



**Response to Consultation Paper -
Automatic Mutual Recognition of Occupational Registrations: Exposure Draft Legislation**

15 February 2021

The Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation Paper – Automatic Mutual Recognition of Occupational Registrations: Exposure Draft Legislation. As the peak body representing state and territory joint councils of teacher associations, and with a network of up to 200,000 teachers from across the various sectors, the Australian Professional Teachers Association is in a key position to provide comment on this draft legislation.

Our strength as an organisation lies in our ability to directly represent the interests of practicing classroom teachers across Australia. We are a voice for teachers and an effective conduit between decision-making bodies and the classroom.

I am able to provide further detail to the comments in this response if this will be of assistance.

Cheryl Brennan
President
Australian Professional Teachers Association

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APTA supports the proposed legislation to amend the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* as it will cut red tape for teachers, do away with additional fees and create a more mobile workforce. APTA notes the findings of PwC that introducing automatic mutual recognition (AMR) of occupational licences could lead to an additional \$2.4 billion in economic activity over ten years as a result of savings to workers and businesses, including 44,000 people who will work interstate that would not otherwise have done so. These benefits will be crucial in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery phase.

APTA is aware that many teachers in one jurisdiction currently do not pursue employment in another jurisdiction because of the red tape and cost involved to simply become registered. With the proposed changes, APTA believes that there are three main groups of teachers who are likely to benefit. The first group are teachers who have family members interstate who need short- or medium-term assistance for health and wellbeing reasons. This could be, for example, middle-aged people with elderly parents, or mature teachers whose children are starting a family. With the proposed changes, many more teachers would consider taking short- or medium- term appointments across state or territory borders to be near family members. The second group of teachers who would benefit from the proposed change are those who would be keen to take advantage of an opportunity to work in another jurisdiction to broaden their experience and improve their professional expertise. The third groups of teachers who would benefit from the proposed change are those who live in border communities, especially casual or short-term contract teachers, who would appreciate the increased flexibility to move across jurisdictions for their employment. In all of these cases, increased flexibility will lead to less stress on individuals, increased conversations about teacher practice across borders and a greater pool of staff for schools to hire from. APTA believes this will result in a stronger, more resilient and more productive economy over the longer term.

APTA recognises and supports the fact that teachers may be required to complete a simple notification process to ensure that regulators are aware of who is teaching in their jurisdiction. APTA also acknowledges that a registered person in one state will be required to meet requirements such as working with children checks in another state. In relation to teaching, it is essential that rigorous processes be in place to ensure that teachers are fit and proper individuals so that children are safe. APTA notes that a registered person will need to comply with local laws in the second state and is subject to any applicable disciplinary actions. APTA strongly recommends that the state registration authorities prioritise the development of effective and efficient administrative processes in order to make available to each other relevant information about registered persons, especially when disciplinary action is taken against an individual in one jurisdiction as this should affect their entitlement to Automatically Deemed Registration (ADR) in other jurisdictions. APTA is concerned that without effective and efficient administrative processes, there could be delays in recognising and acting on persons of concern.