



STRENGTHENING A RESEARCH-RICH TEACHING PROFESSION FOR AUSTRALIA

A jointly funded investigation by three professional associations
committed to education and educational research in Australia

FINAL REPORT
July 2018



AUTHORS OF THIS REPORT

Simone White
Joce Nuttall
Barry Down
Sue Shore
Annette Woods
Martin Mills
Katherine Bussey

RECOMMENDED CITATION

White, S., Nuttall, J., Down, B., Shore, S., Woods, A., Mills, M., & Bussey, K. (2018) Strengthening a research-rich teaching profession for Australia. Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA), Canberra; Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), Melbourne; Australian Council of Deans of Education, (ACDE) Canberra.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge the financial, intellectual and organisational support of the Australian Teacher Education Association, the Australian Association for Research in Education and the Australian Council of Deans of Education.

We would like to acknowledge Professor Jo Lampert for her insightful feedback in the later stages of the project, that helped further shape our thinking for this report.

We would like to thank Ms Nhi Pham for the design and desktop publishing work conducted.

We would like to thank Professor Ian Menter for his advice in establishing the project and his insightful support as critical friend.

We also acknowledge and thank all those who participated in this project, including the executive members of the three funding bodies, the reference group members and all those who participated in the workshops and survey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FUNDING

This project was jointly funded by three national professional associations: the Australian Teacher Education Association, the Australian Association for Research in Education and the Australian Council of Deans of Education.

With the exception of logos and any other material whereby copyright is owned by a third party, all material presented in this document is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>

REPORT CONTENTS

The report has six sections.

1. Executive summary
2. The study design
3. An overview of three key messages
4. A summary of the study's recommendations and suggestions for education systems
5. Conclusion
6. Governance of the study and appendix



PART 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The three funding organisations responsible for this report have been communicating with each other for many years about working together to enhance the relationship between teaching, teacher education and research. With the release of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the Royal Society of the Arts (RSA) (2014) report *Research and the Teaching Profession: Building the capacity for a self-improving education system* and then the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) (2015) report, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, the impetus for an alliance project was enhanced. Further, a policy environment whereby the significance of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in the processes and oversight of teaching and teacher education in Australia was increasing, required that those involved in the delivery of, and research on, teaching and teacher education work together to ensure that education reforms are well supported by research evidence.

The current policy context surrounding teaching in Australia is clearly one that calls for greater alignment across all components and stages of the teaching profession, including pre-service teacher education and the continuing professional learning of in-service teachers. There is also a need for greater knowledge mobilisation and transfer to strengthen the links between research, policy and practice in education. This was identified, for instance, in recommendations from the TEMAG report calling for an 'integrated system' where 'higher education providers, school systems and schools work together to achieve strong graduate and student outcomes' (2015, p. vii). The report noted that innovations and practices that have a demonstrable impact on student learning need to be identified and shared nationally.

The project reported here aimed to gather information from across the education field to support greater alignment for an integrated system, and generate recommendations to sustain existing educational research and consolidate development leading to research-rich and self-improving education systems in Australia.

The perspectives of teachers, educators, system leaders, education researchers and teacher educators are central to this aim as they are the source of current practices and future ideas, issues, challenges and opportunities that will enrich system-level improvement in Australian education through research.

The BERA-RSA (2014) report provided foundational definitions and purposes for the project, including the parameters of research as: 'any deliberate investigation that is carried out with a view to learning more about a particular educational issue' (p. 40).

Funding was provided by the Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA), the Australian Association for Education in Research (AARE) and the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE), with each of these organisations recognising their shared concern for the relationships between systems, teachers, research and student outcomes.

Four questions were central to this Australian study.

- How do education professionals encounter research in their professional life?
- What are the barriers to participation and engagement with research for education professionals?
- What unrealised opportunities are there for participation and engagement with research for education professionals?
- What are the recommendations of education professionals for overcoming these barriers and realising these opportunities?

The project collected qualitative and quantitative data through workshop discussions and a national survey across three participant groups.

Teachers and educators: This group included early childhood educators and classroom teachers (both primary and secondary). Pre-service teachers were also included in this group.

Teacher educators and education researchers: This group included those employed in Faculties/ Schools of Education or Faculties offering initial teacher education. Education Deans and Heads of School were included in this group.

System leaders: This group included those employed in education systems, such as state departments of education and school principals.

The resulting data provide preliminary insights into efforts to use research and suggest possibilities for strengthening education systems through enhanced support for research-rich education contexts. Whilst the project's findings are drawn from a modest data set and therefore do not claim to be representative of Australia's education sector as a whole, the commentary provided in this report reflects a broad range of perspectives offered by project participants.

As such, the report provides a stimulus for discussion and indicates potential avenues for future research.

Three key messages for an integrated system are that:

1. research is highly valued by education systems personnel, educators, teachers and teacher educators
2. research literacies promote deeper engagement with, and understanding of, student learning
3. building research capacity is everybody's business.

