26 October 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email : eewr.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

<u>Re : AEU Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committees Inquiry into Teaching and Learning - Maximising Our Investment in Australian Schools</u>

Please find attached the Australian Education Union submission to the Inquiry into Teaching and Learning - Maximising Our Investment in Australian Schools.

Please contact me if you have any questions in relation to this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Hopgood
<u>Federal Secretary</u>

Australian Education Union

Submission to the

Senate Inquiry into Teaching and Learning - Maximising Our Investment in Australian Schools

October 2012

Angelo Gavrielatos
Federal President

Susan Hopgood
Federal Secretary

Australian Education Union
Ground Floor
120 Clarendon Street
Southbank VIC 3006

Web: www.aeufederal.org.au
E-mail: aeu@aeufederal.org.au

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Introduction

The Australian Education Union has approximately 189,500 members employed in public schools and early childhood settings and in public VET/TAFE institutions and training as teachers, school leaders and education assistance or support staff classifications.

Approximately 176,000 AEU members are employees within the schools workforce, which makes AEU members the vast majority of the public school workforce.

Our members work every day with a diverse and complex range of students across the spectrums of ages, ability, geographic location and socio-economic, cultural and linguistically diverse background.

It must be noted though that public schools educate the vast majority of students who are educationally disadvantaged and/or have special needs. 80% of students in the lowest quarter of socio-educational advantage attend public schools, as do 85% of Indigenous students, 78% of students with a funded disability, and 83% of students in remote and very remote areas.[1]

These patterns of enrolment reflect the unique position of public schools within the Australian school system, flowing from the legal and moral responsibility of the public school system to provide universal access to quality school education and be open to all students.

An understanding of the unique challenges these responsibilities pose for public schools and systems and those who work in them, is crucial to consideration of the issues being considered by this Inquiry.

Being blind to the context within which schools operate and teaching and learning occurs is unproductive and will distort the findings of the Inquiry.

While the AEU welcomes the opportunity provided by this Inquiry to make a submission on the issues as they impact on our members in the public school system, we wish to note from the outset that:

1. The content of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference is not new

The issues contained within them have been front and centre in numerous State/Territory and Commonwealth Government inquiries into various aspects of teaching and learning. Countless recommendations for reform have been made, the majority of which have been either ignored or only partially and/or badly implemented.

In a recent piece, *Why we're never satisfied with teachers*, Professor Stephen Dinham, Chair of Teacher Education and Director of Learning and Teaching at University of Melbourne, noted Australia's "apparent obsession with teacher inquiries":

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[1] Australian Government, Review of Funding for Schooling. Final Report, December 2011 (Gonski Report) p10 http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/ReviewofFunding/Documents/Review-of-Funding-for-Schooling-Final-Report-Dec-2011.pdf

> *In Australia there has been, on average, one major state or national inquiry into teacher education every year for the past 30 years. No other program of professional preparation has been thought to warrant such scrutiny.[2]*

We urge this Inquiry to be cognisant of significant developments aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in Australia. These developments should be recognised and built on, rather than ignored in favour of yet more simplistic 'quick fix solutions' to often manufactured educational 'crises'; 'solutions' which the evidence shows have failed.

2. The increasing politicisation of teaching and learning

What is 'new' is the unprecedented degree to which issues around teaching and learning have been politicised. A key feature of this politicisation is the extent of implicit or explicit 'teacher-bashing', which has major implications for the teaching profession and the morale of our members.

Failure to recognise that *teaching is a complex professional activity which involves integrating a deep understanding of a knowledge base encompassing theoretical knowledge, pedagogy, subject discipline, child development and learning theory, in practical and unpredictable circumstances,[3]* impacts negatively on quality teaching and learning.

Quality in teaching requires a sustained system-wide focus informed by empirical evidence rather than 'blaming and shaming' teachers, either individually or collectively.

International evidence shows, as described by leading international education researcher Michael Fullan, that:

> *No nation has got better by focusing on individual teachers as the driver. Better performing countries did not set out to have a very good teacher here and a very good teacher there, and so on. They were successful because they developed the entire teaching profession – raising the bar for all.[4]*

The AEU rejects approaches to issues around teaching and learning which either implicitly or explicitly suggest that total responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning is exclusively borne by an individual teacher.[5]

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[2] Stephen Dinham, *Why we're never satisfied with teachers*, The Conversation, Wednesday, 8 August 2012. Available at http://theconversation.edu.au/why-were-never-satisfied-with-teachers-8654

[3] Australian Education Union, *Quality Teaching in Schools Policy 2007* (as adopted at the 2007 Annual Federal Conference). http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Policy/QualTeach2007.pdf

[4] Michael Fullan, *Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform*, Centre for Strategic Education Summary of Seminar Series Paper No. 204, May 2011. http://bluyonder.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/fullanss204_mccprecis-1.pdf

[5] As evidenced by approaches to education reform in Australia centred on arguments that levels of funding/resourcing are not important to the improvement of student outcomes; that what really matters is improving how and what teachers are teaching, and (implicitly) identifying and getting rid of the so-called 'deadwood'. See for example Christopher Pyne's Sydney Institute Address, *Achieving Teacher Quality: The Coalition's Approach* , 16 July, 2012. http://www.pyneonline.com.au/media/speeches-media/sydney-institute-address-achieving-teacher-quality-the-coalitions-approach

3. Context Matters

> *The quality of teachers and of teaching is but one factor, albeit one of the most important, influencing the quality of education for students. A singular focus on teacher quality ignores governments' responsibility for properly resourcing public education. Improved outcomes for students require attention to social, political and economic pressure on public education and communities.*[6]

There is no question that teachers are fundamental to the quality of learning and student outcomes. But there is equally no question that the work of teachers/teaching depends to a large degree on a multiplicity of factors within the context in which they operate.

Failure to directly address the wealth of empirical evidence documenting the fact that students from disadvantaged backgrounds on average perform less well than those from more advantaged backgrounds, leads to policy approaches which not only contribute little to raising overall student achievement or to reducing achievement and educational attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students, but potentially do serious harm.[7]

It has become common to hear it said that the teacher has the biggest influence on student achievement; ergo the way to get the best value for our investment in education is to focus on individual teacher quality – frequently in a context of blaming and shaming teachers.

Apart from major problems with such an approach to the teaching profession, what this overlooks is that the statement is not true. Teachers have the biggest *in-school* influence on student achievement, but research shows that only around one third of the factors that influence student achievement are within the school.[8]

Additionally, teachers are only one component of the share of the achievement gap that can be attributed to the school. The in-school influence of teachers is also shaped by other factors within the school which are beyond the control of individual teachers. These include, but are not confined to, the quality of the physical learning environment, the resources available to the teacher, the quality/nature of the curriculum, the quality of leadership, and the extent of teacher/professional collaboration within the school.

As the distinguished US education researcher David Berliner says:

> *Virtually every scholar of teaching and schooling knows that when the variance in student scores on achievement tests is examined along with the many potential factors that may have contributed to those test scores, school effects account for about 20% of*

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[6] AEU Quality Teaching in Schools Policy 2007.

[7] See for example, Helen F Ladd *Education and poverty: confronting the evidence* Duke Sanford School of Public Policy Working Paper Series SAN11-01 November 4 2011; Larry Cuban, *School Reform and Classroom Practice. A Significant Error that Policymakers Commit* 21 May 2012; *Education and the income gap: Darling-Hammond* 27 April 2012; Richard Rothstein, Helen F. Ladd, Diane Ravitch, Eva L. Baker, Paul E. Barton, Linda Darling-Hammond, Edward Haertel, Robert L. Linn, Richard J. Shavelson, and Lorrie A. Shepard, *Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate* teachers, *Economic Policy Institute* August 27, 2010. http://www.epi.org/publication/bp278/

[8] While "around one-third" is the figure most used, some credible researchers, such as David Berliner, put the figure at around 20%.

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the variation in achievement test scores, and teachers are only a part of that constellation of variables associated with "school."

Other school variables such as peer group effects, quality of principal leadership, school finance, availability of counseling and special education services, number and variety of AP courses, turnover rates of teachers, and so forth, also play an important role in student achievement.

Teachers only account for a portion of the 'school' effect, and the school effect is only modest in its impact on achievement.

On the other hand, out-of-school variables account for about 60% of the variance that can be accounted for in student achievement. In aggregate, such factors as family income; neighborhood collective efficacy, violence rate and average income; medical and dental care available and used; level of food insecurity; number of moves a family makes over the course of a child's school years; whether one parent or two parents are raising the child; provision of high quality early education in the neighborhood; language spoken at home; and so forth, all substantially affect school achievement. The outside-of-school factors affect achievement three times more than do the inside-the-school factors.

So to continue trying to affect student achievement with the most popular contemporary educational policies, mostly oriented toward teachers and schools, while assiduously ignoring the power of the outside-of-school factors, is foolish. Perhaps it is more than foolish, perhaps it is a form of insanity if one believes that doing the same thing over and over and getting no results is a reasonable definition of madness![9]

4. 'The Elephant in the Room'

Given the title of the Inquiry it seems odd that the Terms of Reference are devoid of any reference to the level and adequacy of investment in Australian schooling; surely a key contextual issue for considerations of the state of teaching and learning in our schools.

Coming as it does when implementation of the recommendations of the Gonski Review of school funding is currently under consideration, it would appear to be the 'elephant in the room' in the context of this particular Inquiry.

Supported by a significant body of credible national and international evidence, Gonski found that the current system of resourcing our schools is inequitable, inefficient and failing too many of our children.

By international standards, Australia invests too little in education,[10] and in particular where it is needed most; in our public schools which educate two thirds of our students and the majority of children from disadvantaged and high-needs backgrounds, including low SES

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[9] David Berliner, forthcoming article (2013), *Sorting out the effects on inequality and poverty, teachers and schooling on America's Youth.* From Diane Ravitch, *This is your homework: Berliner on Education and Inequality*, July 23, 2012; p4. Available at http://dianeravitch.net/2012/07/23/your-homework-berliner-on-education-and-inequality/

[10] Gonski Report, *op.cit.*, p13. Government expenditure on schooling in Australia is relatively low in comparison to other OECD countries.

students, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, students in rural and remote locations, and students with English language difficulties.

The consequences of this under-investment are stark. Australia's overall performance in education has dropped,[11] and there is deepening inequity in Australian schooling with widening resource gaps between schools and sectors and schooling outcomes for students from different backgrounds.

The findings from the OECD's PISA reports show that while the overall quality of education in Australia is relatively high by international standards, our distribution of educational outcomes is relatively uneven and that reducing achievement gaps and improving achievement across the board requires targeting resources to where they are most needed; ie schools with less advantaged students whose particular educational needs require greater levels of sustained investment.

