



## AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

*'Championing the Cause of Primary Education in Government Schools'*

### **Discussion Paper: Pre-service Teacher Training June 2014**

The Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA) firmly believes that there is a definite need for a more rigorous and consistent approach to teacher training across Australia to ensure that pre-service education is high quality, comprehensive and relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning practices.

AGPPA is highly supportive of the training in the real-world-application of teaching, and of the necessity to ensure that potential teacher graduates experience the widest possible range of school experiences with the highest quality supervisory staff available. As a nation striving for excellence in education, we need to ensure we train and produce high quality future teachers, through world-class pre-service education.

#### **Background:**

Following feedback from government school primary principals across Australia, the AGPPA position has been developed with consideration of the following contextual drivers:

- Inconsistencies in course content, course outcomes and teaching rounds in recognised teaching courses at tertiary institutions across Australia.
- Professional learning in the teaching profession should be seen as a continuum which includes initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development
- Newly qualified teachers report or demonstrate deficits in basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as a lack of knowledge about effective contemporary approaches to teaching
- All teacher training programs must ensure that pre-service teachers develop skills in the more complex issues associated with contemporary teaching and learning practices. These to include: Behavioural management, parental interaction and dealing with student with learning difficulties.
- The changing cultural profile of the Australian population demonstrates the need for education and training in the area of cross cultural communication and inclusive teaching practices
- Newly qualified teachers have minimal understanding of Australian Curriculum initiatives, assessment practices and school imperatives

- Federal and state governments spend at least \$16,000 a year to train a teacher, or about \$64,000 over the course of a four-year education degree. Universities receive about \$9500 per student per year from the federal government for every student enrolled in teaching, and can charge up to \$5500 per student per year in HECS fees.
- Participants of one year training diploma courses have increased the workload of mentors and are generally not ready for teaching in primary schools, usually lacking content knowledge and experience. They have very little knowledge of primary curriculum
- There is a lack of confidence in the 'Teacher Training Australia' initiative (\*One year training Diploma program), as long term training is seen as more beneficial to the profession.
- Pre-service teaching round assessments lack rigour. There is an obvious lack of consistency between teacher training institutions, across states and territories
- Graduate teachers are not sufficiently skilled to instruct and facilitate the work of educational support staff
- The quantity and process for supervising pre-service teachers is inconsistent

### **AGPPA Position - Supporting Statements:**

- The Australian Government Department of Education needs to assume a greater responsibility for setting consistent teaching standards in teacher training institutions across Australia, with an increased emphasis on developing effective classroom literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teacher training institutions must be required to align course content with AITSL teacher standards on a nationwide basis.
- Training courses must be aligned with Australian Curriculum and implementation strategies.
- Three important entry criteria should be required for entry into Bachelor of Education courses;
  1. Interview prior to entering teaching course – The profession takes some responsibility. Principals to be more heavily involved with interview process, including principals to sit in on interview panels. Principals with five years' experience be invited to be involved with interview process for two days
  2. ATAR or comparable state based tertiary score: Teaching training institutions to mandate a minimum entry score for Bachelor of Education courses
  3. For those pre-service teachers entering teacher training via non ATAR related avenues, there must be an equivalent capacity / capability to the minimum entry score / standard for ATAR
- Teacher training to include a mandatory time in schools in the first six months of every course
- Tertiary teacher training institutions must develop agreed formal partnerships with appropriate pre-service teacher placement schools. These designated schools must feature rural, multicultural, provincial, remote and diverse socio-economic settings. There also needs to be an increased relationship / partnership and collaboration between employer, university and the profession
- Introduce an internship year or similar. For example, upon appointment, quality teachers to be employed as an instructor / mentor for one year learning on the job, with appropriate professional support time funded for both mentor and mentee to fulfil their respective roles