The research found common ground with the BERA-RSA (2014) report in that many participants who contributed to the study were concerned about the emergence of an environment in which professionals are excluded from conversations about their own students' learning because of an overly narrow and instrumentalist view about what counts as research, and the conflation of terms such as 'research' and 'data' within the practices of education systems and schools.

The study supported the need for a more comprehensive and integrated systems approach, one that supports open, collaborative, and multiple forms of research-based enquiry.

Three overarching recommendations for systems improvement identified the following needs.

1. Build research literacies at all levels of the education profession.

Teachers, educators and leaders need more opportunities to critically engage with research *in* context. This suggests that a systematic approach to providing spaces for teachers and educators to *critically engage as consumers or readers* of research across diverse research outputs and approaches, as well as engagement in research as producers of research within and *of* their own practice, and in partnership with researchers in larger projects is vital.

2. Mobilise and diversify a research-informed and research-engaged workforce.

Creating an integrated system means building and mobilising a workforce that can move in and across the system. Competing roles and pressures can erode the capacity of the education workforce. Instead, it is timely to explore new and hybrid approaches to workplace roles that might better support research-rich education systems. Mentoring others in research-informed practices is also vital to the profession.

3. Incentivise research-led partnerships within and across education systems.

Constant policy changes make it difficult to embed and sustain research-informed practices. Partnerships enable new kinds of professional learning to occur between teachers and educators and academics or university researchers, and also help in the creation of new, more powerful kinds of knowledge to inform teaching.

Analysis of findings suggests that Australia has highly educated and aspirational education professionals, who both value research and are eager to access and participate in research-led and research-informed practice at all levels.

The workshop and survey participants saw research as central to their professional work. Rather than seeing classrooms and teachers and educators as only the ‘end users’ of research, a more productive framing is recommended whereby professionals are seen as partners-in-research. This finding has implications for careers and career development.

The report suggests that education professionals are eager to move away from a one-size-fits-all, ‘what works’ model and toward profession-led and enquiry-based frameworks. One aim for a collective approach would be to break down the silo-like arrangements between and within systems and sectors. Participants emphasised that Australia

needs a system- and sector-level approach that supports a developmental model of research, embedded in all aspects of initial teacher education and continuing long into teaching and leadership careers.

Such an approach requires teachers and educators to be research literate and engage with research literacies, since there are multiple understandings of, perspectives on, and uses of educational research. The concept of ‘research literacies’ is predicated on a notion of continuing professional learning, **where teachers and educators, teacher educators and education researchers, and system leaders** know how to identify problems related to their practice, and to students’ learning and education more generally, and who can harness skills and knowledge to implement change. Within such a scenario, it is more likely that the quality of teacher education, teaching and student learning can be enhanced.

Two significant enablers were suggested as necessary to achieve research-rich systems. *First*, education systems must ensure teachers and educators are discerning consumers of research; *second*, all teachers and educators need to be enabled, through support from system leaders and education academics, including teacher educators, to undertake their own processes of systematic enquiry and to evaluate and respond to the findings of their research in context. Some examples of successful initiatives have been included in this report to demonstrate potential models of the collaborative and reciprocal learning relationships required at all levels of the profession to meet the criteria of research-rich and self-improving systems.

The report concludes with suggestions for further investigation and potential actions by teachers and educators, teacher educators and education researchers, and system leaders to continue the wider dialogue commenced by this project. The overall aim is to promote a strategic and systemic way forward for Australia’s education systems to collectively maximise the important role research plays in improving the everyday lives of all students.

PART 2

STUDY DESIGN

Background and overview

The three organisations responsible for funding this project – the Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA), the Australian Association for Education in Research (AARE) and the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) – have a shared interest in the best ways to work together to enhance the relationship between education, teaching and research. This project marks the first of its kind in terms of a joint ‘alliance’ between these three national associations. This set the tone for a collaborative and systematic way forward in trying to understand how to best strengthen a research-rich, self-improving education system in Australia, involving three organisations with distinctive but complementary roles in supporting the profession.

The ‘alliance’ project had its genesis in the United Kingdom report *Research and the Teaching Profession: Building the capacity for a self-improving education system* commissioned by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and Royal Society for the Arts (RSA). This report understood research as any deliberate investigation that is carried out with a view to learning more about a particular educational issue, including:

“all elements of research engagement and activity at all levels related to teaching: i.e. including (but not limited to) teachers as consumers of research, teachers’, institutions’ and systems’ capacity to systematically enquire into their own policies and practices, teacher educators as researchers, and research-informed teacher education programs (BERA-RSA, 2014, p. 40).”

Drawing on these parameters, the project considered research as being essential in

enabling all students to thrive in a research-rich education system. In order to achieve this long-term goal, the project’s Steering Group (the authors of this report) gathered the views of a range of representatives from across education systems about the enablers and inhibitors to building and strengthening such research-rich systems.

