

Media Release

May 11, 2016

## EDUCATION DEANS CALL FOR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO INCREASE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TEACHER NUMBERS

The Labor Party policy to fund [400 teacher education scholarships](#) is an excellent contribution to increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in Australian schools.

However, as funding for the four-year More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI) finishes this month, the Australian Council of Deans of Education is calling on all parties to commit to long-term funding to improve the recruitment and retention of Indigenous teachers.

At present, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples comprise only 1.2% of the teaching workforce but 4.9% of school students – a situation that must change if we are to make real inroads into improving Indigenous education.

‘The teachers are vital role models to inspire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, improve their aspirations, and enhance cultural respect, understanding and reconciliation with all Australians’, ACDE Executive Director, David Templeman, says.

‘There is an also urgent need to attract quality teachers to help lift disadvantaged, remote and regional communities’.

The recently released [MATSI Evaluation Report](#) outlines how, as part of its brief, the MATSI project has collected vital data and identified key ‘walking points’ where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples most need support in order to have the best chance of succeeding in initial teacher education.

‘But it will take time to increase the overall number, and current low retention rates of, teacher education students. We need a deep, long-term commitment with a holistic, multi-faceted approach to change outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,’ Mr Templeman says.

On June 17, 2016, the [Australian Council of Deans of Education](#), is holding a Deans’ Forum in Adelaide to explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and teaching workforce priorities. The Forum will also launch a new, practical online resource – the 3Rs of Teaching: Respect, Relationships and Reconciliation.

The 3Rs will to assist all Australian teaching students and current teachers to build their knowledge and confidently meet [Professional Standards 1.4 and 2.4](#) that relate to the teaching of, and the understanding and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

**Further information:** David Templeman, ACDE Executive Director 0431 283 969  
Leslie Falkiner-Rose, ACDE Media and Strategy 0418995240

**The Australian Council of Deans of Education represents represents all Australian universities and several private colleges that offer initial teacher education degrees**