



# **PROFESSIONAL PAY AND TEACHING STANDARDS**

**Statement and Background Paper by  
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## **AEU RESEARCH PROVIDES A GENUINE OPPORTUNITY FOR REFORM**

### **Statement by Angelo Gavrielatos**

Teacher unions have long sought reform of career structures with the purpose of providing recognition and reward aimed at retaining highly accomplished teachers in the classroom. For these reasons the Australian Education Union (AEU) has developed a proposal to achieve further professional pay for teachers.

The AEU's proposal has two objectives.

The first 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 objective is *further* recognition and appropriate reward for demonstrated quality teaching, knowledge, skills and practice. To this end the AEU supports the development of a negotiated framework incorporating professional teaching standards against which teachers can be voluntarily assessed for the purpose of being classified as an 'accomplished teacher'.

The success of the strategy aimed at further recognising and rewarding quality teaching knowledge, skills and practice through professional standards will be dependent on governments providing the necessary additional targeted funding. It requires the Federal Government to respond with a clear funding commitment.

The AEU is not alone in calling for reform. The Business Council of Australia has also called for reform to attract and retain accomplished teachers in our classrooms. The BCA, concerned about global competitiveness, has called for an additional \$4billion to be allocated to pay teachers who meet required standards a salary of at least \$100,000 pa.

COAG has also identified the need to further recognise and reward quality teaching. To assist in the development of a National Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth and state/territory governments, the Commonwealth is committed to funding research to inform effective ways to achieve this.

To inform these initiatives, the AEU commissioned the University of NSW's research organisation, Educational Assessment Australia (EAA), to undertake a survey of Australian government school teachers to research the validity of a common set of national professional standards and their application for the purpose of assessing the level of achievement required for an 'accomplished teacher'. The study drew valid survey responses from schools in every state or territory.

The EAA research found that “that the current range of evidence and criteria developed in the states and territories provides a valid foundation for a national model for recognition of ‘teacher accomplishment’” and that the EAA “survey would form a valid basis for the development of a national assessment instrument to assist states and territories to plan for valid and consistent measures for recognising ‘accomplishment’ in teacher standards and performance.”

The AEU has forwarded a copy of the report to Minister Gillard and has sought to discuss it and its implications with her.

## ***Background Paper – Professional pay and teaching standards***

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Australia is facing a growing teacher shortage.

Results of the survey of more than 1700 new teachers conducted by the AEU in 2008 showed that nearly half (47.9%) do not see themselves teaching in ten years time, with workload, pay, behaviour management and class sizes ranking as the top four concerns.

Attracting teachers to the profession and retaining them in our classrooms is becoming increasingly difficult as 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 approximately 8-10 years.

In 2007 the Australian Education Union proposed a Professional Pay scheme to reward experienced teachers through recognition of their teaching knowledge and practice. Such reform would recognize and encourage professional excellence and help to attract and retain the best teachers in our classrooms.

The AEU's proposal has two objectives.

The first is to establish 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 objective is *further* recognition and appropriate reward for demonstrated quality teaching, knowledge, skills and practice. To this end, the AEU supports the development of a negotiated framework incorporating professional teaching standards against which teachers can be voluntarily assessed for the purpose of being classified as an 'accomplished teacher'. Successful assessment would require a formal appraisal which is independent and transparent.

### ***A framework for Professional Pay standards***

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- **INITIAL EDUCATION:** attract the best entrants by improving teacher education courses, beginning salary rates and HECS remission.
- **BAND 1 GRADUATION:** provide improved support, non-teaching time, professional development and mentoring for new teachers prior to full registration.
- **BAND 2 COMPETENCE:** progressively recognise the attainment of skills and knowledge of teachers gained through successful professional practice. Teachers on this band who wish to apply for appraisal to move to Band 3 may do so.
- **BAND 3 ACCOMPLISHED:** a new classification for expert teachers to access professional pay based on a mix of successful practice, professional development and student learning. Access to this third band will recognise teacher quality through a formal appraisal process which is independent and transparent.
- **LEADERSHIP:** a set of standards which reflect the qualities associated with educational leadership

Establishing a new ‘Accomplished’ band is crucial to keep these teachers in the classroom. Currently there are few options for such teachers other than to move into leadership and administrative roles which take them and their teaching abilities out of the classroom where they are most needed.

### ***Assessing experience and excellence in the classroom***

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Towards this end, the AEU commissioned the University of NSW’s research organisation, Educational Assessment Australia (EAA), to undertake a survey of Australian government school teachers to investigate a set of national professional standards.

The study investigated standards and criteria already established in the states and territories and the validity of applying them nationally for the purpose of assessing the level of achievement required for an ‘accomplished teacher’.

The survey covered areas outlined below:

1. Current position and employment status (e.g. permanent full-time; part-time; temporary; casual)
2. Tertiary qualifications
3. Memberships
4. Role(s) at school
5. Knowledge of teaching area(s)
  - a. Curriculum and programming
  - b. Lesson planning and content
  - c. Assessment and reporting
6. Implementation of teaching practice
7. Maintenance of professional development
8. Participation in the school community

The survey also collected additional information such as the size and demographics of the schools at which the teachers have taught.

EAA analysis clearly indicates that the current range of evidence and criteria developed by state and territory governments provide a valid foundation for a national model for recognition of ‘teacher accomplishment’.

EAA suggest the survey used for this study would form a valid basis for the development of a national assessment instrument to assist states and territories to plan for valid and consistent measures for recognising ‘accomplishment’ in teacher standards and performance.

### ***A national investment priority***

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Ultimately, the success of the strategy aimed at further recognising and rewarding quality teaching knowledge, skills and practice through professional standards will be dependent on governments providing the necessary additional targeted funding.

The AEU is not alone in calling for reform. The Business Council of Australia has also called for reform to attract and retain accomplished teachers in our classrooms. The BCA, concerned about global competitiveness, has called for an additional \$4 billion to be allocated to pay teachers who meet required standards a salary of at least \$100,000 per annum.

COAG has also identified the need to further recognise and reward quality teaching. To assist in the development of a National Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth and state/territory governments, the Commonwealth has committed to funding research to inform effective ways to achieve this.

However there is so far no commitment to fund a new classification and career structure to attract and retain accomplished teachers in the classroom.

Such a comprehensive reform must be underpinned by increased funding to public schools to address resource issues like workload, qualified allied staff and infrastructure. Adequate resources for professional teaching and learning conditions are crucial for quality teaching.