An ethics protocol was submitted to one university and received reciprocal approval from each of the universities involved in conducting the study. The Steering Group engaged a Research Assistant/Project Manager, with funds managed by the institution having primary Research Ethics Committee responsibility and hence also acting as the employer of the Project Manager. A Reference Group, drawn from representatives of thirteen national education professional associations (See Part 6, Governance of the project), provided valuable advice about the design of the research, an iterative process of consultation and engagement, and peer review of this report.

Four research questions were central to the study.

- How do education professionals encounter research in their professional life?
- What are the barriers to participation and engagement with research for education professionals?
- What unrealised opportunities are there for participation and engagement with research for education professionals?
- What are the recommendations of education professionals for overcoming these barriers and realising these opportunities?

The project collected data from three participant groups.

Teachers and educators: This group included early childhood educators and classroom teachers (primary and secondary schools). Pre-service teachers were also included in this group.

Teacher educators and education researchers: This group included those employed in Faculties and Schools of Education. Education Deans and Heads of Schools were included in this group.

System leaders: This group included those employed in various education systems and state departments. School principals were included in this group.

Data collection occurred in two phases.

Phase 1: Roundtable workshops

Materials for the workshops (see Appendix 1) were designed in collaboration with the Project Reference Group during teleconferences held in November 2016 as part of a design and feedback loop. The goal of the roundtable workshops, which were held in seven locations across Australia, was to gather varied perspectives from across diverse contexts. The discussions were organised around the four research questions of the project, listed above. The Project Manager attended all workshops and in each location, at least one member of the Steering Group also attended. A total of 72

participants attended workshops in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Sydney and Launceston between 13 February and 2 March, 2017. Analysis of field notes of these workshops provided the basis for design of the survey instrument administered in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Survey design and administration

Initial analysis of the data collected during the Roundtable Workshops led to the design of an online survey, which was then refined and endorsed by the Reference Group in late July 2017, again via a design and feedback loop. The survey (Appendix 2) consisted of three sections. In the first section a number of demographic details were collected. In the second section participants were presented with statements about research and asked to indicate their level of agreement (from 1 = low agreement to 5 = high agreement). In the third section of the survey, participants were asked to rank their top three recommendations from a list of ten recommendations drafted from data collected during the Roundtable Workshops. Finally, participants were provided with the opportunity to provide open-ended comments or recommendations for policy and practice.

The survey was administered using Qualtrics online survey software and was open to participants from 4 August to 8 September, 2017. A total of 389 participants completed the survey. Table 1 provides a breakdown across the three target groups participating in the workshops and responding to the survey.

	TEACHER/ EDUCATOR	ACADEMIC	SYSTEM LEADER	TOTAL
Roundtable workshops	12	32	28	72
Survey	155	136	98	389

Table 1: Details of participants across the two data collection phases.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of survey respondents reported working in a metropolitan location, with 21% in a regional location, 6% in a rural location, 3% in a remote location and the remaining 3% in other or unspecified locations. Although strategies to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in the survey were used, such as advocacy on the part of the Reference Group, only 2% of survey respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people – less than the national total of 3.3%.

Data were analysed to identify initial themes for discussion, and the advice of the Reference Group was sought about case study examples to illustrate specific themes. The Steering Group also presented preliminary findings from the project to colleagues at research conferences, and discussions at these sessions assisted in refining the project recommendations and the final report as it was prepared.

The responses of workshop and survey participants suggest that Australia has highly educated and aspirational education professionals, who both value research and are eager to access and participate in research-led and research-informed practice at all levels. Rather than seeing classrooms, teachers and educators as the 'end users' of research, a more productive framing was advocated, whereby professionals are seen as partners-in-research. Analysis of the project data confirmed that mentoring others in research-informed practices is vital to the profession. Analysis also confirmed that many teachers and educators see research as central to their professional work.

The findings and recommendations of this report suggest that education professionals are eager to move away from a one-size-fits-all, 'what works' model toward profession-led and enquiry-based frameworks. Findings highlight that collectively, Australia needs a system-level approach that supports a developmental model of research embedded in all aspects of initial teacher education and continuing long into teaching and leadership careers.

The research found common ground with the BERA-RSA (2014) report in that many participants who contributed to the study were concerned about the emergence of an environment in which many professionals are

excluded from conversations about their own students' learning because of an overly narrow and instrumentalist view about what counts as research. The study supported *the need for a more comprehensive and integrated systems approach, one that supports open, collaborative and multiple forms of research-based enquiry.*

The study points to two significant enablers in building research-rich systems. First, education systems must ensure educators, teachers and teacher educators are discerning consumers of research; second, all teachers and educators should be enabled, through support from system leaders and education academics, including teacher educators, to undertake their own forms of systematic enquiry and evaluate and respond to the findings of their research in context.

Such an approach requires teachers and educators to be research literate and engage with research literacies. The term research literacy relates to the extent to which educators are knowledge producers and 'are familiar with a range of research methods, with the latest research findings and with the implications of this research for their day-to-day practice, for education policy and practice more broadly' (BERA-RSA Report, 2014, p.40). Since we understand that there are multiple understandings of, perspectives on and uses for educational research, and because we assert that there are multiple ways to engage with research for a diverse range of purposes, we use the term research literacies throughout this report.

