

Opening comments for Senate Estimates (24/10/2019)

Mark Grant – CEO, AITSL

Senators, if I may take a moment, World Teachers' Day is being celebrated across Australia tomorrow. It would be remiss of me if I did not recognise the amazing work happening in schools and early childhood centres across the country. AITSL exists to serve and lead the education profession, something it has done with pride and commitment for ten years. And over these ten years, by building strong connections with the profession- including the over 160,000 educators who have signed up to our monthly e-news, we have a credible and respected reputation as a voice for the profession.

AITSL Board Chair, Laureate Professor John Hattie says that we don't need to go to Singapore or Finland to see expert teaching practice happening. And of course he is absolutely right! You can go a few minutes down the road from here, to Evatt Primary School where Glynis Stewart, a nationally certified teacher works. Glynis received an Australia Day honour earlier this year for her lifelong commitment to teaching and her impact on students. Or you could go to Gunbalanya School in the Northern Territory, where I had the privilege of visiting earlier this year, where the school and the local community are working in partnership to achieve amazing outcomes for their students. These are just two of the countless examples of exemplary teaching happening across Australia.

As you'd be aware, research shows that of all in-school factors, teachers are the number one influence on outcomes for students, second only to the role parents and community play. By investing in teachers, we are directly investing in our most valuable asset – the next generation of Australians.

Tomorrow, on World Teachers' Day, I encourage you to think about those teachers who made a difference to you in your own education. I encourage you to share this reflection with whoever is important to you – family, constituents, colleagues, and if you're inclined, head onto social media and share that impact with the world using the hashtag World Teachers Day (#worldteachersday).

The theme for AITSL this year is Teaching A Bright Future - with a special focus on beginning teachers. The theme is about making sure we invest in the next generation of teachers and support them as they move into and through the teaching profession. Equally it is about acknowledging the key role of experienced teachers, including some of our most expert teachers, and how they generously give their time and expertise to coach tomorrow's teachers.

Ultimately, World Teachers' Day is about reminding the community of the value of teachers and celebrating the profession. When you're out in schools and early childhood centres, working with these teachers, you see first-hand their expertise, impact and commitment.

For these reasons I am confident of a bright future for teaching.

And lastly- for those following the hearings tonight, you might want to jump on to Twitter and follow the AITSL account to take part in a chat featuring AITSL's Chair, Laureate Professor John Hattie from 5.30pm-7pm tonight (AEDT).