What this means for an informed assessment of the current state of teaching and learning in the context of 'maximising' Australia's investment in education cannot be underestimated.

To give just one example: Prominent researchers Stephen Lamb and Richard Teese note in their submission to the Gonski Review, *The Funding of Australian schools in the context of student outcomes,* that analysis of relative concentrations of low achievers in government schools serving different communities shows:

> *In better-off suburbs, many government schools have no "very poor" readers, and the number of "poor" readers rarely exceeds 1 in 10. By contrast, in schools located in poorer suburbs, few schools have no "very poor" readers, and most have between 10 and 20%, with some over 30%. While in schools serving advantaged communities, the total number of poor and very readers in Year 3 generally falls below 20%, it is the opposite story in poor suburbs: most schools have at least 20% poor or very readers, many have over 30% and some over 40%.[12]*

Failure to recognise that the widening social gap in achievement they identify is in part a consequence of widening resource gaps (both cultural and financial) within and between schools driven by our current funding arrangements,[13] and attributing it simply to differences in the quality of teachers/teaching is, at best, ideologically-driven cynicism.

At worst, it fails both the students whose risk of academic failure it increases and the teachers whose worth is brought into question.

> *It is constantly stated that differences between classrooms are greater than differences between schools. But Australia's between-school differences which are determined by*

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[11] In 2009, Australian students scored above the OECD average in each of the subjects, finishing ninth in reading, 10th in science, and 15th in maths. However Australia was one of only five countries, and the only high-performing nation, to record a decline since the previous test in 2006.

[12] Richard Teese and Stephen Lamb, *The Funding of Australian schools in the context of student outcomes,* A Submission to the Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling, March 2011. p7. http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/ReviewofFunding/SubGen/Documents/Teese_Richard_and_Lamb_Stephen.pdf

[12] Teese and Lamb, p12.

> *student background are very significant. ... Students are intellectual and cultural resources for schools – they bring prior learning, family education, networks and know-how. Shifting these resources has a compounding impact on:*
> - *school curriculum offerings and access.*
> - *the experience and expertise of teachers.*
> - *a range of other resources.*[14]

Gonski's key findings and recommendations - an additional investment of $5 billion a year (2009 dollars) - with $3.8 billion to public schools, the schools in the greatest need, and major changes to the way money is allocated to schools to ensure it is better targeted to meet the learning needs of students are crucial contextual factors to be taken into consideration by this Inquiry as they go to the heart of questions concerning student and school performance and equity in outcomes across Australia.

It is unfortunate that the Inquiry's consideration of important issues about teaching and learning in Australia's schools is constrained by an apparent assumption that increased investment is neither needed nor possible and blind to the equity issues associated with Australia's under-investment in education and particularly in our public schools.

It is noteworthy also that current inquiries into 'teaching and learning' being undertaken by the Victorian and New South Wales governments also ignore the wider context of funding and levels of investment in education and systemic problems associated with funding shortfalls, all of which impact on the ability of schools and teachers to create optimal teaching and learning conditions for all our students.

For the concept of 'teaching and learning - maximising Australia's investment in schools' to have real currency it must be considered within the context of achieving the national imperatives of a stronger economy, a more skilled workforce and a prosperous and socially cohesive society in a manner consistent with the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians, the most recent national agreement on the purposes of education in Australia.[15]

How schools are resourced is fundamental to the quality of teaching and learning and the design and implementation of education programs within schools, and there is ample evidence from Gonski, including the large volume of submissions from schools, teachers and parents, and a wealth of research that our current patterns of public resourcing are not adequate for the achievement of Australia's education goals.

Meeting the learning and welfare needs of the diverse and complex student mix in the majority of Australia's public schools requires a level of physical and financial resourcing which most schools struggle to provide within the constraints of their current funding levels.

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[14] Chris Bonnor, *Submission in response to the Productivity Commission Issues paper on Schools Workforce*, http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/111617/sub009.pd Submission Number 9, p5

[15] Gonski's warning about the economic and social cost to the nation of declining achievement and uneven educational performance and the failure to invest in equitable provision of education is borne by international evidence, such as the OECD's *The High Cost of Low Education Performance: The Long-Run Economic Impact of Improving PISA Outcomes* which shows that even relatively small improvements in the skills and employability of their youth can have very large impacts on future well-being and the GDP of the nation.

The nonsensical notion that there is no relationship between how a school is funded and resourced and (1) the quality of teaching/learning which occurs within it and (2) what it is expected to achieve flies in the face of the evidence.

Research/international evidence demonstrates that investing as early as possible in high-quality education for all students, and directing additional resources towards the most disadvantaged students, is a cost-efficient strategy that will have the greatest impact on improving overall performance.[16]

A recent (September 2012) piece by the Grattan Institute's Dr Ben Jensen, *Sorry, but we do need more money to improve student learning*, has a particular resonance within the context of this Inquiry, as his work has been cited by the Federal Coalition as evidence against increased funding for schools – public schools – in Australia:

> *... fundamental change is required and the history of reform in this country, in any policy area, shows major reform costs money.*
>
> *High performing systems begin with a detailed understanding of the complexities of effective teaching and learning. They identify the path to take teaching and learning from where they are to where they need to be. They build teacher capacity; education leaders role model and reinforce effective behaviour. Most importantly, all programs need to be aligned so that all resources are focussed on improving learning and teaching. It is a difficult and resource-intensive process. It is therefore costly and where money has the greatest impact. Grattan Institute reports have never said that effective education was cheap. And no system has discovered a way to address inequality with inadequate resources.[17]*

5. Wrongheaded educational policy

In AEU's submission to the Productivity Commission's study of the schools workforce, which gathered a vast body of evidence concerning the issues contained within the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry, the AEU quoted at some length from the extremely experienced educational administrator and distinguished academic Professor Ben Levin on what the experience and evidence on school reform clearly demonstrates.

We consider it equally relevant to this Inquiry:

> *Over the last few decades many efforts have been made to address education issues through policy at various levels. Looking at these efforts around the world suggests that they have often been motivated more by beliefs than by evidence of impact. Not only are the wrong policies often adopted, but effective implementation of education policy is often lacking ... Education reform efforts would be stronger if they gave more attention to reliable research evidence and a greater focus to what is known about effective teaching ... (p. 739)*

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[16] See for example, Gonski Report pp. 108-110; OECD Report *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools* p 9; p26-27

[17] Ben Jensen, *Sorry, but we do need more money to improve student learning*, The Australian, 27 September. http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/sorry-but-we-do-need-more-money-to-improve-student-learning/story-e6frgd0x-1226482109239

Governments are driven to tinker with the levers they control most directly whether or not those are the real drivers of outcomes. The main means used to try to generate improvement have most often been around structural aspects of the system – governance, finance, workforce, and accountability or incentive systems. Most of these can be changed relatively easily, at least on paper, through policy edicts, and the changes have been deeply influenced by dominant ideas rooted in economic systems such as managerialism, choice, markets, and incentives. Thus, the emphasis on decentralization, competition, leadership, inspection, and accountability.

There is considerable research evidence now on many of these efforts and, to sum up many studies in a few words, it is hard to find much evidence of sustained improvement in outcomes resulting from these efforts. Structural changes have almost always had disappointing results ... (p. 740)

At least two elements are critical to successful implementation ... First, it is essential to recognize that implementation also implies adaptation. Lasting school improvement will not come from the mindless adoption of someone else's plan or program, but must involve thoughtful participation by many people within each school and community. Daily life in schools, and the experience of students, is shaped by the beliefs and intentions of the participants. If there is one thing we have learned about education policy, it is that ordering people to do better without engaging their hearts and minds cannot succeed. Improvement is necessarily a process of learning by all those involved.

This does not mean, however, that each school should find its own way, or that there are no generalisable approaches to effective schooling. Quite the opposite; we know an increasing amount about effective teaching and learning and education systems should be working hard to make those practices and approaches universal in schools. But that cannot be done by fiat; it must be done through engagement – in just the same way as teachers cannot force students to learn, they can only create the conditions that make learning more likely through various forms of support, encouragement, and pressure – with much more of the former than the latter since we know that fear is a disincentive for learning ...

To do this across an entire education system requires a significant support infrastructure, which means enough skilled people to provide ongoing support to all schools and districts, and supporting elements such as professional development, data, and accountability aligned with system goals and strategies.

... [F]ar too many education reforms, based on conventional ideas about organization, have seen teachers as the equivalent of assembly line workers whose job is simply to follow instructions or, in some cases, as an opposition to be controlled through policy. This cannot work. Governments that belittled teachers may have reaped short-term political benefits but failed to create the conditions that could produce better outcomes for students. Motivated and committed people are by far the most important resource any human service organization has to dispose, so engagement must be a high priority. (p. 742)[18]

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[18] Levin, B., (2010a), *Governments and education reform: some lessons from the last 50 years*, Journal of Education Policy, 25: 6, 739 – 747.

This accords entirely with observations made by Dr Pasi Sahlberg, Director-General of the Education Ministry in Finland, during a recent Australian visit. Dr Sahlberg was asked about the differences between educational practices in high-performing countries like Finland and those in Australia. He said that, based on global evidence rather than political opinion, none of the high-performing education systems in the OECD achieved their success using the policies Australia has in place.

> *If the goal is to be in the top five, it requires rethinking some of the fundamental policies and reforms as well here in Australia.*[19]

It is with these evidence-based observations and the contextual factors outlined in this introduction in mind, that we provide the following with respect to the issues contained within the Terms of Reference of this Inquiry.

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[19] Jewel Topsfield, *Rethink required for top five finish*, The Age, 29 September 2012.
http://www.theage.com.au/national/rethink-required-for-top-five-finish-20120928-26r23.html

The effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools

In an interview (September 27) with Melbourne University's Professor John Hattie, one of the most critical differences identified by Dr Sahlberg was that in terms of understanding and organising education "we [Finland] have a much more sensitive lens through which we are looking at our classrooms and students."

One of the key features of a 'sensitive lens' is an understanding that the responsibility for effective current classroom practices rests with many players within or associated with the profession and depends on a multiplicity of factors both internal and external to schools.

In addition to Federal and State government policies, this includes the responsibility of education policy-makers at the state and federal level for the quality of many of the system 'inputs' which impact on student outcomes, including structural and policy matters associated with school enrolments, staffing and leadership.

These include, but are not confined to, the level of resources provided to schools and teachers to enable them to meet the learning needs of their students, and educational reform policies such as NAPLAN and My School and the impact they have on classroom practice.