The concept of research literacies is predicated on the importance of ongoing professional learning, where teachers and educators, teacher educators and education researchers, and system leaders know how to identify problems related to their practice, and to students' learning and education more generally, and who can harness skills and knowledge to investigate solutions and implement change. Within such a scenario, where 'to be research literate is to 'get' research—to understand why it is important and what might be learnt from it, and to maintain a sense of critical appreciation and healthy scepticism throughout' (BERA-RSA 2014, p.40), it is more likely that the quality of education and teaching can be enhanced and student learning can be supported.

PART 3

KEY MESSAGES

Three key messages for education systems were identified through this project.

1. Research is highly valued by education systems personnel, educators, teachers and teacher educators.
2. Research literacies promote deeper engagement with, and understanding of, student learning.
3. Building research literacies is everybody’s business.

In the following section we elaborate on these key messages, pointing to data that support these messages, along with illustrative case examples of how these messages might be responded to in practice.

KEY MESSAGE 1

Research is highly valued by education systems personnel, educators, teachers and teacher educators.

The study suggested that engagement *with* and the value *of* research is high across Australia’s education systems, a message that was confirmed by the Reference Group. All participant groups reported specific examples of research engagement at the workshops

(See Table 2), with engagement evidenced through attending research-based conferences. Participants told us they were engaged in research mentoring and in seeking research opportunities, and consistently identified research as being important in their workplace.

SYSTEM LEADERS	TEACHERS/EDUCATORS	TEACHER EDUCATORS/ACADEMICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read articles • Read blogs • Produce research • Listen to presentations from a researcher • Engage with a particular professional association • Engage with evidence-based research • Promote research in their area • Critique research • Build partnership opportunities to foster research • Watch TedTalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read research in practitioner journals • Read research from social media sites • Read ‘school/student data’ • Engage with school/student data discussions • Participate in research webinars • Attend an association-based conference • Listen to researchers presenting, e.g. at a university-based seminar • Participate in a school-university research project • Participate in action research/practitioner enquiry (school-based or cluster-school-based) • Attend a specific PD about a research-informed-practice e.g. enrolled in a Master/Doctoral program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read research • Ensure research is grounded in ethical principles • Apply for ethics • Conduct research • Consultant work • Deliver PD based on research • Critically reflect with research • Analyse research and policy documents • PhD supervision • Mentor and support ECRs • Disseminate research • Teaching about research • Build research teams both within and across universities • Translate research with and for pre-service teachers • Organise conferences • Edit journals • Linkage work and work with schools • Community of practice

Table 2: Examples of engagement with research

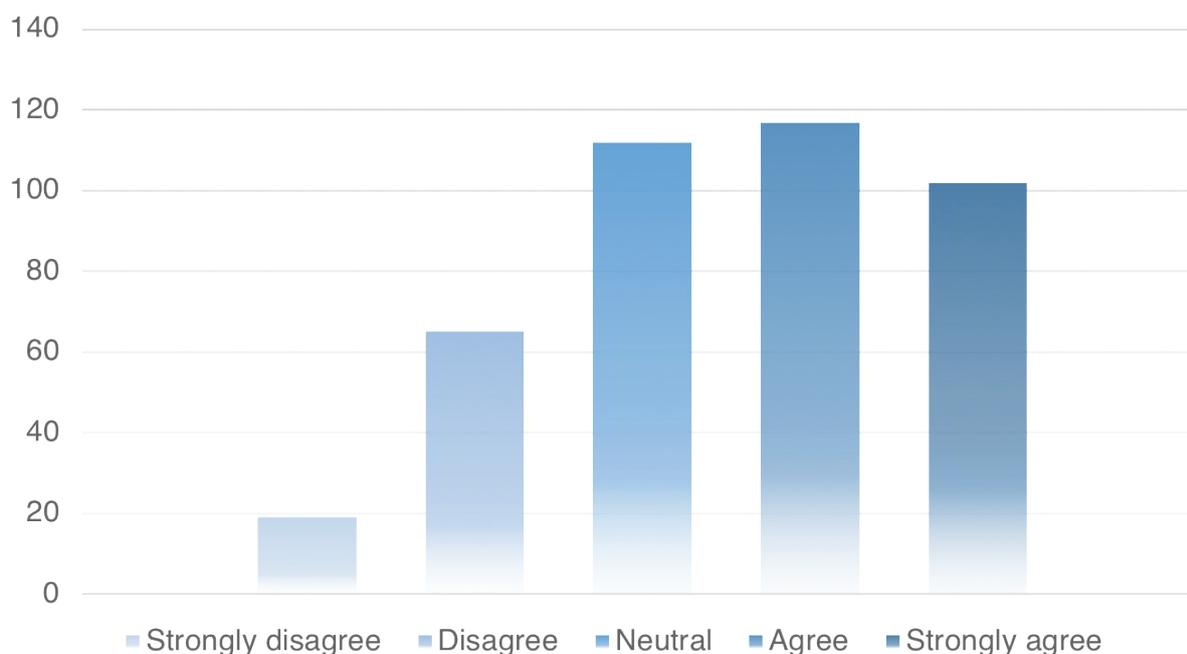


Figure 1: Education research has a low status

Although valued by participants, education research was viewed as having a low status in general.

