



AEU Statement on Teaching Australia (formerly National Institute of Quality Teaching and Learning (NIQTSL))

The AEU believes that there is a potential for a National Institute to play a constructive role in supporting teaching and learning in Australian schools. In order to do this it would need to be properly constituted and operated.

A properly constituted Institute would be truly representative of the teaching profession. It would be “by the profession, for the profession” as Minister Nelson promised in his original announcement (17th July 2003). He went on to say that this would mean it would operate independently of interference from the Australian Government, the Federal Minister of Education, the Department of Education, Science and Training or any other government bodies.

It is already blatantly failing to meet these conditions. Under its new constitution the Institute is a company with a single owner – the Federal Minister for Education. The Minister appoints the chair of the Board and an “eminent educationalist”. The Minister has right of approval of any person nominated to the Board by any organisation. The Minister even has an “unfettered discretion” to nominate a representative should an eligible organisation decide not to nominate someone.

The Board is made up of representatives of organisations approved by the Minister. It lacks balance. The organisations on the Board have little accountability to the teaching profession, either in general or to a particular part.

The Institute has no process of membership, either individual or organisational, to make it directly accountable to any group beyond the Minister and the Board.

Whilst there was initially an advisory committee with wider representation, this no longer exists.

Education Unions, which are directly accountable to a membership that covers most teachers and educational leaders, have been excluded from the Board at the behest of the Minister.

In this context, the AEU opposes the Institute in its current form and does not recognise its right to speak on behalf of the profession.

Notwithstanding this, the AEU recognises that the Institute will undertake activities which may impact on the teaching profession and will participate in such activities where it is in the interests of members to do so.