## **Recommendations for Implementation:**

### **1. That admission to teacher education programs is selected on the basis of specific criteria that address:**

- ✓ Motivation to enter the profession
- ✓ A genuine interest in children and a capacity to relate to them positively
- ✓ Evidence of emerging skills and abilities in relation to relationship building capabilities and communication
- ✓ Leadership of others
- ✓ Experiences with young people in community and/or family settings
- ✓ Desire to make a contribution through learning
- ✓ A tertiary entrance score that is indicative of the level of scholarship required to undertake the professional studies required
- ✓ Where possible, support of an appropriate referee with each application
- ✓ Passing an entrance test that indicates suitable literacy and numeracy skills

### **2. The university based and school based personnel who work with trainee educators must be drawn from suitably qualified primary practitioners. For primary placements, these people must have:**

- ✓ Credibility in professional practice
- ✓ The ability to teach across the primary age range
- ✓ A high level of knowledge about the primary years curriculum and appropriate teaching methods
- ✓ An understanding of the unique developmental characteristics of the primary aged child
- ✓ The capacity to develop positive professional relationships and organise learning in an age appropriate manner
- ✓ Formal accreditation as expert practitioners who demonstrate and educate at advanced skill level
- ✓ The training and confidence to successfully work both within the university setting and the school based practicum. They must be able to scaffold prospective teachers into the complex repertoire of knowledge, skills and dispositions that effective teachers bring to the classroom
- ✓ Access to currency of pedagogical practice; need to have secondments at university level and not just at schools

### **3. There must be a negotiated and coherent balance of university and schooling sector facilitated professional teacher training which is indicative of;**

- ✓ Shared and collaborative planning about teacher education and training
- ✓ Stronger mutual relationships between the university provider and the schools in which practicum is undertaken
- ✓ A coherence across university based curriculum that ensures that an holistic curriculum is completed, that gives graduates a comprehensive training in all aspects of the primary educators role, rather than a program that follows the particular interests and research priorities of staff
- ✓ Consistency of teacher education programs across the nation through the use of a set of curriculum and practicum standards that are developed by the profession
- ✓ A strong theory-practice link between schools and universities and continued dialogue between the practising profession in relation to what is included in each practicum

- ✓ Appropriate funding for universities to run comprehensive programs that meet world's best practice standards for teacher education and training
  - ✓ Sufficient university funding to conduct induction and training programs for practicum supervisors
  - ✓ Reforming the induction or internship year, and working with key employer groups to ensure a partnership between them and the university sector to facilitate shared funding of this partnership
  - ✓ AGPPA strongly recommends that pre-service teaching practicums be increased from a minimum of 60 days to 100 days for all teacher training courses
- 4. All teachers must commence their professional practice having achieved an explicit set of professional standards in their initial training and education and be required to continue to develop these as they progress from novice to experienced practitioner.**
- ✓ This ongoing process should also be based on standards and resourcing that enables all educators, regardless of their employment location or sector, to access continuing, accredited professional learning
  - ✓ That designated teacher education primary schools are identified in a wide range of settings (urban, rural, remote, high ICSEA, low ICSEA, etc.) that allow trainee and practising teachers to observe and work with a pool of outstanding practitioners who provide ongoing modelling, coaching and guidance
  - ✓ Each practicum must be a rich and integrated experience which allows a long-term relationship to develop, a broad perspective of teaching to develop over time, and which is characterised by explicit teaching about teaching at the university level and within the school setting
  - ✓ A major requirement of accreditation for pre-service programs should be the capacity of the teacher education institutions to furnish evidence that pre-service teachers, who pass related subjects and field experiences, will have demonstrated teacher education institutions' capacity to achieve professional standards.
  - ✓ All pre-service teachers must be thoroughly trained in contemporary, research based, evidence informed, literacy and numeracy pedagogical best practice

**References:**

**1. Victorian Principals' Association Position Papers**

- a) *Raising the Quality of Pre-service Training for Entry into the Teaching Profession (Feb 2013)*
- b) *Pre-service Teacher Placements (May 2013)*

**2. Australian Primary Principals Association**

*APPA Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training: Inquiry into Teacher Education (2005)*