Figure 1 summarises the survey responses across all participants, when asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement ‘education research has low status’. More than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Unsurprisingly, university-based participants were more likely to be engaged with research, both as consumers and producers of research, whereas school-based and systems-based participants were more likely to report being consumers of research. However, teachers and system leaders argued for teachers and educators to be more involved as active producers of research and identified mechanisms that could facilitate this. As one survey respondent stated:

“Education Departments need to value teachers with research degrees and encourage schools to use this expertise. Schools need to be encouraged to engage with research outside of accountability discourses and be assisted to identify opportunities to engage in research, that

is in partnerships with universities addressing specific school needs. Academic researchers need to move beyond writing for other academics if they want teachers at large to be consumers of their work. (Systems leader, open-ended survey response)”

As anticipated by the Reference Group, the study revealed differences in definitions of what ‘counts’ as research, which, participants argued, causes some confusion. For example, system leaders were more likely to value what they described as ‘evidence-based’ research, while teachers and educators were more likely to value research that helped them meet the immediate learning needs of their students.

Differences were also identified about a number of persistent research debates, including the value of qualitative and quantitative research, differences between engaging in research and ‘being researched’, different understandings about the value of various research approaches (for example, action research, clinical trials), uncritical acceptance of particular kinds of evidence, under-valuing of teacher research and knowledges, and the complex research

environment within education as a field including issues related to trust, ethics, values and authority.

Survey participants based in regional and rural settings were more likely to express concern that research translation did not meet their particular needs; these participants called for less commercial research and more locally responsive research approaches. This was especially the case for teachers working with Indigenous communities and in culturally diverse locations. Teachers in these contexts noted that much research was Euro-centric, English-centric, and metropolitan-centric. We interpreted these responses as suggesting that research findings that do not take contexts into account may be perceived as irrelevant and culturally inappropriate:

“Evaluations are city-centric. (Teacher, Roundtable Workshop)”

“Research needs to look at language learning, move away from a top-down view. This denies language learning for these communities. Denial of children’s home language as soon as they enter education. (Teacher, Roundtable Workshop)”

System leaders in regional, rural and remote settings shared similar concerns, but also spoke about the constraints of limited funding, shifting policy goalposts, casualisation of the workforce, questionable robustness of existing data, and costs of attending conferences and building research networks.

Participants reported confidence in their capacity to access and interpret research (Figure 2) but also that this was confounded by constraints in terms of accessing research. Figure 2 summarises survey responses to the statement ‘I feel confident about accessing and interpreting good quality research findings’.

