

## 'Productivity' measures a serious risk to teacher training

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The Australian Education Union has sounded a strong warning on potential Productivity Commission recommendations that could risk further undermining quality teaching by reducing the training required before teachers enter the classroom.

Anticipating the release tomorrow of the Commission's *Shifting the Dial* report commissioned by Federal Treasurer Scott Morrison, a [Fairfax](#) report has suggested the Commission could recommend the introduction of shortened, specialised training for teachers.

'We listen very closely to the professional experience of thousands of public school teachers across Australia, and there are already deep and wide-ranging concerns about the quality of initial teacher education,' said Correna Haythorpe, Federal President of the Australian Education Union, today.

'The answer lies in strengthening and increasing the length of training, and demanding the highest standards for entry to teaching - not reducing the quality, and lowering barriers to entry, which can only further compromise students' learning.

'We have to seriously question any claimed productivity gain that weakens training and holds back necessary investment at the cost of students' learning and their future. If the Government thinks this is the solution, it will be fiercely resisted by the teaching profession,' Haythorpe said.

She said there was clear scope to strengthen initial teacher education in areas such as teaching students with disabilities, managing students with difficult behaviour, engaging parents and guardians, and building the capacity for consistent and comparable assessment.

'Teaching is a complex profession of critical importance, and attempting to fast-track teacher training in the name of "efficiency" is a dangerous false economy. Public school teachers are teaching more students with disabilities, have a greater need to interpret and analyse assessment, and to create individual learning strategies. We need to properly equip them for that.

'It is concerning that this report foreshadows measures that echo the failed Teach for Australia program, which has resulted in unqualified people teaching students, at great cost, and with less than half still teaching just three years after completing the program, on the latest evaluation.

'Parents have a right to know that the professionals charged with the learning of their children are fully qualified and have the best possible preparation to take on that trusted role.



'The profile of Australia's public teaching profession is currently of an experienced workforce working with too little support in an underfunded public system.

'We need to enhance the public system through a commitment to quality, better initial teacher education, ongoing professional development, and fairer funding.

'We need a strong commitment to quality teaching and learning from the Federal Government that is shared with the profession,' Haythorpe concluded.