System Support for Ensuring Optimal Teaching and Learning

The effectiveness of current classroom practices is very much associated with the level of system support for ensuring optimal teaching and learning through the provision of the necessary resources in areas such as:

- Time allocations;
- Class sizes;
- ICT;
- Quality curriculum frameworks and support documents designed to produce 'high quality/high equity educational outcomes and enhance teacher professionalism';
- Professional learning/research opportunities;
- Support services for all schools and teachers, with additional staff and services for schools with large proportions of children with particular education needs;
- Preparation time;
- Instructional materials;
- Buildings and facilities;
- Pay and conditions; and
- Research into factors which affect the quality of teaching.[20]

The Class Size Question

While the question of class size remains highly-charged and politicised, there is a substantial body of credible research evidence over the last several decades on the positive relationship between class size and effective classroom practice.

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[20] Australian Education Union, *Quality Teaching in Schools Policy 2007*

Nina Bascia's review of class size for the Canadian Education Association (OISE, University of Toronto, 2010) confirms the importance of class size reduction, together with other factors which support innovative practice - such as the ways in which teachers and students work together; the curriculum in use; and teachers' opportunities to learn new teaching strategies - in creating an environment in which teachers can teach differently and improve student learning:

> *In smaller classes, they interact with individual students more frequently and use a greater variety of instructional strategies. They can create more opportunities for higher-order co-construction of meaning by students. They also may spend out-of-classroom work time on more creative planning (and less on routine marking), and they may interact more frequently with other teachers and adults in support of classroom teaching. The research on student outcomes and behaviour tends to support teachers' beliefs that they can teach more competently and effectively in smaller classes.*[21]

The Changing Policy Environment and its Impact on Classroom Practice

The Australian Curriculum

The AEU sees the establishment of an Australian national curriculum as a significant opportunity to construct a world-class curriculum with associated support resources, including teaching resources and opportunities for teacher professional learning. This would have major positive benefits for both teaching and learning.

However, as with any curriculum development, there needs to be an appropriate balance between prescription and flexibility in its design and implementation. Too much prescription and there is a danger that innovation and teaching quality could be stifled. Too open a curriculum could lead to continuance of existing approaches.

We emphasise however that curriculum reform, no matter how well designed will not in itself improve educational outcomes if it is implemented without sufficient preparation, including the provision of support for teachers' professional learning. Well resourced and structured programs of professional learning are required, particularly during the implementation of curriculum reform, but also on an ongoing basis.

A curriculum that is not supported by adequate and effective professional development is unlikely to meet its full potential in improving the quality and equity of educational outcomes of students.

NAPLAN

The AEU has significant ongoing concerns with the use of standardised test data as an indicator of successful classroom teaching practice and student learning. These issues have been extensively canvassed in submissions made by the AEU and its Branches and Associated Bodies to the 2010 Senate Inquiry into NAPLAN, to which we draw the attention of this Inquiry.

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[21] Nina Bascia, *Reducing Class Size: What do we know?* Canadian Education Association, 2010
http://www.cea-ace.ca/publication/reducing-class-size-what-do-we-know p11

These submissions, and subsequent reports from our members, clearly demonstrate that:

- A narrow focus on standardised test data, such as NAPLAN data, without regard to its limitations, has negative consequences for both students and teachers.

- Not least of these is the potential for narrowing the curriculum and teaching to the test leading to a lack of focus on the opportunities a rich, broad curriculum provides and diverting teaching effort away from a more educationally sound curriculum approach.

- Workload intensification for both teachers and principals, such as modifying the school curriculum to comply with the testing regime and the work associated with preparing students for and administration of the tests, without any appreciable benefits for student learning outcomes.

Our members report significant problems in areas where there is a focus on improving test results without genuine dialogue with teachers themselves and without regard to methodological flaws associated with the data and its publication. At its worst this leads to bullying, demoralisation and a culture of 'blaming the teacher'.

My School

The publication of NAPLAN results on the My School website, and subsequent creation and publication of league tables, exacerbates the AEU's grave concerns about the potentially misleading nature of student test score data in a 'high stakes' environment and the harmful impact this can have on schools, students and teachers.

There is a significant body of research evidence about the impact of high stakes testing. The recent Whitlam Institute extensive literature review, *The Experience of Education: The impacts of high stakes testing on school students and their families*,[22] summarises the range of concerns evident in the international literature and validates the AEU's position:

> *These [concerns] range from the reliability of the tests themselves to their impact on the well-being of children. This impact includes the effect on the nature and quality of the broader learning experiences of children which may result from changes in approaches to learning and teaching, as well as to the structure and nature of the curriculum. ...*
>
> *Considerable evidence may be found in the international literature regarding the negative impact of high stakes testing on students' well-being ... [and] the quality of the learning experience of children. Evidence has emerged that such testing can structure the educational experiences of students in ways that limit the development of the range of skills and literacies needed in the modern world, encouraging low-level thinking and promoting outcome measures rather than the intrinsic processes of learning and acquiring knowledge.*

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[22] Polesel, J., Dulfer, N. and Turnbull, M. (2012) The Experience of Education: The impacts of high stakes testing on school students and their families, Literature Review, January. pp. 4-5
Two notable books on high stakes testing that also contain extensive bibliographies are: Nichols, S.L. and Berliner, D.C. (2008) Collateral Damage: How High-Stakes Testing Corrupts America's Schools, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, and Madaus, G., Russell, M. And Higgins, J. (2009) The paradoxes of High Stakes Testing: How they affect students, their parents, teachers, principals, schools and society, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.

This adds to the Australian evidence about the impact of NAPLAN and the reliability and validity of NAPLAN/My School data, which strongly suggests, for example, that like-school measures, including those which incorporate socio-economic data, do not produce helpful or meaningful comparisons of educational achievement.[23]

What is particularly disturbing is the impact of NAPLAN on teachers and curriculum in disadvantaged schools. The work undertaken by an ARC funded research team headed by Professor Barbara Comber complements other research outlined in submissions to the 2010 NAPLAN Inquiry about the particular problems associated with NAPLAN and My School in relation to educating student groups such as low SES, Indigenous, ESL and students with disabilities.

Comber and Nixon (2009) note that 'at a time when questions about teacher professional standards and the quality of teaching are in the foreground of federal policy, it is of concern that teachers downplay their professional knowledge and discretionary judgement and practice with respect to student learning',[24] and speculate that:

> *Discourses, such as corporatism or managerialism, instantiated in particular kinds of textual practices – such as standardised test or student reports ... may overwhelm the professional knowledges and ways of speaking of teachers working in disadvantaged schools.*[25]

Coupled with the daily challenges of 'doing more with less support and fewer resources' this has profound implications for classroom practices in schools where disadvantage is concentrated.

We urge this Inquiry to heed these evidence-based findings about the largely negative impact of high-stakes testing on teaching and learning in the context of the NAPLAN program and publication of NAPLAN data on the My School website.

Such measures will continue to be potentially misleading and counterproductive to fostering an atmosphere of educational professionalism and quality learning in schools, which impacts on classroom practice and inhibits students realising their potential.

Meaningful assessment of school achievement must be made in a wider context involving a range of qualitative and quantitative measures supported by resourcing and system support to foster improvement

In addition to the above, there is a multiplicity of factors external to the education system which impact on the classroom and affect the ability of schools and teachers to respond effectively to students' learning needs.

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[23] See for example Thompson, G. (2012) Effects of NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy): Executive Summary, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA, http://effectsofnaplan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Executive-Summary.pdf.; Wu, M. (2010) Inadequacies of NAPLAN results for measuring school performance, Submission to NAPLAN Senate Enquiry; Wigglesworth, G. Simpson, J. and Loakes, D. 2011, NAPLAN language assessments for Indigenous children in remote communities: Issues and problems, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 320-343.

[24] See Comber, B. and Nixon, H. (2009) 'Teachers' work and pedagogy in the era of accountability', Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 30(3), pp. 333-345; p6

[25] ibid, p4.

Addressing the achievement gap between more and less advantaged students, and schools, requires explicit attention to the health and social-emotional well-being of all students and a commitment to addressing 'out-of-school' factors in improvements strategies and budgets.

Social and economic conditions, family wealth, geographic isolation and access to social and health services all impact on student achievement in ways which are beyond the capacity of teachers and schools to control and for which teachers, school leaders and schools should not be held accountable.

> *To the extent that education policy makers at the state and federal level are responsible for the quality of many 'inputs' which impact on student outcomes ... they should be held accountable for any shortfalls. At the same time individual schools should also be held accountable, but only for things that are under their control. Specifically they should be held accountable for the internal policies and practices that help to produce a broader set of educational outcomes than student achievement alone as measured by test scores.*
>
> - *Safe and supportive school environment*
> - *Climate that promotes respect among children and teachers*
> - *Tracking individual developmental needs for all the children they serve and implementing strategies to address those needs*
> - *Curriculum delivery* [26]

The Changing Policy Context of Educating Students with Disabilities and its Impact on Classroom Practices

That said, the question of educating students with disabilities/special needs highlights the complexity of the issues confronting schools and teachers in classrooms in attempting to ensure quality education for all their students.

There is clear and unambiguous evidence that government/system policies over several decades have led to:

- A dramatic increase in the number of students with identified disabilities, a growing number of students with increasingly complex disabilities relative to the overall student population and a considerable level of unmet need.

- Under-funding and resourcing of programs, including capital costs of compliance with legislative changes associated with the *Disabilities Discrimination Act*, aimed at bringing students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms and schools.

- A serious and worsening skills shortage among teachers who increasingly find students with disabilities assigned to their classes, with teachers not always well prepared for this experience and unskilled in methods which involve teaching across a wide spectrum of abilities, capabilities and disabilities and dealing with the classroom dynamics that are affected by the presence of students with different disabilities.

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[26] Helen Ladd, *Education and poverty: confronting the evidence*, opcit.

- An under-resourced assumption that with inclusion policies now broadly accepted, classroom teachers will develop skills in areas that were once the domain of specialists.

While governments have provided increases in funding for students with a disability or special needs they have not been sufficient to ensure the resources necessary for schools and teachers in classrooms to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of students with an identified disability and increasingly complex disabilities.

Detailed research from New South Wales on changes in enrolment patterns for the ten years from 1997 to 2007 shows significant increases in the number of students with disabilities previously educated in Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) and support classes who are now in mainstream classes as a consequence of integration funding. Additionally there are significant increases in the number of students in SSPs with higher support needs including those with very high support needs.[27]

Over those years the percentage of students with a diagnosis of disability eligible for additional support across the continuum of provision in New South Wales government schools more than doubled, rising from 2.7% to 6.7% of total enrolments.