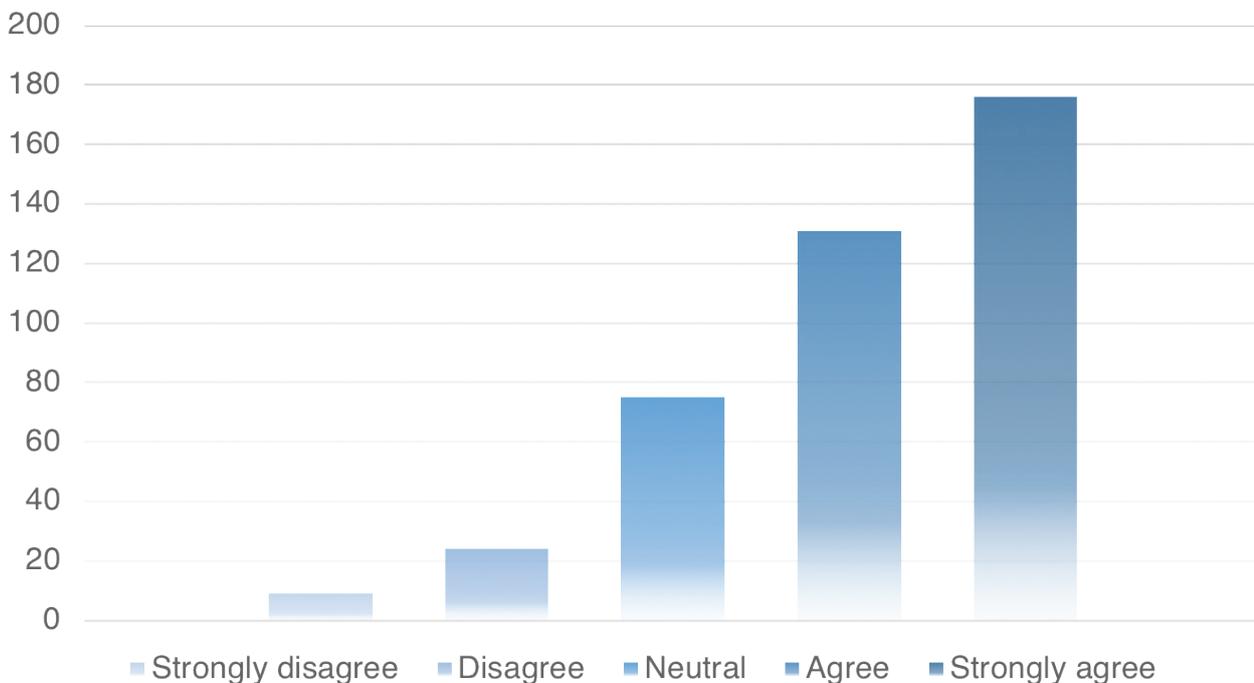


Figure 2: I feel confident about accessing and interpreting good quality research findings

Both school-based and systems-based participants were more likely to rely on free research repository sites, with the cost of access to journals and commercial research reports identified as prohibitive. Others lamented the increasing commercialisation of research. Some participants suggested that teachers and educators found academic research difficult to read, and commented on the need for support to understand what quality, relevant research looked like. Some participants placed the responsibility on education professionals to see engaging with research as part of their role.

In the workshops there was general support for the need for systems to support teachers' and educators' engagement with research through financial and other resourcing support for postgraduate study, and for a shift in systems' approaches to, opinions about, and support for research if teachers are going to engage effectively with research.

The wider education context also featured in discussions about teachers' understandings of how research is relevant and useful to them. Some participants, mostly those from an education academic/teacher educator and teacher/educator perspective, identified a perceived distrust of research within systems, system and leader distrust of teachers who engaged in research, and work environments characterised by increasing levels of casualisation and insecurity – especially for early career teachers – that is not conducive to educators engaging in critical debates about contemporary policies and practices. For example, some teacher participants expressed concerns about a workplace culture where further study (postgraduate coursework or a higher degree research program) were not valued. These participants noted that, as a consequence, they chose not to disclose their desire for, or participation in, further study.

A number of recommendations were made by the participants to address these issues. In particular, partnerships between researchers and practitioners, and between schools and systems, were proposed as a potential solution:

“Research done by teachers needs to be valued, prioritised and seen as part of teacher workload meaning teachers undertaking research need to be given time, a platform to share, and support from the school. (Teacher, open-ended survey response)”

There were calls for more involvement by professional associations in providing access to research through their channels. Exploring options for greater open access to research was a common thread across all participant groups. There was also a view that school leaders need to have opportunities to be more creative, imaginative and proactive in fostering research (rather than being primarily 'data driven').

“Build school leader capability to lead research-engaged schools, so the right conditions are in place to enable practitioner engagement in/with research. (Systems leader, open-ended survey response)”

“There needs to be an Australian Education and Teacher Development Fund which is a nationally competitive research fund. This is needed to build research capacity and provide a pool of funds for teachers, practitioners and academics. This fund should aim to assist and facilitate world class research and develop partnerships with universities, schools, systems, and business. Research which informs and includes the teaching profession at all levels should be a priority. This is an urgent priority. (Systems leader, open-ended survey response)”

CASE EXAMPLE 1: VALUE RESEARCH ACROSS SYSTEMS

Where research is highly valued, a number of issues come into play simultaneously, as demonstrated in the Catholic Education Melbourne-managed *USER Project* (2016). Schools are often invited to participate in research but partnerships with traction aligned with school priorities, had tangible benefits and outcomes for the school, had inbuilt capacity building elements and involved internal or external partners who were committed to these aspects of enduring engagement.

The USER project collected quantitative and qualitative online survey, focus group and semi-structured interview data from 67 Melbourne Catholic schools to summarise mobilising factors for *school* research engagement. An evidence-informed culture in schools was demonstrated by supportive leadership and an *integrated approach to research-evidence-operations*. That is, projects aligned with school improvement plans and/or jurisdiction strategic priorities.

Genuine school engagement was deemed critical if partners were to experience parity during research engagement. This could be better managed by including changes to university processes for research and ethical review where enduring partnerships are demonstrated. Education systems could be more proactive in initiating relevant research projects and programs. University trends to demonstrate greater impact and engagement might support these moves but will require 'a significant shift in academic thinking and practice'. <http://www.cem.edu.au/About-Us/Research-in-Schools/USER-project.asp>

Following the 'logic' of the BERA-RSA report, the kind of research-rich and research-engaged environment promoted by the USER project (See case example 1) highlights the importance of a mutually beneficial partnership that aligns with various strategic priorities is an integral part of this process of building a research-rich teaching profession. Building research literacies across all stakeholder groups is key.

