



Australian Education Union Tasmania Branch

Submission

Consultation on Education Legislation Amendments (Education Regulation) Bill

Submitted: 22nd August 2021

The Australian Education Union (AEU) Tasmanian Branch makes the following submission to the *Consultation on Education Legislation Amendments (Education Regulation) Bill*.

AEU Tasmania is the only union dedicated exclusively to supporting practitioners in public education and TAFE. Our membership includes teachers, principals and support staff serving in schools, colleges and those in non-school based positions.

OVERVIEW

The net result of key changes to be enacted by this draft Bill will be the disenfranchisement of teacher voices in critically important areas – most notably on the Teachers Registration Board.

We are concerned at the disbandment of the representative appointment structure of the Teachers Registration Board (TRB) and other changes to be enacted through the legislation which creates barriers to practising teachers serving on the Board.

Further, the establishment of an Education Regulation Advisory Council, constituted of only the three sector authorities, excludes provision for a teacher voice by exclusion of their representative bodies – such as education unions.

TEACHER REPRESENTATION ON THE TEACHER REGISTRATION BOARD (TRB)

The teaching environment is unique and complex, and the associated knowledge and skills cannot be gained anywhere else other than being on the ground, in schools. It is unconscionable that such a key and powerful entity as the TRB, that regulates the day-to-day activities of teachers, would not consider it anything other than imperative to have skilled teaching practitioners serving on its Board.

In addition, there are a range of very practical reasons to ensure teacher representation on the TRB.

Workload stress is an increasing problem and one that must be fully understood when formulating policies and processes to ensure they will be workable in an education setting.

Teachers can put this lens over the TRB procedures such as the pathway to full registration and HALT (Highly Accomplished Lead Teacher) processes.

Effective communication with teachers is also obviously a key requirement and a serving teacher can give advice about the best timing and form of Board communications.

Teachers have an understanding of what Professional Learning looks like in schools, on a practical level, and how much time can be devoted to it. This is important knowledge must be considered when creating registration policies and application processes.

Finally, teachers understand the complexities of working with students, families and the community and are able to apply this perspective when dealing with Professional Conduct issues. It is also most important for confidence in the system that teachers who are being investigated see that their peers are involved in the process.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Given the narrow scope of this phase of the consultation we strongly urge, as a minimum, that the following change be made to the legislation to safeguard representation on the TRB from serving teachers.

Recommendation that the following addition be made to *Section 229A inserted – Membership of Registration Board, (pg. 36)*

Under (3) (a) (ii) add a third requirement:

- *“(iii) current and ongoing teaching skills and experience”*

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