

NEWS IN BRIEF – OCTOBER 2025



President's Report



APTA President, Karen Yager

Throughout 2025 ATPA has been continuing to actively support the work of Joint Councils across Australia. Through a range of strategic initiatives and collaborative activities, APTA has remained committed to advancing the specialist expertise of the teaching profession and strengthening the role of professional teacher associations nationwide.

I would like to thank my fellow APTA Board members for their dedication throughout the year:

Vice President: Cheryl Brennan (PTC NSW)

Secretary and Treasurer: Steve Hawkins (PTANT)

Miriam Parsons (Educators SA)

Jill Abell (NEAT)

Mary Gallagher (COACTEA)

Laura Newman (CPTAV)

Craig Johnston (JCQTA)

Chris Callus (PTCWA)

APTA 2025 Annual General Meeting

The APTA AGM will be held on Saturday 15 November at 2pm via Zoom. At the AGM, each member association will need to make an appointment to the APTA Board.



APTA AGM
15 November 2025

Some highlights of 2025 are as follows:

Strategic priorities

The work of the APTA Board throughout the year has been guided by three strategic pillars:

1. **Capability** – Strengthening APTA’s internal systems and governance to ensure sustainable and effective operations aligned with our strategic goals.
2. **Advocacy** – Representing and promoting the interests of member associations and the broader teaching profession within the national education landscape.
3. **Support** – Providing relevant, timely, and collegial support to member associations and educators through collaboration, communication, and shared resources.

These pillars have underpinned APTA’s efforts to influence policy, foster professional learning, and enhance the visibility and impact of subject-specific teacher associations across Australia.



Strategic Plan: 2024-2026

Vision
 To provide national leadership that supports and advances the teaching profession

About Us


The Australian Professional Teacher’s Association (APTA) is a federation of state and territory joint councils of professional teacher associations.

These associations represent a network of up to 200,000 teachers across all jurisdictions, sectors and stages of schooling. We collectively reflect the diversity of expertise that is the Australian teacher workforce.

We operate as a company limited by guarantee driven by the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance. We are governed by a Board who are appointed from their state or territory joint councils.

Our Strategic Goals are underpinned by our core values of Expertise, Integrity and Inclusivity, and allow us to achieve our goals aligned to our overall vision of supporting and advancing the teaching profession.


www.apta.edu.au
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Strategic Pillar 1: Capability

Goal 1: APTA develops and maintains highly effective and sustainable practices to meet our strategic objectives by:

- 1.1 Fostering best practice in board governance to ensure sustainability and continuous improvement
- 1.2 Communicating and networking collaboratively with Joint Councils to harness expertise in achieving our objectives
- 1.3 Collaborating strategically with key partners and stakeholders to sustain our status within the education sector



Strategic Pillar 2: Advocacy

Goal 2: APTA actively advocates for our members, teacher associations and the teaching profession in the national educational landscape by:

- 2.1 Developing and maintaining our status as an effective advocacy body with a consistently understood and respected identity
- 2.2 Promoting the role of teacher associations and the importance of specialist expertise in educational decision making
- 2.3 Influencing the federal government and its agencies in policy development and initiatives that impact on education



Strategic Pillar 3: Support

Goal 3: APTA coordinates effective and relevant collegial support to our members and the teaching profession by:

- 3.1 Developing quality professional learning of benefit to joint councils and teacher associations
- 3.2 Promoting awareness of current education trends, policies, programs and research to support joint councils and teacher associations
- 3.3 Anticipating future directions that may impact on associations and support joint councils and teacher associations to better respond to change

Foundational values

Expertise: APTA values the expertise of teachers and communities of excellence that exist in professional teaching associations. We value the expert knowledge and skills of associations in all aspects of teaching and learning, particularly in specific subject areas and disciplines.

Integrity: APTA values a commitment to transparency, accountability and good governance, being an effective and sustainable partner in the Australian education environment. We value being known as responsive, reliable and trustworthy to our members and stakeholders.

Inclusivity: Representing all states and territories, sectors and stages of schooling, APTA values the inclusive and diverse communities of educators that comprehensively represent the teacher voice. APTA along with the associations, advocates for the teaching profession and the improvement of teaching and learning across Australia.