The increase in student numbers was most dramatic for students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Approximately 26,154 students were receiving support in regular or mainstream classes in 2007 compared to approximately 5000 in 1997 – a 523% increase.

In SSPs there was an increase of 254% in the number of students with behaviour disorders.

In primary school support classes there was an increase of:

- 139% in the number of students with a diagnosis of emotional disturbance including a 61 per cent increase in the number of children enrolled under the autism category; and
- 41% in the number of students with moderate intellectual disability.

 In secondary school support classes there was an increase of:
- 23% in the number of students with a moderate intellectual disability;
- 280% in the number of students with autism;
- 348% in students with emotional disturbance; and
- 585% in the number of students with a behaviour disorder.

The research suggests, as argued by the NSW Teachers Federation, that:

> ... *increases in the number of students with disabilities and special needs in mainstream classes, the massive increases in the diagnosis of autism and mental health disorders and the increased severity of the disability of students in SSPs and support classes constitutes* the most dramatic change in the classrooms *in public education in New South Wales in the last ten years.*[28]

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[27] NSWTF Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into the Provision of Education to Students with a Disability or Special Needs, p2.
[28] NSWTF Submission, p.17.

The increasing diversity of classrooms and growing integration into mainstream classes of students from specialist behaviour centres or disability support units highlights the need for greater specialist support.

Teacher training has not usually prepared 'mainstream teachers' for dealing with the complexities associated with special needs and mental health problems where the majority of students with learning disabilities or mental health problems are to be found. It is difficult, if not impossible, to focus on teaching a class of up to 30 (in some cases more) students while also dealing with students with disabilities and mental health problems (which are frequently combined with learning difficulties or intellectual disability). Even where there is the provision of some supplementary funding for a few hours of support it barely begins to address the real problems facing schools, teachers and students.

Our members struggle to provide suitable and adequate teaching for these students in their classrooms, while at the same time not compromising the learning opportunities for all students. They simply do not have the resources to meet the needs of all their students, as the following representative examples from submissions by teachers, schools and school communities to the Gonki Review show.

- *The special needs students at our school not only have high learning needs but, in many cases, high behavioural and emotional needs. The increasing prevalence of autism has meant we require higher levels of staffing to cater for the needs of our students. We would prefer to have lower student numbers so our students can access the support they require and deserve. As we have a rapidly increasing enrolment, without enough classroom spaces, we are required to keep class numbers high to accommodate all eligible students from within our zone. Due to our current funding levels, we are only able to provide a certain level of support. This is not enough leading to high levels of teacher stress and injury and lower educational outcomes.*

- *[We need] an increase of Special Education Support as a large number of our students do not meet the DECS requirements for funding but are struggling to function in a class situation. Many students are getting into the middle primary years before they are the required number of years behind their chronological age to qualify for funding. At this stage it is very difficult for these students close the gaps in their learning. Funding is needed earlier in these students schooling. We would like funding for trained Special Education teachers and resources to work with our students to help them to reach their full educational potential. Students in our community need the skills necessary to be engaged by the curriculum thus decreasing the unacceptable behaviours of students for whom the curriculum is irrelevant because of speech or academic disabilities.*

- *In addition to funding support staff, it is also very costly for the school to have students assessed for developmental learning difficulties. Our parents cannot afford these costs. There are students who are having serious learning difficulties, but have not been able to access adequate assessments and diagnosis because the costs are too great. Teachers do their best to accommodate individual learning needs however, additional funding is necessary to resource assessments and support staff with expert advice on appropriate teaching and learning strategies.*

- *Our school has a 50% higher than average level of Students With Disabilities (SWD) and whilst we get funding for these on an individual basis and have created our own*

special class and support structure the funding is inadequate for the high level needs of some of our clients. These students are currently subsidised out of other general income areas to the tune of $48936.00. ... we have 3 autistic students who have to have one-on-one supervision and have been supported by short term funding from the Regional Office. ... these sources of funding are unsustainable and with another 5 high level autistic students coming through pre-school at the present time we have to look at other sustainable options for funding otherwise we will not be able to offer them an education.

Additional funding for more teachers and appropriate support staff – integration aides, therapists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists - to support individual students and teachers in the classrooms, as well as specialised equipment, modifications to classrooms and greater access for disabled students, is necessary to provide equitable education for these students.

The structure and governance of school administration – local and central – and its impact on teaching and learning

Ideally, quality teaching and learning depend on schools and 'the local'/'the central' operating on shared values and a common responsibility. This includes a recognition that the quality of individual schools and the quality of all schools in the system are inseparable.[29]

Within this framework, judgements about the location of decision making are best based on an approach that ensures appropriate systemic resources while allowing each school the flexibility necessary to cater for its unique student community.

In the AEU's view this requires the 'system bureaucracy' ('the central') to be closely connected to the culture of public schools ('the local'), with the location of decision making transparently related to what is best for student learning across the system. [30]

Whether decisions are made centrally or locally, quality educational decision making requires the inclusion and involvement of the profession at all levels.

In the AEU's view, teachers have both a desire and a responsibility to contribute to the development of the profession through active engagement in professional consultation and decision making at school and system levels; equally the system is responsible for ensuring their inclusion at all levels of decision making.

The AEU recognises however that, while government policy approaches to the structure and governance of schools have been constantly evolving, there is currently bipartisan political support for devolving aspects of governance, management and financing functions - authority, obligation and responsibility - from central agencies to the local school through policy initiatives such as 'empowering local schools/communities',[31] 'self-managing' or 'self-governing' schools or 'independent public schools'.[32]

At the local level, school managing/governing bodies are vested with greater responsibility to determine their school's so-called 'local priorities' and staffing requirements and school leaders are empowered with greater control over financial resources allocated to them.

It is taken as an article of faith that management/budgetary decisions made at the local level will be superior to those made centrally and that this will lead to an improvement in school effectiveness - improved school management and leadership; improved quality of teaching; more responsive curriculum and more efficient use of resources – which will translate into improved student learning outcomes.

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[29] AEU Policy on Quality Teaching in Schools 2007
[30] AEU Policy on Quality Teaching in Schools 2007
[31] See for example speeches by the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, on the Federal Government's 'Empowering Local Schools' agenda: *A greater responsibility over governance arrangements, school budgets, selecting and employing teachers and staff and identifying funding priorities which will drive improvements in students' achievements and enable schools to better meet the needs of their students. Empowering local communities to make decisions about what is best rather than a centralised system run by state bureaucracies dictating matters like the mix of staffing and how resources are allocated between competing demands.* 2010 Election Campaign: School Reform Making Every School a Great School www.alp.org.au/getattachment/0d9e5f31-7597.../school-reform/.
[32] Such as the Independent Public Schools initiatives instigated by the Barnett Government in Western Australia and the Newman Government in Queensland, and the NSW O'Farrell Government's *Local Schools Local Decisions* school autonomy policy.

Unfortunately, given the zeal with which it is advocated and the claims made for what it will achieve, several decades of national and international research have established that there is no clear-cut evidence that local management/greater 'autonomy' over issues such as school governance, workforce, infrastructure and funding leads to direct or predictable improvements in student learning and outcomes.[33]

Further, that what this substantial body of evidence does show is severe negative consequences for many students and further disadvantaging school communities already experiencing educational disadvantage.[34]

Here in Australia, analyses by researchers like Stephen Lamb, Richard Teese, Jack Keating etal, confirmed by expert research commissioned by the Gonski review, clearly establishes that reforms of this nature have led to residualisation in the public school system with severe negative consequences for students and schools in low SES areas.[35]

- A third of Australian students are in schools with socio-economically disadvantaged students, that is schools where the average SES of the students is below the average SES of the nation. **This is higher than in all similar OECD countries, and the OECD average.**[36]

- Nearly 60% of the most disadvantaged students are in schools with disadvantaged socio-economic status. **This is well above the OECD average, and substantially higher than in any comparable OECD country.**[37]

- Only around a third of all Australian students are in schools with average or mixed SES, **which is well below the OECD average.**[38]

These consequences are such that it led the eminent researchers in the Nous Group consortium,[39] commissioned by Gonski to examine the impact of Australia's school funding arrangements on student outcomes and equity, to conclude:

> *'Autonomy' has arguably been one of the more faddish concepts that has informed education reforms internationally in the past decade. It is generally used to refer to 'autonomy from government control' but it is not always clear whether that autonomy constitutes relaxed controls over curriculum, teacher employment and remuneration, financial management, enrolment of students, or some combination of these. The common underlying assumption, however, is that greater freedom will deliver improved student outcomes. As we have shown, freedom over enrolment certainly does that for the 'receiving' school, but it comes at a cost for other schools in the system. ... We do not support greater autonomy over enrolments than currently exists, and we see value in centrally-directed industrial relations arrangements for teachers and principals to*

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[33] AEU, Devolution and Education Research Report, May 2012
http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/2012/Devandeducation.pdf
[34] ibid.
[35] Lamb; Teese; Gonski research – particularly Nous Group and ACER.
[36] Nous Group, *Schooling Challenges and Opportunities. A Report for the Review of Funding for Schooling Panel*, August 2011 p20. http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/ReviewofFunding/Documents/Nous-SchoolingChallengesandOpportunities.pdf
[37] ibid.
[38] ibid.
[39] The Nous Group consortium was made up of researchers from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education working with Professor Richard Sweet, the National Institute of Labour Studies and the Nous Group.

support a thriving professional community and to ensure that the best teachers are deployed where they are most needed.[40]

This is confirmed by international research on the theory, evidence and policy associated with devolution and school autonomy:

> *Two decades of experience and research provide compelling evidence that simply setting schools free and holding them accountable for results is not in itself sufficient to conjure the attributes of effectiveness into being. Detaching schools from the bureaucratic structures within which they are embedded may enable the most privileged or resourceful schools to strike out in new and positive directions, but the rewards of enhanced autonomy for less advantaged schools are uncertain at best. While some studies suggest improved relations between schools, parents and their communities, this is largely associated with more advantaged schools and not easily replicated in other schools, especially those serving disadvantaged communities.*[41]

Levin (2010) concludes that there is no evidence to demonstrate that policies which emphasise choice and competition and structural factors such as governance, finance, workforce and accountability lead to an improvement in student outcomes in any sustained way across a system.[42]

Even the Productivity Commission *Schools Workforce Research Report* warned that ... *allowing schools greater autonomy has the potential to exacerbate inequalities unless all schools are adequately resourced.*[43]

Internationally, the OECD's *Equity and Quality in Education – Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools* (February 2012) report found that the highest-performing education systems across the OECD countries are those that combine quality with equity;[44] and OECD research on PISA results shows only a very small positive correlation between school autonomy in allocating resources and student performance [*Challenges for Australia's Education: Results from PISA 2009*, Table 7.31, p. 274]. However, the multi-level regression analysis in the OECD study on what makes a school successful shows no causal relationship between the two [Table IV.2.4c, p. 169]. That is, greater school autonomy in hiring teachers and for school budgets does not lead to higher student achievement in Australia.

