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ACSA on the proposed Teaching and Learning Commission

The Australian Curriculum Studies Association aims to provide a national forum for sharing, debating and creating curriculum scholarship, policy and practice. As such, the recent announcement of the proposed Teaching and Learning Commission ([Education Ministers Meeting, October 20, 2025](#)) was of great interest to the ACSA Executive and members.

At ACSA, our focus has always been on the teachers who undertake the complex and demanding work of interpreting and enacting curriculum for their own contexts and the unique young people in their care. As Glenn Savage (Editorial Board Member of ACSA's journal *Curriculum Perspectives*) has recently argued, reduced bureaucracy, duplication and overlap in systems may result in some cost savings and efficiencies, however, we share Glenn's concern that "reforms which sideline the professional wisdom of teachers rarely produce lasting improvement" ([Savage, 2025](#)).

The devaluing of teachers as professional, expert curriculum workers and the lack of a voice representative of the whole education community in the reform process cuts to the heart of what ACSA sees as the greatest risk to meaningful curriculum and systemic reform: if teaching becomes an exercise in compliance rather than a student-centred, context-responsive profession, the teacher shortage crisis will only worsen, as will our educational outcomes.

ACSA's concerns about the proposed Teaching and Learning Commission are based on recent changes which have been driven by AERO with very limited or no consultation. The use of valid and reliable evidence is also critical in the design of education policy. However, as our [recent Point and Counterpoint discussion](#) in *Curriculum Perspectives* highlighted, there are concerns amongst the education research community about the validity and reliability of the evidence being used to justify AERO's mandates.

One of the greatest strengths of the Australian Curriculum is the way in which it allows teachers to select pedagogical strategies that suit their context and their student cohorts. ACSA has concerns that any merger with ACARA will see the embedding of pedagogical mandates within the curriculum, thus compromising the professional judgment of teachers in their school communities. The proposed merger also calls into question the ability of states and territories to retain constitutional independence in their governance of education, as a singular national body managing standards compliance, curriculum, pedagogy and resourcing offer little scope for variation and contextualisation to each jurisdiction's needs and priorities.

While a merger of Australia's four largest education governance bodies/companies is not explicitly recommended in the Productivity Commission's report [Building a skilled and adaptable workforce Interim report](#), "collaboration" between states and territories is emphasised (Productivity Commission, 2025, p.25). However, the majority of citations to support this argument are self-citations of AERO and ESA publications. The [Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025-2034](#) makes no reference to the merger and the KPMG review of AERO is not yet available, so the evidence base for the need for this reform remains unclear.

Of further concern to ACSA is Minister Clare's announcement of further curriculum reform. While the Minister asserts that "teachers have flagged challenges with the implementation of the current early mathematics curriculum" (Clare, 2025) it is important to note that there has been no formal national data collection by ACARA on the Australian Curriculum since 2019—well before the development or publication of the current Version 9. Again, the evidence being used to support the need for reform is unclear. A new process for monitoring curriculum implementation and gathering teacher feedback is currently being developed and is not expected to be used until 2026. In the absence of such data, it is difficult to see how these "challenges" have been systematically identified or verified. ACSA is concerned this will create further uncertainty and additional workload, as teachers anticipate future rounds of change and the need to revise existing planning materials. This, risks reinforcing the perception that curriculum reform is another layer of administrative burden, rather than a meaningful opportunity for teachers to engage in the design of high-quality learning experiences for their students. This curriculum review is taking place while the governing authority is being merged with other organisations, which introduces further uncertainty for educators.

The ministerial communique which discusses the Teaching and Learning Commission states "Ministers instructed the Working Group to conduct consultation with teachers and school leaders, school staff, First Nations representatives, public servants and their respective unions" Commission (Education Ministers Meeting, October 20, 2025). Education researchers are very notably absent from this list, as are representative bodies like subject area teacher associations and other education specialisation interest groups, such as ACSA.

The timeline for consultation is also very rapid, with the Working Group to report in February. Seeking feedback from schools, teachers, and principals over the long summer school holiday break further reduces the likelihood of meaningful or extensive engagement and feedback from these key stakeholders.

The proposed merger of four of Australia's key education bodies with no meaningful or sustained consultation with teachers, professional representative bodies or education researchers is of deep concern to ACSA, and its fellow members of AAAE, and we ask that education ministers and the Working Group engage in more fulsome and meaningful consultation and conversations over a more realistic period of time to ensure the TLC best serves all of Australia's education ecosystems.

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