

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT NEEDED TO QUALITY TEACHING WORKFORCE

The **Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)** welcomes the continuation of Senator Simon Birmingham as Education Minister and calls on the Federal Government to make a long-term commitment to teaching initiatives vital to Australia's future.

These include:

- Re-energising the teaching profession by addressing the current ageing profile and large gender imbalance of the teaching workforce;
- Helping to build career opportunities for teaching graduates at a time when the increasing casualisation of the workforce is disproportionately impacting early career teachers, many of whom leave teaching within five years of graduation;
- Ensuring teachers have access to rigorous professional development and life-long learning so they are able to maintain the teaching qualities and skills outlined in their Professional Standards;
- Inspiring innovation in tertiary teacher education and schools;
- Improving the public image of, and celebrating achievements in, the teaching profession so it is rightly viewed as a desirable profession critical to future generations and Australia's prosperity;
- Endorsing multiple accountable and rigorous forms of entry to teacher education courses – a suite of selection procedures that represent both the academic abilities and positive, non-academic traits required to make inspiring teachers;
- Rigorous and transparent sub-Bachelor programs that provide access to higher education for disadvantaged students or mature-age students.

'Future funding should target evidence-based, effective ways to enable the greatest possible participation of all under-represented cohorts,' ACDE President, Professor Tania Aspland, says.

The Federal Government's investment in the four-year More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI), which finished this year, has underpinned significant progress in identifying how to attract, support and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Initial Teacher Education students.

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Teacher Education (1.96%)¹ is the highest of all Fields of Education (FOE) and almost double the FOE average.

However, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples currently account for 4.9% of school students yet only 1.2% of teachers – an estimated 3700 of Australia's 450,000 school teachers.

'We now urgently need to ensure substantial and sustainable systemic change through a deep, long-term Federal Government commitment to a multi-faceted approach that changes outcomes for all marginalised and disadvantaged groups,' Professor Aspland says.

Further information:

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¹ Analysis based on Department of Education, *2015 First Half Year Student Summary Tables for Higher Education*. Accessed at <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/2015-first-half-year-student-summary-tables>