Similarly, the OECD's findings on school autonomy and student achievement in its PISA 2009 Results: What makes a School Successful? – Resources, Policies and Practices (Vol IV), show that education systems which provide schools with greater autonomy in selecting

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[40] Nous Group, p.63

[41] David N. Plank & BetsAnn Smith, Autonomous Schools: Theory, Evidence and Policy. In Helen F. Ladd & Edward B. Fiske (eds) *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy*, Routledge, New York, 2008, pp. 402-424 (quoted by Cobbold) *No Compelling Research Evidence For School Autonomy*, January 14, 2011 http://www.saveourschools.com.au/choice-and-competition/no-compelling-research-evidence-for-school-autonomy

[42] Levin (2010), p740. For a Canadian strategy on large-scale systemic improvement in education that de-emphasised these structural elements as well as student testing and curriculum change but emphasised teaching, learning and assessment practices, see Levin (2007).

[43] Schools Workforce Productivity Commission Research Report (April 2012), p44. http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/116651/schools-workforce.pdf

[44] http://www.oecd.org/document/42/0,3746,en_2649_39263231_49477290_1_1_1_1,00.html=

teachers and for school budgets do not achieve higher results in reading; "greater responsibility in managing resources appears to be unrelated to a school system's overall student performance" and that "school autonomy in resource allocation is not related to performance at the system level."

Significantly, what the PISA research did show is that while *overall there is no clear relationship between the degree of autonomy in allocating resources and a school system's overall performance, it did find that* <u>*school autonomy over design of curricula and assessment is a key characteristic of successful school systems.*</u>[45]

This is confirmed by evidence from Finland:

> *... the most important thing in this school autonomy in Finland is that all the schools are both responsible and also free to design their own curriculum as they wish, based on the quite loose national curriculum framework. So financing and managing the school is one thing, but I think the... using teachers' knowledge and skills that we have in our system to design how they want teaching and learning to take place is the most important thing ... [and] frankly speaking, one of the keys also to this favourable situation that we have internationally.*[46]

Mourshed et al (2010) in a major international study (published by McKinsey & Co) of 20 educational systems that have shown the most sustained improvement in student achievement since 1980 note that the move to greater system improvement is characterised NOT by greater autonomy over governance, workforce, finance or infrastructure but over teaching and learning processes.[47]

But increased school autonomy over teaching and learning processes - curriculum and assessment - are two key areas not featured in the political push for increased school decision making. On the contrary, there is increased centralisation of curriculum, assessment and reporting and a lack of respect for increasing the involvement of the teaching profession in professional and pedagogical decision-making.

Mourshed et al also stress the evidence shows the need for a 'systemic approach' rather than specific, discrete or ad hoc programs.

> *Anecdotally, it is the experience of the AEU that it is a nonsense to require schools in rural and remote communities or other difficult to staff locations to recruit and select their own staff when staff simply aren't available for recruitment or these locations aren't provided with the resources to enable such recruitment. It is a nonsense to allegedly provide greater autonomy to schools over how to spend their finances but then maintain rigid central control over formulae for determining the amount of such finance (or size of budget). It is a nonsense to develop standards of teacher professional practice which stress professional autonomy but then to centrally standardise the student testing or assessment regimes to be used in part to assess performance against such standards.*[48]

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[45] Queensland Govt sub to Gonski p34 ; OECD Education at a Glance 2009
[46] Pasi Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons*, ABC Lateline February 28 2012
http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2012/s3441913.htm
[47] Mourshed et al, p26.
[48] AEU Submission to Productivity Commission Schools Workforce Study

The research evidence does not support the role of school principals and the model of school leadership that are central aspects of the current devolution agendas and the changes to the structure and governance of school administration that being pushed at both the federal and [most] state levels in Australia. Rather it supports the role of the principal as a member of the teaching profession, rather than as a 'separate management class'.

> *The whole thrust of recent research and writing about 'effective' school leaders stresses their role as educational leaders, not just managers. There is no evidence that having business people running schools will elevate student performance to "the global top tier". The core business of schools is education not business. While the principal in a school of any reasonable size should be supported by a business manager, the role of the principal should not be confused with that function.*[49]

The background paper to the recent International Summit on the Teaching Profession held in New York (March 2012) noted that:

> *School systems cannot be successful if principals are given total autonomy to make all the decisions affecting their schools. Schools need external support and to work with each other and their communities. Public education systems publicly provided are the best way of both providing support and engaging communities in education.*[50]

The AEU supports increased school-based decision making when and where it is demonstrable that it does not undermine or diminish the Melbourne Declaration goals of equity and excellence for all students and school; system-wide curriculum, resource and staffing guarantees; teachers' employment rights and entitlements; and the primacy of the principal's role as educational leader.

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[49] Australian Education Union Victorian Branch, *New Directions for School Leadership and the Teaching Profession Australian Education Union (Vic) Response*, pp24-25
http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/new_directions_workforce_paper___aeu_response_1_.pdf
[50] *Education International and the International Summit on the Teaching Profession* EI Background paper 2nd International Summit of the Teaching Profession, New York, March 2012.

The influence of family members in supporting the rights of children to receive a quality education

> *One of the most important indicators of equity in education is the strength of the relationship between the social background of students and their educational achievement. If the relationship is strong, the education system is not acting to produce more equitable outcomes, but is instead reinforcing educational privilege where it exists by conferring higher scores and denying privilege where it does not already exist.*[51]

The current focus on devolution also has a strong component of family choice of schools and a focus on individual parents/family members and their children.

The AEU has very strong concerns about such an approach, backed by a wealth of research evidence on the significant relationship between the socio-economic background of students and their educational performance at school and the related impact of 'choice' policies on the rights of all children to receive a quality education.

Additionally, PISA findings show a strong relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and educational outcomes with a competitive schooling market and academic selectivity, features which are strongly associated with 'parental choice':

> *What is striking [in PISA] is the strong correlation between the performance of a child and the average SES of all the students that attend his or her school. <u>In other countries, including 'high equity' countries like Finland and Canada, such an effect would not be evident. In Australia it is quite pronounced.</u>*[52]

Compared to similar OECD countries, there are relatively large concentrations of disadvantaged students in disadvantaged schools, and the 'compounding effect on disadvantage and underperformance creates a vicious circle for these students and schools'.[53]

> *There is a large and significant gap between the average SES of schools with advantaged and disadvantaged students in favour of those with advantaged students. (i.e. there is a strong concentration of advantaged students together in the same schools and of disadvantaged students together in the same schools ... **the gap between the quality of the educational resources in schools with advantaged and disadvantaged students is large and significant, favours schools with advantaged students, is around twice the OECD average, and is larger than in any similar OECD country**.*[54]

The Nous Group's analysis of PISA and what it means for equity in Australia is confirmed by the *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators* report:

> *Equality of outcomes can only be achieved if disadvantaged students have the opportunity to attend schools with high-quality resources and effective social policies and practices.*

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[51] Sue Thomson etal (ACER), *PISA in Brief: Highlights from the full Australian Report: Challenges for Australian Education: Results from PISA 2009*, p18
[52] Nous Group, op cit, p5
[53] ibid, pp29-30
[54] ibid p109

Focusing on the prevalence of vulnerable students and the extent to which certain subpopulations are at greater risk of being vulnerable – having low literacy skills or being disengaged from school, for example – enables countries to set meaningful and achievable goals. The most desirable outcome for a country is to have low levels of vulnerability and low levels of inequality.[55]

In some school systems, inequality is entrenched through the mechanisms in which students are allocated to schools, including tracks that channel students into different schools based on their prior achievement or ability, private schools and special programs in the public sector.[56]

Inclusive school systems, those with greater levels of inclusion that support diversity among all learners, *have better overall outcomes and less inequality. When school systems are more inclusive, material resources and experienced teachers tend to be more evenly distributed among schools.*[57]

The biggest single predictor of differences in achievement is the social background of children. And that's compounded by the social background of children when they're brought together in particular school settings so we get a multiplier effect. So that there's a very strong relationship between the social character of a school and the average level of achievement in the school. That's the primary factor. On top of that, there are a range of resource issues quite independently of that - whether poor schools can access specialist teachers, whether they have access to ancillary services to support children, the curriculum that they're able to offer. There are a range of secondary factors. But the basic underlying factor is: who are my kids and in what density, what concentration are they?[58]

The answer to improving teaching and learning in our schools, to maximising our investment in schooling, does not lie in the illusory promise of giving parents greater 'choice' between schools and systems in the name of supporting the rights of their individual children to 'a quality education'.

It can only be achieved by reducing the overly-large proportion of under-performing students in Australia;[59] students who are overwhelming concentrated in the public sector, through far greater levels of investment in the schools they attend.

The effect of aggregated high levels of socioeconomic background can be seen in Australia's school system, in which we have many children of parents with high socioeconomic background pooled into the independent school sector, and, to a lesser extent, the Catholic sector. The advantage that these schools have in terms of this pooling of resources is demonstrated by the fact that, after adjusting for student and school socioeconomic background, there are no significant differences between the results of students in government schools and those in independent schools. Of course,

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[55] OECD, *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators* p451
[56] ibid, p455
[57] ibid, pp.454-455
[58] Richard Teese, http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2012/s3571971.htm 20/08/2012
[59] Government schools (2010) enrol 77% of low SES students; 85% of Indigenous students; 78% of students with disability; 83% of remote area students.

we do not live in a world where such adjustments are made, and so more must be done to address the level of resourcing in schools that the majority of Australian students attend. (p21)

We do note however, research which shows the correlation between parent, family, and community involvement in education and student achievement and school improvement.[60]

While there is no universal agreement on what parental involvement is or a 'one-size-fits-all' model for parental involvement, the research emphasises approaches to family/parental engagement and its contribution to better educational outcomes which:

- focus on the importance of developing strong relationships between schools/educators, parents/families and their communities in improving student achievement and learning.

- take into account the different compositions, backgrounds, lifestyles and characteristics of the families and communities of the students enrolled in schools.

