

1 October 2020

Statement regarding the review of the national architecture for schooling

Education Council has agreed to improve the performance of the national architecture for schooling in Australia to better support high quality teaching and learning across Australian schools.

The national architecture comprises the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Education Services Australia (ESA), and the new national evidence institute, which will be established in 2020, as well as Education Council subcommittees. Ministers acknowledge the central role of the national architecture agencies in delivering significant reforms and administering key national functions for schooling in Australia.

Ministers expressed appreciation to the large number of stakeholders who have shared their views on the findings and recommendations of the 2019 Review of the National Architecture for Schooling in Australia. Based on the consultations, Ministers have identified a need to make a more explicit link between the national architecture and the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and the National School Reform Agreement. These documents set out a vision for school education in Australia and provide a strong rationale for national action in key areas.

Ministers have agreed that there is a need to better articulate the purpose of the national architecture. There is strong support for a purpose statement that places student outcomes at the centre of the national architecture. The agreed statement below takes account of views expressed by stakeholders during consultations on the architecture review:

The purpose of the national education architecture is to enable and support early childhood, primary and secondary school teachers, educators and leaders to deliver world class education that promotes excellence and equity for every Australian child. Through collaboration, it will facilitate, coordinate and support implementation of a shared national vision and reforms where the most national benefit can be gained under the direction and oversight of Education Council.

Ministers have also agreed there is a need for better communication and engagement with stakeholders, especially early childhood, primary and secondary school teachers, educators and leaders, in relation to the national reform agenda, in line with the commitment to developing stronger partnerships in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

Ministers have undertaken to progress reforms through a staged approach, with an immediate focus on resolving process and governance issues to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the national architecture. Ministers recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic poses challenges in undertaking more far-reaching reforms for the time being, and has decided not to make any structural changes at this time.

Ministers recognise that the review of the former Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Councils and Ministerial Forums, led by Mr Peter Conran AM, is scheduled to make recommendations to National Cabinet in 2020 that may shape the future of Education Council and the national architecture for schooling. Any implications of the review will be considered by the Education Council at its meeting in December.

Note from Education Council Secretariat regarding National Cabinet and Ministerial Councils

Education Council acknowledges the ongoing National Cabinet review of the current Ministerial Council structure and continues to meet and exercise its functions as a Ministerial Council in accordance with its agreed protocols.

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