Changes to the APTA Constitution

Throughout 2025, APTA has undertaken a comprehensive review of its Constitution to ensure that its governance structures and operational processes remain contemporary and responsive to the evolving needs of member associations. A revised version of the Constitution is currently being finalised and will be presented at the APTA AGM.

Federal election – May 2025

The federal election held in May 2025 resulted in the re-election of the Labor government, with the Hon. Jason Clare MP continuing in his role as Minister for Education. APTA has maintained ongoing engagement with Minister Clare and his office throughout the year, advocating for the interests of joint councils, professional teacher associations and the broader teaching profession.

Engagement with the federal Department of Education

APTA’s engagement with the Department of Education has continued to strengthen in 2025. Katie Dziubinski, Assistant Director of the Teacher Profession Team, has assumed the role of APTA’s primary contact within the Department, working alongside Clare O’Halloran, Director of the team. APTA Board members and I have met with Ms Dziubinski to stay informed about current departmental initiatives and to provide feedback on behalf of member associations.

Key topics discussed have included:

- An update on the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*;
- National initiatives related to phonics instruction and classroom management, particularly where linked to funding;
- The work of the *Anti-Bullying Rapid Review Taskforce*;
- Implementation of recommendations from the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Review, including curriculum changes in tertiary education and updated professional experience guidelines;
- Ongoing responses to the *Disability Royal Commission*; and
- A renewed focus on teacher wellbeing.

These meetings have been constructive, and the Department has expressed a strong interest in continuing its collaboration with APTA on future policy and program development.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Throughout 2025, I have attended briefings hosted by ACARA. These sessions have focused on the ongoing *Review and Monitoring of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0* and the analysis of recent *NAPLAN* results. APTA continues to monitor developments in curriculum implementation and assessment to ensure alignment with the needs of subject associations and classroom practitioners.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

In 2025, AITSL released the Australian Professional Experience Guidelines to support the professional experience component of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs. These guidelines highlight:

- The importance of professional experience in teacher preparation;
- Characteristics of high-quality professional experience;
- Strategies for building effective partnerships between ITE providers and learning environments; and
- The integration of culturally responsive practices.

Additionally, AITSL commenced a pilot program to trial the Professional Standards for Middle Leaders, developed to support leadership development within schools.

APTA has also continued its support for the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) Summit, recognising the achievements of professional teacher association members who have attained this level of national certification. In 2025, APTA Board member Mary Gallagher (COACTEA) represented APTA at the HALT Summit held in Canberra.

Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)

In 2024, APTA provided feedback to AERO, recommending greater support for classroom teachers to undertake practitioner-led research projects directly connected to their teaching practice. APTA also highlighted the need for differentiated support and communication strategies tailored to early career and experienced teachers.

Throughout 2025, APTA has continued to monitor AERO’s strategic direction in response to these recommendations. A review of AERO, conducted by KPMG via a public survey distributed through social media in mid-2025, has not yet been formally reported on AERO’s or the Department of Education’s websites. APTA notes that some public commentary on social media has raised concerns about the perceived superficiality of AERO’s research outputs, including a reliance on literature reviews and the production of overly prescriptive materials for teachers.

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP) and Roundtable

The *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* remains the Federal Government’s central strategy for addressing the ongoing challenges of teacher workforce shortages across Australia. APTA continues to advocate for the vital role of professional teacher associations in supporting the profession—particularly in assisting out-of-field teachers, delivering high-quality professional learning, mentoring early career educators, and providing access to subject-specific resources.

On Friday, **19 September 2025**, I represented APTA at the *National Teacher Workforce Roundtable* in Canberra. The event brought together key education stakeholders, including Minister for Education Jason Clare, to discuss national priorities and the implementation of the NTWAP. Key areas of focus included strengthening initial teacher education, addressing teacher shortages, and improving teacher wellbeing and workload.

As a direct outcome of the roundtable, the Federal Government has tasked AITSL with scoping a review of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, with a proposal to be presented to Education Ministers in **February 2026**.

Next steps in school education reform, including a new Australian Teaching and Learning Commission

On **17 October 2025**, Education Ministers from all states and territories, along with the Australian Government, endorsed the next phase of school education reform under the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*. This agreement outlines a shared commitment to improving educational outcomes and equity across the nation.