- recognise the importance of developing models which can be adapted to the needs of the particular school, parents, and community.[61]

- provide system support for collaborative strategies and innovations in schools/networks of schools/district-based plans , involving working closely with parents, families and community members in local communities across the country focussed on closing achievement gaps, improving low-performing schools and transforming relationships between schools and their communities.

- provide ongoing professional development to assist educators/schools engage socially and culturally diverse students and students from low-income families.

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[60]See for example William H. Jeynes, *Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*, Harvard Family Research Project December 2005 www.hfrp.org. Jeynes meta-analysis drew from 77 studies, comprising over 300,000 students from diverse family backgrounds.
Steven R Hara and Daniel J Burke, *Parental Involvement: The Key to Improved Student Achievement*, School Community Journal, Vol 8, No 2, Fall/Winter 1998
Department for Children, Schools and Families (UK), *The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Education: Because of the complex interaction between a number of factors (and only some of which have been taken into account in the analysis) it is difficult to prove that one causes the other, the research instead demonstrates that a relationship exists between parental involvement and achievement.*[60] Steven R Hara and Daniel J Burke, *Parental Involvement: The Key to Improved Student Achievement*, School Community Journal, Vol 8, No 2, Fall/Winter 1998 p227

The adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment

Although Term of Reference Number 4 refers to the adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment, it is unfortunate that questions around the adequacy of the wider physical environment in which school programs take place and learning occurs were not also canvassed.

There is an abundance of national and international evidence concerning the effects of inadequate physical infrastructure created and compounded by underfunding and long periods of neglect of school buildings and facilities on teaching and learning and the capacity to effectively meet the needs of schooling.

Adam Rorris' review of the literature on the impact of school buildings and facilities on student learning shows that there is substantial evidence showing the positive effect that school facilities can have on teaching and learning/school and student performance.[62]

The review includes a major UK study undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers which provides both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the view that a positive and statistically significant association exists between schools capital investment and pupil performance, with the most significant evidence from a statistical point of view being in relation to community primary schools, and schools in areas of high economic and social deprivation.[63]

While some inroads into the building of new school infrastructure and the refurbishment and maintenance of existing ageing infrastructure have been made in recent years there is a considerable body of evidence at both the macro and micro levels that too many Australian children are still educated in inadequate learning environments.

For example, the Business Council of Australia's 2007 call for education reform, *Restoring our Edge in Education: Making Australia's Education System its Next Competitive Advantage*, highlighted the poor condition of infrastructure, including buildings and technology, and considered that it *reflected a lack of investment and an outdated mindset when it comes to priorities for education.*[64]

> *While there has been significant investment in infrastructure on the part of some state governments, physical facilities in many government schools remain inadequate. Students and teachers often work in ageing and sub-standard classrooms, many of which were built to be temporary. Physical facilities in schools (for example toilet blocks and heating and cooling systems) often are well below the standards expected*

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[62] Rorris, 2008, op.cit. p7; see also Kenn Fisher, The Impact of School Infrastructure on Student Outcomes and Behaviour, Schooling Issues Digest, http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/schooling_issues_digest/schooling_iss ues_digest_building.htm. Examines international research on the causal linkages between building design and student outcomes - research indicates that student academic achievement improves with improved building condition.

[63] Quoted by Rorris, 2008, op.cit. p9.

[64] Business Council of Australia, *Action Required to Make Education Australia's* Advantage, *26 August 2007* http://www.bca.com.au/Content.aspx?ContentID=101154.

*more generally in the community. Many government schools across Australia are in
need of substantial physical renewal.*[65]

Marilyn Harrington in a Parliamentary Library publication on School Reform attests to the
importance of the environment in which students learn and teachers work on educational
attainment, and refers to OECD research which supports this.

> *It is probably fair to say that infrastructure resources have received much less attention
> in educational policy and debate than have personnel resources. The emphasis on
> personnel is understandable. ... If the teachers are not well educated, highly motivated
> people who are able to establish a productive rapport with their students then
> infrastructure resources, no matter how well provided, will probably count for little in
> promoting effective learning outcomes. On the other hand, inadequate or inappropriate
> infrastructure can hinder the implementation of the best designed educational plans.
> Buildings which are overcrowded, dilapidated, or fitted with obsolete equipment and
> learning materials, depress the spirit and make it difficult to teach and learn effectively.
> Infrastructure resources give schools the opportunity to provide effective learning
> programs. Students who do not have access to adequate science laboratories or library
> facilities are, in effect, denied access to those parts of the curriculum which require
> such resources.*[66]

In its consideration of infrastructure issues, the Gonski Review found that while drawing
comprehensive and objective overall conclusions about the adequacy of school facilities
based on the available data was difficult, *it is clear that many government schools, and some
poorly resourced non-government schools, are suffering in terms of their facilities.*[67]

The Report noted that the strong messages coming from submissions to the review on the
effects of inadequate infrastructure, facilities and equipment in many schools include:

- the ability of government schools to be competitive with some non-government
  schools for enrolments being compromised.
- schools not being able to offer education that will meet the National Goals of
  Schooling.
- not all students having access to the same range of educational opportunities.
- the morale of students and teachers being adversely affected.
- students and teachers not feeling safe in the school environment.
- school environments not being well tailored to local circumstances and which could
  be better matched to educational need.

> *It is the panel's view that every teacher and student in Australian schools should have
> access to facilities that provide the basic necessities, such as space, and health and
> safety features. The panel also strongly believes it is crucial that teaching and learning
> environments are of sufficiently high quality to maximise the educational value and*

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[65] Business Council of Australia, *Restoring our Edge in Education: Making Australia's Education System its
Next Competitive Advantage*. Report prepared for the BCA by Professor Geoff Masters, Chief Executive Officer
of the Australian Council for Educational Research. www.bca.com.au/DisplayFile.aspx?FileID=224
[66] Marilyn Harrington, School Reform, Parliamentary Library Briefing Book, 2010,
http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/BriefingBook43p/school-reform.htm.
[67] Gonski Report, p97.

opportunities for all students. To date, there has been no clear national statement about what quality of facilities Australia expects for its schools. It is the panel's position that this should be developed and then used to assess whether schools are equipped to meet these expectations.

Rebuilding public schools across Australia would provide opportunities to create quality buildings and resources which would be genuinely public - environmentally sustainable and open to the whole community. ... When it comes to investment in infrastructure, investing in our public schools and students is the most important infrastructure investment a government can make.[68]

In short, meeting the agreed national commitment to equity and excellence for all requires that all Australian students are educated in learning environments which are conducive to effective teaching and learning in the 21st century; ie. optimal learning environments characterised by quality buildings, good quality learning spaces, appropriate ICT, libraries/resource centres, science laboratories, music, art and sport equipment/facilities and continuous upgrading and maintenance to keep them to a high standard.

The AEU's *State of Our Schools Survey 2010* and thousands of school submissions to the Gonski Review from a wide range/diversity of educational settings demonstrated many common challenges and priorities including clear and unambiguous evidence of a lack of appropriate and adequate 'tools'/good quality learning spaces.

Principals responding to the *SOS Survey* overwhelmingly reported that their schools had to engage in fundraising in order to meet basic needs of the school, including maintenance on existing school infrastructure, new buildings and facilities and the provision of ICT. Nationally only 6% of principals did not consider school fundraising and voluntary contributions to be an important component of their school budget.

Submissions from schools in disadvantaged areas also show evidence of students having difficulty meeting course requirements simply because the school does not have the resources to upgrade facilities or to finance essential equipment.

Inadequate resourcing of ICT - lack of teaching spaces and huge problems associated with incorporating technologies appropriate to 21st century learning into school buildings with, among other limitations, aging electricity infrastructure - is common across the country. As one typical school submission to the Review explained it:

__What we do with what we have ...__ The school is provided with some of the ICT costs that support infrastructure and allow for some purchases. Three years ago the school was successful in receiving a federal grant to fund the purchase and installation costs of 48 computers throughout seven classrooms as well as the fit out of a computer lab with an Interactive Whiteboard. With this support, teachers have incorporated technology in a diverse range of way including, animation, movie making, learning web quests, developing relationship with overseas schools, blogging, video conferencing, and much more. This year we are funding the rollover of the computer fleet at much less of the cost of the original federal grant. With changing technologies and limited

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[68] Gonski Report, p96

funds available, we have included a mix of mobile technologies. Early this year, three Interactive Whiteboards were purchased and installed. All these costs have placed great strain on our funding.

What we need to continue to succeed … *To provide equitable, reliable and resourced access to the latest technology in classrooms the school needs a clearly identified ICT budget that fully resources schools to maintain and rollover fleets. While government have been eager to set school targets for computer to student ratios, they have been less willing to provide the resources to enable schools to invest in the infrastructure and ongoing associated costs. We believe that we should not have to make choices between employment of staff and renewal of infrastructure.*

Similarly there is widespread evidence of inadequate space and facilities in many libraries to carry out their expanded functions in line with community expectations of learning in the 21st century.

Almost all Australian schools have a school library, and school libraries and teacher librarians make a significant contribution to school communities and student learning outcomes. However key findings from inquiries such as the 2010 government inquiry into school libraries, recent research reports and surveys, and submissions from schools to the Review, show that over time budget constraints and a failure to adequately staff school libraries have undermined the capacity and quality of library services provided by schools.[69]

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[69] AEU Submission to House of Reps Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools. Submission Number 113.
http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=ee/schoollibraries/subs.htm

Factors influencing the selection, training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system

> *Quality teaching, professional pay and the resources to provide them are the means to improve our public schools and the outcomes for students. This is vital for them, their parents and Australia's future.*
> Professional Pay and Quality Teaching for Australia's Future: The AEU Proposal

It is a fundamental expectation of the Australian community that students, whether of pre-school, school or post-compulsory school age, have the right to properly resourced public schools and to be cared for and taught by highly trained teachers and other professional and administrative support personnel.

This is an essential precondition of achieving the national educational goals for all young Australians.

- *Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; and*
- *All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.*[70]

The factors outlined in this term of reference were comprehensively addressed in the AEU's submission to the Productivity Commission's study of the schools workforce. The following summary is provided for the benefit of this Inquiry.

Supply and Demand Issues

Efforts to enhance selection, training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system are being hampered by the lack of publicly available and nationally consistent research data concerning teachers and even less for the other components of the school workforce.

On the demand side:
- the numbers of students and teachers per school,
- the age profile of teachers,
- the proportion on fixed term appointments,
- the levels of part-time employment,
- the levels of leave,
- attrition rates,
- supply difficulty trends (including subject areas and geographical locations) and
- projections of student enrolments and new teachers required to meet the projected demand.

On the supply side:
- the numbers of students enrolled in teacher education courses,
- the types of courses they are enrolled in,

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[70] Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (2008), *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, Canberra, p7.

