



APTA

AUSTRALIAN PROFESSIONAL
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
www.apta.edu.au

"APTA is a federation of state and territory joint councils of professional teacher associations. Its vision is to provide national leadership that supports and advances the teaching profession".

News in Brief – October 2020



President's Report



APTA President, Cheryl Brennan

2020 has been a turbulent year for teacher associations across the country as the impact of COVID-19 has continued to be felt. Teacher associations have had to be innovative in coming up with new ways to network as many face-to-face events have not been able to run. APTA has been busy, supporting state joint councils in their operations and advocating for the important role of professional teacher associations in educational decision making at the national level. Please talk to your state or territory APTA Board member if you have ideas on other activities that APTA can become involved in.

Strategic Plan



APTA has been focusing on its capacity – “sustainable finances achieved through clearly defined goals”. At the 2019 AGM, the Board resolved to keep fees to members at a low base and to focus on income-generating activities. However, APTA’s plans for a 2020 national conference were put on hold due to COVID-19 and, instead, the Board has since decided to achieve its goals by reducing its operating expenses. Significant progress has been made. Decisions about fees and income-generating activities for 2021 will be made at the November APTA AGM.

National Architecture Review

The Education Council continues to consider Australia’s national architecture for schooling. The national architecture consists of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), National Curriculum Services (NCS), and the recently established National Evidence Institute (NEI). APTA has been involved in stakeholder feedback with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) and is stressing the need for teacher voice in educational decision making. This can ideally be achieved through including APTA on expert advisory committees. More details on the results of the review will be provided later in the year.

Schools Stakeholder Forum

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment held an online Schools Stakeholder Forum on 18 September. Key addresses were presented by the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education, The Hon Andrew Gee MP, Minister for Regional Education, Alex Gordon, Deputy Secretary DESE and Dr Jenny Donovan, Director, National Evidence Institute. It was helpful to gain an understanding of the Department’s direction and to hear that there will be more opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in the future. The next Schools Stakeholder Forum will be held on 6 November.

National Curriculum Review

ACARA is currently reviewing the National Curriculum. APTA initiated and hosted an online virtual forum with ACARA’s CEO, David de Carvalho, and its Director of Curriculum, Janet Davy, on 23 July. This forum was attended by over 80 leaders of various teacher associations across the country. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about the process involved in the review and the opportunities for stakeholder feedback, which are different across the various states and territories. ACARA will provide an update to APTA on progress of the curriculum review on 14 November.

National Evidence Institute

The *National Evidence Institute* (NEI) was established on 1 July 2020 as a new component of the national architecture for education with the appointment of its inaugural director, Dr Jenny Donovan. The Institute will focus on generating new evidence on effective teaching and learning practices, curating and translating evidence into user-friendly and accessible resources for teachers and school leaders, and ensuring this evidence can be accessed and used by educators across Australia. Dr Donovan spoke with the APTA Board on 11 August about her role and canvassed APTA’s views on suggested priorities for the NEI. An initial research agenda and strategic plan for the NEI are being developed. Initial projects and first products of the NEI will be in 2021.

Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments

As reported in the *May News in Brief*, APTA made its submission to the Inquiry in February 2020. However, in the light of COVID-19, APTA was invited to make a second submission to the Inquiry. To inform its submission, on 4 June APTA hosted a national virtual forum on the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and teacher associations. This was attended by 25 teacher association leaders from across the country, who were able to discuss challenges, opportunities and successful strategies. The discussion informed APTA’s second submission, which can be read [HERE](#). More details on the results of the Inquiry will be provided later in the year.

Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into work, further education and training

As reported in the May *APTA News in Brief*, APTA made a submission to this review that emphasised that professional teacher associations actively work with the tertiary sector, industry and community groups, as well as having many members who work outside of schools. Such a broad membership strengthens the opportunities for collaboration and communication between schools and post-school institutions. Education Council has published its Report of the Review in June 2020, and it can be accessed [HERE](#).

Projects with AITSL

APTA is continuing to work with AITSL on two projects: A review of “red tape” faced by teachers, and an investigation into abuse of teachers and school leaders. Both of these projects were election commitments and were initiated by the federal Education Minister Dan Tehan. APTA will provide a report on the progress of these projects as more information becomes available.



Other projects

APTA has recently been involved in consultations on *Teach for Australia’s Future Leaders Program*, cross-sector collaborative workshops on a *National Disability Strategy*, and a workshop to develop nationally consistent guidance to help teachers and principals recognise and respond to child sexual abuse.

APTA website

The APTA website contains useful information to help teacher associations and other stakeholders stay update on its activities: www.apta.edu.au

Please be in contact with the APTA Board if you have any suggestions or comments. The APTA Board can be emailed at the following address: contactus@apta.edu.au