In summary, **Key Message 1** suggests that research is highly valued across Australia's education systems, with participants highlighting a range of uses relevant to their context and

purposes. While there was broad agreement about the importance of research, the emphasis varied according to whether participants were in universities, were system leaders or were classroom teachers. There were divergent views about what kind of research was desirable/undesirable and who benefits from research. This is especially the case for regional and remote education professionals, who argued that research needs to be more sensitive to contexts. There was a broad consensus about the need to develop and adequately resource a coherent, systems-wide approach to research in which all stakeholders can participate.

Key Message 1 suggests that research is highly valued across Australia's education systems.

KEY MESSAGE 2

Research literacies promote deeper engagement with, and understanding of, student learning.

Self-improving education systems require that teachers, educators, academics and system leaders know how to engage in a variety of research practices. These can include: reading, assessing, analysing and managing data; situating research in prior literature; talking in public or workplace groups about research; sharing insights about knowledge transfer within and across sites; and extrapolating research insights and terminology from the national and international level into local contexts.

There was general agreement ‘about the positive impact that a research literate and research engaged profession is likely to have on learner outcomes’ (BERA-RSA 2014, p. 6), and that one purpose of enhancing research capacity is to help practitioners better understand and advocate for their jurisdictions, communities and classrooms.

An insight from this project is that, although ‘research’ *per se* is not generally factored into teaching workload times, teachers and educators already use a wide variety of research literacies. This may explain why survey participants indicated a high degree of

confidence in accessing research, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Being ‘research literate’ in this context included examples of diverse practices of research consumption, which ranged across professional newsletters and blogs, peer-reviewed papers, research studies, scanning ‘big data’ and engaging with social media. However, if the education profession is to shift from being ‘data rich’ to ‘research rich’, then all participants will require new kinds of research literacies. As one teacher pointed out:

“[we need] more training in how to interpret data particularly statistics, as unless you are a statistician, inferences made from data can be inaccurate. (Teacher, open-ended survey response)”

Figure 3 suggests that survey participants were confident that their workplace institutions have the capacity to participate in research partnerships (noting that this figure is likely to be high due to the disproportionately high number of teacher educators and academics responding to the survey).

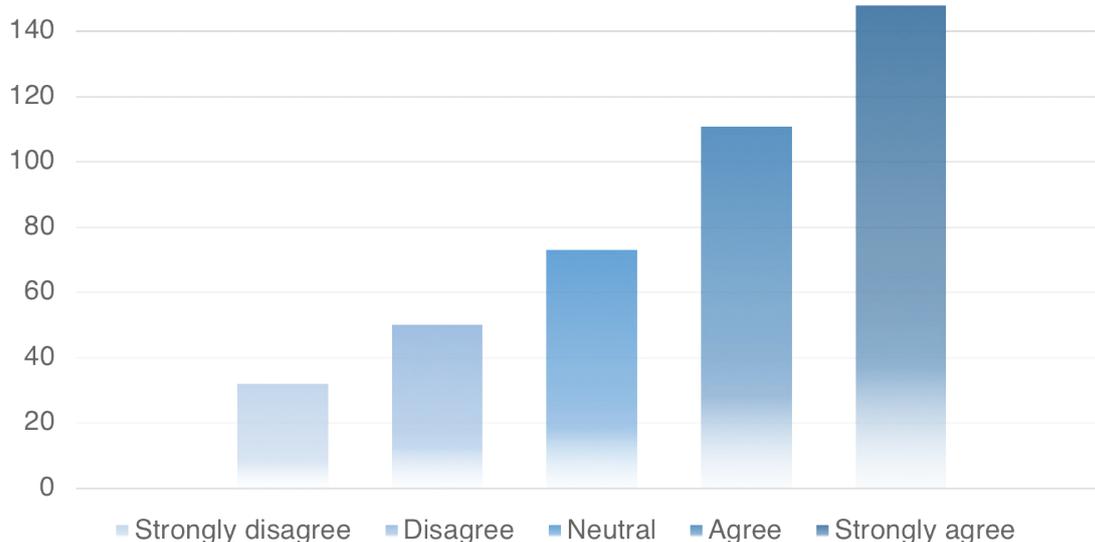


Figure 3: My workplace has the capacity to participate in research partnerships with other institutions (i.e. schools/early childhood services and/or universities)

When education academics and system leaders discussed research in the workshops or survey comments, they tended to focus on the issue of how best to navigate and sustain research partnerships. These issues are taken up in more detail in the final section of this report, which suggests some necessary overarching conditions for sustainable research-rich partnerships. For example, in working across educational sites, a shared language – not the *same* language but a set of shared understandings about a range of research practices and terminology – was identified as important in order to explore and explain localised policies and practices.

Also in relation to shared understandings, respondents identified the need to develop stronger links across the career lifecycle from pre-service education through to professional development frameworks and promotional pathways for in-service teachers, educators and leaders. Data shown in Figure 4 show a strong degree of agreement across survey respondents about the need for pre-service and in-service teacher education with supporting teachers to engage in and with research.