- the subject methodologies they offer,
- the historic and existing course attrition rates and projections about how many students in each type of course can be expected to become primary, secondary or special education teachers.

Supply and demand issues go beyond recruitment (into initial training and then employment) and retention in employment to the 'deployment' of the requisite personnel to specific 'tasks' whether that be in particular schools, subject areas, geographic locations or with cohorts of students with particular needs such as Indigenous students, students with disabilities or from low SES or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Data from the AEU's 2010 national *State of Our Schools* survey indicate that that the majority of secondary schools have teaching staff working in subject areas for which they are not qualified with mathematics, technology, science, special education and physical education being the 'worst' areas in this respect. Similarly the majority of all schools reported difficulties in filling vacancies either because of a lack of suitable candidates or an inability to obtain relief teachers on a casual basis.[71]

The 2010 ACER *Staff In Australia's Schools* publication indicates that fairly large numbers of principals report having difficulties in suitably filling staff vacancies across all areas of the curriculum. About 6% of primary principals and 9% of secondary principals reported major difficulty in suitably filling staff vacancies during the past 12 months. These proportions are quite similar to those reported in SiAS 2007 and confirm that recruitment difficulties continue to be more acute in secondary schools. A further 21% of primary principals reported a moderate difficulty in recruiting staff as did 31% of secondary principals. Government schools generally report the greatest difficulties in recruiting staff, and independent schools the least.[72]

The Victorian Education department refers to 'difficult to fill vacancies' in its annual teacher supply and demand report but does not provide a definition of "difficult to fill" in the report. Over the period 2001-2009 the percentage of all government schools (primary, secondary and special) experiencing such difficulties fluctuated between 29% and 15%. Over the same period the most difficult to fill subject areas (maths, technology and LOTE) and geographic areas remained constant.[73]

The AEU is not aware of any other Australian education authority that collects, collates and publishes relatively comprehensive data in the manner of the Victorian *Teacher Supply and Demand Report*. This supports the need for an appropriate body to nationally coordinate these critical workforce planning and development data needs.

What is known from these data sources is that a multi-faceted problem exists:

- the further away from metropolitan and larger provincial centres, the greater the difficulties of balancing supply and demand;

[71] Australian Education Union, *State of Our Schools Survey*, 2008 & 2009. (electronic copy)
[72] Phillip McKenzie , Glenn Rowley, Paul Weldon and Martin Murphy (ACER) , *Staff In Australia's Schools 2010: Main Report On The Survey*, November 2011, p.xxi
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Documents/SiASMainReport.pdf
[73] DEECD (2010), *Teacher Supply and Demand Report 2009,* pp 56-57.

- greater difficulties persist in critical curriculum areas, predominantly at the secondary level and especially in mathematics, science, technology, LOTE, Indigenous education and special education; and

- greater difficulty persists in regions or communities of low socio-economic status, including especially, Indigenous communities.

While there are numerous teacher supply enhancement schemes and strategies that exist across the various jurisdictions, there is little substantive data publically available evaluating their effectiveness. However the fact that such problems continue, suggest the programs tend to be ad hoc or piecemeal 'plug the gap' schemes and aimed at fixing problems when they arise rather than constituting longer term preventative solutions or strategies.

Successful strategies

Strategies which have worked as longer term solutions are available from the experience of high performing countries in the OECD's *PISA* programme:

- strong, sustained nation-wide communications and public relations campaigns to develop positive images of schools and their teachers, especially as highly regarded and rewarded professionals;

- early identification of and financial support for high quality candidates for teacher training;

- empowering teachers to act as developers and drivers of continuous improvement rather than as implementers of change dictated by government policy;

- increased professional autonomy and responsibility over the curriculum and student assessment;

- significant financial and other support for ongoing professional development and performance appraisal; and

- professional standards of employment which includes significant reward (both monetary and non-monetary) and working conditions enabling greater scope to concentrate upon individual student learning needs, eg, through smaller class sizes and reduced instructional load time.[74]

Rather than address the imperative for policy change in these areas, the evidence indicates that an increasing burden of work is being placed upon the schools workforce which is being required to do more with comparatively less than what is required. Such work intensification has implications for an already overcrowded curriculum as well as the already overloaded work requirements upon staff.[75]

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[74]See OECD (2011a), op cit, pp7-32 and Stewart, V (2011), op cit, pp 8-11, 15-16.
[75]Galton, M. & MacBeath, J., (2008), *Teachers under pressure.* Gardiner, C. & Williamson, J., (2004), *Workloads of government school teachers and allied educators in Tasmania.*

Moreover, OECD research on disadvantaged student achievement shows that increased expenditure on school level inputs such as smaller class sizes, improved teacher quality (training levels) and peer group successes have a significant positive effect on student achievement.[76]

This available evidence suggests that something other than current policy approaches (of maintaining or increasing staff workload or of maintaining existing or increasing class sizes) is required if student outcomes and workforce productivity are to be improved.

Consistent survey evidence collected by the AEU shows significant job redesign of teaching roles is required to achieve greater improvement in student outcomes. That re-design would entail smaller class sizes, better access to professional development and new technologies, better school and classroom facilities and increased levels of support for programs to enhance literacy and numeracy and the needs of students with special learning difficulties.[77] Such job re-design will be important in increasing job satisfaction and so reducing attrition rates. The ACER has found that dissatisfaction with teaching and better opportunities outside of schools were key reasons behind intentions to resign prior to retirement for teachers at all stages of their careers and that more support staff, smaller class sizes, fewer student behavioural problems and a more positive public image would retain teachers in the profession.[78]

Training and professional development

The AEU recognises a range of different models exist for teacher training. These may range from 'end-on' postgraduate diplomas through integrated Bachelor degrees and 'professional' Master's degree programs. Of greater significance than these models is the support provided to the student teachers or trainees and the content of such courses. Teacher scholarship programs which provide a wage rather than simply HECS fee payments would be particularly significant. Such programs were common in Australia until the 1980s and are currently used in 'high-performing' countries such as Singapore. So too would be increasing the clinical or 'on the job' or practicum component of all initial teacher education programs, including through employment-based 'internship' programs.

Absolutely critical in this endeavour is the engagement of the profession in its induction, mentoring and ongoing training and professional development needs. This will not be achieved through employer or institutional exhortations about professional responsibility or of mandatorily requiring existing staff to supervise and train new trainees but by recognising and rewarding through significant career structure enhancement this important role of teachers. The current compensation or reward scheme of small payments to teachers who either supervise student teachers or coordinate the work of other teachers who provide the supervision is wholly inadequate.

Serious consideration needs to be given to the lessons learnt from so-called high performing countries as to what is required to achieve and maintain a high quality teaching profession. These lessons - the early identification and support of potential teachers (even at school age level), greater financial incentives during study/training, job re-design and substantial

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[76] OECD, (2011b), p 14.
[77] See AEU (2010), *State of Our Schools Survey Report*.
[78] See McKenzie et al, (2008), pp82-86, 98.

professional development oriented towards teacher and not system needs - have been canvassed in earlier sections of this submission.

OECD research, however, on what makes for a high quality teaching profession, indicates that high status reflected in what might be called professional remuneration levels and professional working conditions is crucial in establishing and maintaining such a profession.[79]

Performance Pay

There is now extensive research literature documenting the successive failure of attempts to link teacher pay to outcomes measured by student or school results or some other peer, school and/or community evaluation.

Levin (2010b) identifies eight reasons why merit pay for teachers is a bad idea:

1. *Very few people anywhere in the labour force are paid on the basis of measured outcomes.*
2. *No other profession is paid on the basis of measured client outcomes.*
3. *Most teachers oppose such schemes.*
4. *Pay based on student achievement is highly likely to lead to displacement of other important education purposes and goals.*
5. *There is no consensus on what the measures of merit should be.*
6. *The measurement of merit in teaching inevitably involves a degree of error.*
7. *The details of merit pay schemes vary widely, yet these details have great impact on how such plans are received and their effects on teachers and schools.*
8. *Merit pay schemes in education have a long record of failure.[80]*

Wu (2009 & 2010) has shown that large-scale assessment programs such as *PISA, TIMSS or NAPLAN* are inappropriate instruments for measuring individual school, student or teacher performances due to the significant effect of factors such as sampling, measurement and equating error and the large 'confidence intervals' associated with interpreting those results.[81] In other words, the fluctuations around any particular result are so significant, that the 'result' cannot be attributed with any degree of confidence to a particular student, school or teacher.[82]

The same caution and advice against using such material to assess and reward schools and teachers due to these margins of error and inherent unreliability and volatility was provided to the Australian Government by ACARA, its own agency responsible for administering the testing programmes and publishing the results.[83] ACARA Board meeting minutes obtained under freedom of information show that:

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[79] See OECD, (2005), pp3-7; OECD (2011a), pp8-13; Stewart (2011), pp10-11
[80] Levin, B. (2010b) *Eight Reasons Merit Pay for Teachers is a Bad Idea.*
[81] Wu, M., (2009a), *Keynote Address to the Pacific Rim Objective Measurement Symposium;* (2010), *Inadequacies of NAPLAN Results for Measuring School Performance.*
[82] Wu (2009b), *Interpreting NAPLAN Results for the Lay Person.*
[83] Harrison, D., (2011), *Agency behind MySchool Warned Against Data Use*, The Age, 7 May 2011, p5.

Caution was urged against using this data set, as the error margins are likely to be too great to infer any meaningful conclusions. Additionally, international experience shows that data tend to bounce from year to year.[84]

Recent analyses of the experience of New York schools with teacher incentive bonuses linked to student achievement scores show that such schemes whether voluntary or mandatory, based on individual teacher or whole school performance do not lead to improved student outcomes and, in fact were so counter-productive as to lead, most recently, to the abandonment of the program.[85]

Attempts to link teacher evaluation to student test scores have been similarly unsuccessful:

> *[T]here is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians, and economists that student test scores alone are not sufficiently reliable and valid indicators of teacher effectiveness to be used in high-stakes personnel decisions, even when the most sophisticated statistical applications such as value-added modelling are employed.*
>
> *For a variety of reasons, analyses of VAM results have led researchers to doubt whether the methodology can accurately identify more and less effective teachers. VAM estimates have proven to be unstable across statistical models, years, and classes that teachers teach. One study found that across five large urban districts, among teachers who were ranked in the top 20% of effectiveness in the first year, fewer than a third were in that top group the next year, and another third moved all the way down to the bottom 40%. Another found that teachers' effectiveness ratings in one year could only predict from 4% to 16% of the variation in such ratings in the following year. Thus, a teacher who appears to be very ineffective in one year might have a dramatically different result the following year. The same dramatic fluctuations were found for teachers ranked at the bottom in the first year of analysis. This runs counter to most people's notions that the true quality of a teacher is likely to change very little over time and raises questions about whether what is measured is largely a "teacher effect" or the effect of a wide variety of other factors.*[86]

Federal, state or territory government experimentation and policy initiatives on this issue simply can't be supported on the evidence.