Key reform initiatives include:

- The proposed establishment of a new **Australian Teaching and Learning Commission**, which would consolidate the functions of AITSL, ACARA, AERO, and Education Services Australia (ESA);
- Enhancements to the **mathematics curriculum** in the early years of schooling; and
- A comprehensive **update to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**.

Further details on these reforms are expected in the coming months. Ministers have committed to a broad consultation process involving teachers, school leaders, education staff, First Nations communities, and unions to ensure the reforms are informed by those working directly in education.

Consultations and reviews

a. Inquiry into Civics Education, Engagement and Participation in Australia

The *Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters* conducted an inquiry into civics education, engagement, and participation in Australia. APTA made a formal submission to the inquiry, advocating for the critical role of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) professional teacher associations in strengthening civics and citizenship education. APTA’s contribution was acknowledged and quoted extensively in the final report, released in January 2025. The submission highlighted the importance of professional learning, curriculum reform, student engagement, and the value of school and community-based activities in fostering civic understanding and participation.

b. Inquiry into building Asia capability through the education system and beyond

APTA is currently preparing a submission to the *Parliamentary Inquiry into Building Asia Capability*, which focuses on enhancing Australia’s engagement with Asia through education. The submission will address the importance of teaching Asian languages, promoting cultural literacy, and supporting regional engagement both within and beyond formal education settings. Submissions are due by **7 November 2025**. APTA has invited joint councils and member associations to contribute to this process by submitting their own responses or providing input for inclusion in APTA’s collective submission. Further information is available on the inquiry’s official website.

c. Productivity Commission Interim Report: Building a Strong and adaptable workforce

The *Productivity Commission’s Interim Report*, released on **12 August 2025**, forms part of a broader inquiry into Australia’s productivity performance. The final report is expected to be delivered to the Australian Government in December 2025. The interim report outlines several recommendations relevant to school education, particularly the need to strengthen generalist capabilities such as problem-solving, communication, adaptability, and critical thinking—skills deemed essential for success in a rapidly evolving workforce.

A key recommendation includes the development and national dissemination of high-quality, curriculum-aligned lesson planning resources that articulate agreed learning outcomes for generalist skills. The report proposes the creation of a single national platform to ensure equitable access to these resources for all teachers.



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APTA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Collaboration

In 2025, APTA reinstated its tradition of recognising excellence within the professional teaching association community through the establishment of a new award. The **APTA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Collaboration** celebrates members of professional teaching associations who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to supporting their peers and fostering meaningful partnerships.

This award acknowledges individuals who have gone above and beyond in promoting effective collaboration - both across professional associations and between associations and key stakeholders in education. In 2025, member associations were invited to nominate one individual from their joint council for recognition. The nomination and selection process is coordinated by each joint council on APTA's behalf, allowing flexibility to align with local recognition practices. Councils may choose to present the award annually or biennially, depending on their established processes.

Award Eligibility Criteria

Nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Be an active member of a professional teaching association operating in an Australian state or territory, or of a national association;
- Demonstrate success in initiating or leading collaborative partnerships in the design, planning, delivery, or evaluation of high-quality professional learning events, activities, or initiatives that support shared educational goals;
- Have made a significant and positive impact on the professional practice of teachers through these collaborative efforts.

For the purposes of this award, *collaboration* is defined as engagement with two or more major partners or stakeholders. This may include partnerships between state or territory associations, interstate or national associations, or collaborations with community organisations, universities, education departments, curriculum authorities, or similar entities.

Communication

The APTA website (www.apta.edu.au) continues to serve as a hub for information, providing updates on APTA's activities, policy submissions, professional learning opportunities, and resources relevant to member associations and stakeholders across the education sector.

In 2024, APTA also launched a **LinkedIn account** to enhance its digital presence and communication with members. This platform has proven valuable in keeping member associations informed about current developments in education policy, research, professional learning initiatives, and the work of Joint Councils. APTA encourages all members to follow and engage with its LinkedIn page to stay connected with national conversations and sector updates.

If your state or territory association or your Joint Council has any suggestions for the APTA Board, please reach out to your state/territory representative.

Karen Yager
President
Australian Professional Teachers Association