistency in the area of teacher registration issues, including appropriate teaching qualifications.

The Institutes of Teaching are now understood by the teaching profession to be the appropriate bodies to set regulations in respect to entry to the profession and the development of policy in respect to these areas. The governing boards of the Institutes/Boards of Teacher Registration include significant representation of practicing teachers through election processes.

### **3.0 Areas Which Might Benefit from National Activity and Co-ordination**

#### **3.1 The provision of independent advice on areas of national importance in education.**

The education unions are the largest representative bodies for the teaching profession and consult with their members in the development of union policy and advice on issues affecting the teaching profession.

However, the dismantling of national advisory bodies such as the Schools Council and the Australian Teaching Council has meant that the education community has not had such an avenue to develop and provide advice to the Minister for Education, Employment and Training and DEST and other appropriate bodies.

The IEUA would see that the provision of advice would be an important role for the Institute.

#### **3.2 Research**

It is becoming more and more critical that there is a greater national investment in research in education. The IEUA believes that a significant function of a national Institute should be the commissioning and funding of research into best practice in such areas as teacher

preservice training, models of professional learning, specific pedagogical issues, and school leadership

### **3.3 Teacher Education Issues**

The IEUA believes that there is merit in a national Institute undertaking a function in researching and providing advice in respect to best practice teacher preservice training, and liaising with the State and Territory Teaching Institutes in this area. Such advice would then inform the Institutes in their work on accreditation of university courses.

## **4.0 Roles and Functions**

### **4.1 Appropriate Roles and Functions**

The IEUA believes that a national Institute could undertake an advisory function in terms of identifying key areas of interest to the teaching profession, undertaking long term forecasting activities, research, advocacy, and developing recommendations on best practice in respect to such areas as:

- Building School Leadership Capabilities – professional learning recommendations, best practice research
- Teacher education course recommendations, particularly in relation to overseas qualifications, best practice models of practicum, mapping exercises etc
- Teacher supply and demand forecasting, advice on teacher recruitment and retention issues
- Identification of areas needing research
- Recommendations on best practice professional learning models
- Information dissemination on the above
- Advice on the appropriate guidelines to the government on the dissemination of Australian Government funds for professional development, for example, the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program and Principal/Leadership Professional Development Programs.

### **4.2 Inappropriate Roles and Functions**

The IEUA believes that any role for the Institute in respect to areas of regulation, application or implementation, including certification, would be inappropriate for the national Institute and should remain the preserve of those organisations or institutions currently in place at the state and territory level.

4.2.1 The IEUA believes that regulation and implementation are properly carried out at the State and Territory level, particularly in the areas of registration of teachers, accrediting university courses, and the development of teaching standards, all of which are currently the provenance of the state and territory Institutes.

- 4.2.2 In respect to the application of standards, such as an advanced/accomplished teacher classification, the IEUA believes that this is most appropriately undertaken through relevant industrial negotiation processes at the state and territory level.
- 4.2.3 The IEUA would be also concerned if the Institute's function included the distribution of government funding for professional development programs. In particular, the union would be concerned at changes to the structure currently in place for the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program. In most states and territories the program does give maximum access to professional development activities for teachers at the local/school level because of the role of the employing authorities and the involvement of the local stakeholders at the project management level.

## **5.0 Relationship with Other Relevant Education Bodies**

- 5.1 The IEUA does not support the proposed Institute attempting to structure the Australian teaching profession through the establishment of a direct membership-based process of national registration or certification. Rather the Institute should establish co-operative arrangements with the authorities, organisations and processes which already educate, employ, regulate and represent teachers.
- 5.2 Accordingly, the Institute should have formal relations in ways appropriate to its agreed functions, with
- Universities across Australia
  - Public and private employing authorities
  - Teaching unions
  - Other professional organisations of teachers
  - Institutes and registration authorities
- 5.3 The work program of the Institute should accordingly be co-operative rather than unilateral.

Therefore

- The Governing Board should reflect this approach.
- Appropriate sub-committees, affording wider participation to appropriate organisations based on the work focus of the sub-committee, should be created (eg leadership, preparation research and best practice).
- Unions, as the key representatives of teachers, would be members of the Governing Board.
- All universities preparing teachers should have a relationship with the Institute.
- As an ongoing provider of funds, DEST should be represented.

## **6.0 Governance**

6.1 The Institute should have a Governing Board and a number of sub-committees based around its agreed work functions.

6.2 The Governing Board, perhaps up to 20 people, should include:

- AEU and IEU
- 2 State Departments, on rotation
- Catholic and Independent employing authorities
- DEST
- 2 State based Institutes on rotation
- Teachers and Principals from government and non-government schools, after consultation with professional associations and the unions (which have substantial representation of principals as well). This group should comprise 1/3 – 1/2 of the Board.

## **7.0 General Observations in Relation to Certain Questions**

7.1 Q. 3 – 5. This Institute should work co-operatively with existing and emerging structures and processes. It should not attempt to create a new voluntary accreditation system in a flawed effort to create a new professional structure.

7.2 Q. 5, 7 – 8. Leadership in schools is far wider than principals. Preparation for leadership is a suitable focus for Institute study: research and advocacy of best practice would be valuable. In partnership with employers and unions, models could be implemented or trialled.

7.3 Q. 9 – 10. Since the role should be one of harmonisation nationally, the direct function of creating, managing and assessing standards are inappropriate.

7.4 Q. 33 – 41. The Institute is an Australian government initiative. It should be funded by the government, without detracting from other programs; staff should be few in number, with co-option of suitable staff from relevant organisations in the different working sub-committees; accountability should be against the agreed work program and partnership commitments.