This is not to say that performance review or evaluation, as distinct from performance bonus pay schemes, are not to be supported. Indeed the evidence, both internationally and within Australia, is that the profession will support teacher appraisal schemes providing they are well-resourced, enable further training and professional development linked to teachers' professional goals and are properly negotiated between employers and teacher unions.

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[84] ibid.

[85] Fryer, R.G.,(2011), *Teacher Incentives and Student Achievement: Evidence from New York City Public Schools*, pp2-6; Marsh et al (2011), *A Big Apple for Educators: New York City's Experiment with Schoolwide Performance Bonuses – Final Evaluation Report*, pp xx-xxvi; Otterman, S, *New York City Abandons Teacher Bonus Program,* The New York Times, 17 July 2011.

[86] Baker, E et al. (2010) *Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers*, (The authors include four former presidents of the American Educational Research Association, A former chair of the National Research Council's Board on testing and assessment, a former chair of the committee on methodology of the National Assessment Governing Board, a former associate director of the National Assessment of Educational progress and a former chair of the National Council on Measurement in Education.)

System-imposed administrative exercises that provide little useful feedback are not endorsed by either the profession or the AEU.[87]

A recent OECD report, *Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment: Australia,* has made a number of policy recommendations:

- *The alignment of teaching standards with a competency-based career structure;*
- *Teacher registration conceived as career-progression evaluation;*
- *Developmental evaluation performed through teacher appraisal as part of performance management, internal to the school, for which the school principal would be held accountable;*
- *Links between developmental evaluation and career-progression evaluation.*

Not only do these recommendations resemble elements of the AEU *Professional Pay* proposal, the OECD goes to some lengths to point out that its 'career-progression evaluation' system is not a performance-based pay or performance bonus model which, it says, the research literature notes as producing only mixed results.[88] Noteworthy, too, is the absence of any reference to quotas or limited tenure or fixed term appointments in these OECD policy recommendations; such features being common in employer proposals for teacher and principal career restructures.

This latest OECD report also notes that few countries use student test results in evaluating teacher performance. While teachers must provide evidence to demonstrate student progress, student test scores or 'value-added models' provide little reliability as a measure of teacher performance.[89]

School Leadership

School leaders are primarily educationalists managing and driving the educational performance of their schools' students and the teaching and other work performance of their staff. To this end, they are and must remain fully qualified teachers with a demonstrated track record of teaching excellence. As McKenzie et al (2008) record, it is the challenge of such a role that motivates teachers to become school leaders.[90]

However, there are significant issues. Higher proportions of school leaders tend to be closer to retirement age and this accounts for higher proportions of such people intending to leave the profession within 3 years. Of those that intend continuing for longer than 3 years, the overwhelming majority intend staying at their current school and position or to seek promotion within their current school.[91] Comparatively few teachers (10%) intend applying

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[87] OECD (2009a), *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*, ch 5; OECD (2011c), *Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment: Australia*, ch 4; Jensen, B., (2011), *Better Teacher Appraisal and Feedback: Improving Performance*, pp22-23.
[88] OECD (2011c), *Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment: Australia*, pp91, 93.
[89] Only a value added model [VAM] which involved testing all students at all levels and in all subject/curriculum areas would have efficacy and such a testing regime would be cost prohibitive. OECD, (2011c), *Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment: Australia*, p93 and Note 3, p96.
[90] McKenzie, et al, (2008), *Staff in Australian Schools 2007*, pp37-38.
[91] ibid, pp84, 88

for principal or deputy principal positions and cite work/life balance, job pressure and the desire to remain teaching.[92]

Interestingly, school leaders cite as strategies to help retain leaders in the profession: more support staff, less imposed change, reduced workload and more positive public image (around 80% plus). However, comparatively fewer cite high salaries or monetary rewards or greater autonomy (50%-70%).[93]

Greater school autonomy, and the increase in work intensification that goes with it, is consequently unlikely to increase attractiveness of leadership, increase leadership retention rates or increase job satisfaction.[94]

As schools serve public purposes, school leaders will require skills which foster the development of their schools as professional learning communities, foster democratic practices and develop and interpret evidence based policy.[95]

In a national survey of government primary school principals in 2009, such leaders valued and rated most highly strategies which helped students develop a love of learning and which helped them become active and responsible members of a democratic society and which encouraged responsibility, trust, respect and professionalism amongst staff and students. They de-valued strategies associated with student selection, national testing, greater school autonomy, school accountability for social outcomes and parental involvement in curriculum negotiations.[96]

The skills required to put such strategies into place require more than administrative, financial or managerial competencies. They require the highest levels of personal, communication, motivation and team building skills.

Attracting and Retaining Accomplished Teachers

While much public attention is given to simplistic calls for identifying and removing underperforming teachers, by far the greater problem is attracting and retaining accomplished teachers. Attracting teachers to the profession and retaining them in our classrooms is becoming increasingly difficult.

An AEU survey of over 11,500 teachers and principals found that two thirds of teachers said they believed there was a problem with retaining people in the profession and less than half were committed to staying in the profession until retirement.

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[92] ibid, pp 91-92.
[93] ibid, pp102-103.
[94] Caro, J., (2011), *A Matter of Principal: Repair Learners or Repair Buildings*, Sydney Morning Herald, 22 August, 2011.
[95] Presentation by Professor Alan Reid at the launch of the report *'Exploring the Public Purposes of Education in Australian Primary Schools'* held at the Holiday Inn, Melbourne Airport on 21 March, 2011.
[96] Cranston et al (2009), *Researching the Public Purposes of Education in Australia: The Results of a National Survey of Primary School Principals*, Tables 2 and 3.

This is confirmed by academic research which shows a high proportion of young teachers leaving within the first five years.[97] The extent of the problem is demonstrated by the fact that secondary teaching has become an occupation listed as suffering a skills shortage for the purpose of recruiting from overseas.

Professional teacher standards and pay

Teachers' salaries fall behind other professionals, particularly after the first 5-10 years of teaching. While salary increments for beginning teachers are essential to recognise growing skills and knowledge, there is no career option for teachers but to move to administrative and leadership roles after they have reached the top of the salary scale in approximately 8-10 years.

Improving teaching and learning in our public schools requires constructive measures to redress this situation.

The first such measure is a competitive professional salary for ***all*** teachers to ensure that the profession can attract and retain teachers in the numbers required to guarantee a qualified teacher in front of every classroom across the country no matter where it is located.

The second is the enhancement of career structures through the establishment of a *Professional Pay and Quality Teaching* scheme to ***further*** recognise and appropriately reward experienced teachers for demonstrated quality teaching, knowledge, skills and practice. Such a reform would recognise and encourage professional excellence and help to attract the best people into teaching and retain the most accomplished teachers in our classrooms.

The scheme for an enhanced, highly remunerated 'professional standards referenced' career structure, over and above existing common incremental salary scales, negotiated by employers and unions and incorporated into industrial regulatory instruments,[98] would involve the development of a negotiated framework incorporating a set of professional teaching standards against which teachers can be voluntarily assessed for the purpose of being classified as an 'accomplished teacher'.

Teachers would be assessed by an objective and fair process and rewarded through salary increases, not one-off cash bonuses. Teachers would be required to demonstrate how their teaching experience and professional development is contributing to the improvement of educational outcomes for students.

The AEU recognises the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* developed by AITSL as a significant opportunity to enhance the profession by further assisting in initial teacher education, ongoing professional development and the retention of teachers by opening the way for a proper professional pay structure for teachers.

Professional teaching standards should be supported by:
- high teacher trust and respect and an acknowledgement of the importance of professional teacher judgement;

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[97] According to Monash University researcher Dr Philip Riley, 40-50% of young teachers leave within the first five years.
[98] AEU (2010a), *Professional Pay and Quality Teaching for Australia's Future: The AEU Proposal.*

- an understanding of the collaborative nature of teaching;
- investments in teacher professional learning which enhance professional capacity and judgement and assist in the sharing of professional knowledge and achievement;
- investment in resources, particularly directed at schools with concentrations of those students finding it hardest to achieve;
- objective and pertinent research which resonates with teachers and helps them to overcome the problems they identify as limiting student achievement;
- acknowledgement of the professional expertise of teachers and the importance of allowing due weight to their views.

Proper career structures and competitive professional salaries for all teachers is the best way to ensure the profession can attract and retain the best teachers and to improve educational outcomes in the classroom.

The AEU has repeatedly indicated a preparedness to negotiate additional, enhanced career structures underpinned by standards. This can be brought to fruition through negotiation between employers and unions in each jurisdiction. It will however require the Federal Government to take national leadership and respond with a clear and adequate funding commitment for its achievement.

Professional Courtesy and Respect

Finally, the Inquiry needs to be cognisant of the lack of professional courtesy and respect currently shown to teachers in many quarters which is systematically driving down the morale of teachers which in turn impacts on students. As Jane Caro ably puts it:

> *All over the English-speaking world there seems to be a concerted attack on teachers. They are to be measured, judged, tested, compared, blamed, named, shamed, casualised, forced into competition with one another and held accountable for their students' results. ....*

> *Far from 'toxic teachers' what we are creating is toxic employment conditions and anyone who has ever employed anyone knows exactly what happens when you do that – your best and brightest practitioners, those with the most options, walk away.... It's not rocket science. You attract great talent the same way in every profession. You provide good working conditions – crumbling, draughty, leaking and run down schools where teachers provide their own coffee, tea, milk, even toilet paper won't cut it. You give your staff professional respect and courtesy, you trust them to know that they are doing and let them get on with it.*

> *Research shows that the only autonomy that actually improves student outcomes is not around hiring and firing teachers, it is actually around curriculum and what goes in the classroom. You give them an appropriate career path and help them to learn and develop their professional skills throughout their career. You give them constructive and helpful feedback as they progress. And you reward them competitively in terms of salary and opportunities. What you don't do is set them up to fail by holding them accountable for things they cannot possibly change – like poverty, disadvantage, family*

breakdown and inequality and then slash funding and so take away the very things they desperately need to make any kind of difference.[99]

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[99] Jane Caro, *A little respect: attracting top teachers is not rocket science.* The Drum 4 October 2012