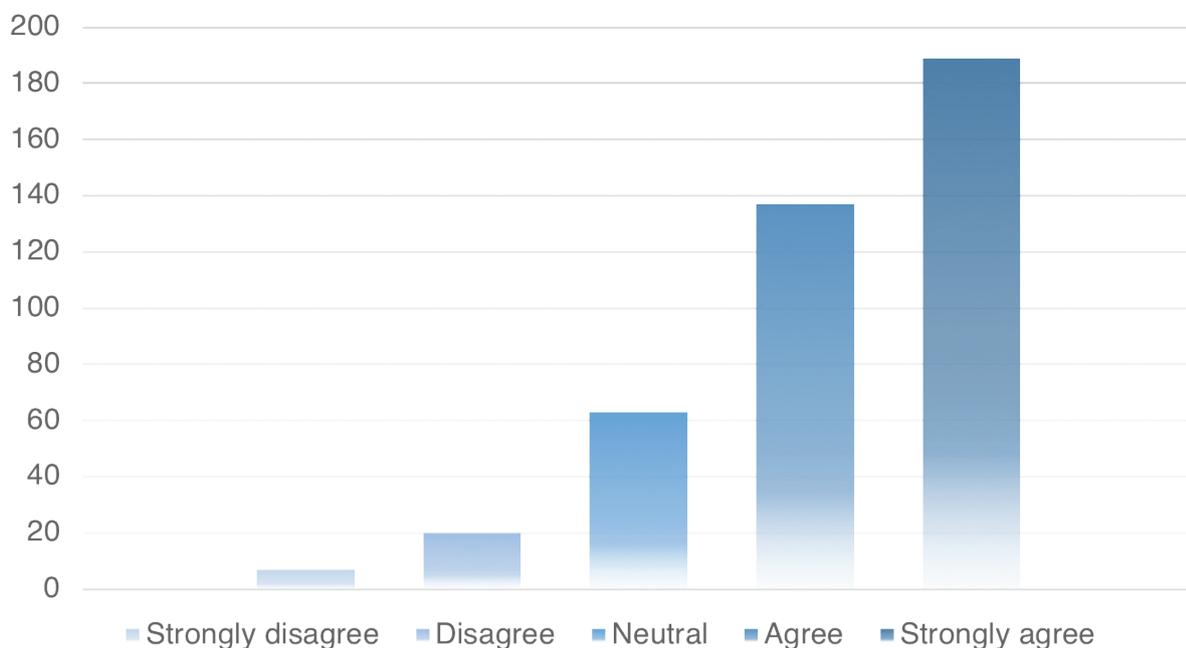


Figure 4: Pre-service and in-service teacher training needs to prepare teachers to engage in and with research

Self-improving education systems require that teachers, educators, academics and system leaders know how to engage in a variety of research practices.

The data also demonstrated the way in which different groups of participants emphasised the importance of having a diverse range of research-engaged strategies, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach:

I think pre-service teachers need more support to be enquirers more so than researchers. When you use the word 'research' people think of high-level thesis kinds of research. The term enquiry is more accurate to the types of research teachers undertake in the classroom setting. (Primary/Secondary Teacher, open-ended survey response)

Teachers want to learn but need time to plan, collect data, analyse the data, discuss and respond to findings in a collaborative team. (Primary/Secondary Teacher, open-ended survey response)

An emphasis on '*critically engaged reading*' at the pre-service stage addressed an aspirational goal to '*develop critical insights and engage with current educational research findings, rather than relying on newspaper/magazine articles to inform their views of education*' and to shift the evidence base away from an:

almost exclusive [reliance] on standardised tests to inform their decisions. (Primary/Secondary Teacher, open-ended survey response)

Research was seen as valuable to the extent that it produced practical outcomes or strategies that teachers, school communities or institutions can then access and implement. But teachers themselves threw out a challenge to colleagues:

Too often I hear my colleagues talk about their perception, their values, but they don't challenge these with research or seek to 'do' differently (Primary/Secondary Teacher, open-ended survey response)

At the system level, curriculum leaders wanted to see more accountability for curriculum decisions based on consistent research findings, recognising that policy and political cycles in decision making are not always in alignment. In this sense, the research literacies of teachers,

school principals, and system leaders become key in ensuring improved educational outcomes for all students.

Engagement in research was not just about '*justifying teaching*'; it also needed to be about creating productive '*dissonance*', seeking solutions for all students, and engaging with:

improved social mobility for our most marginalised Indigenous Australians and migrants. (Primary/Secondary teacher, open-ended survey response)

Workshop participants reported that time to access data, read journals and share ideas with colleagues are all research practices grounded in the context of the local, and that ideas are not developed in isolation from participation as educators, teachers, system leaders or academics. We did not interpret participants' responses as a plea for 'more time' *per se* in order to engage in research but as recognition that research activities require qualitatively different kinds of application in practice:

There's plenty of good data collected but it doesn't always get translated and consolidated into improving practice before the next big thing takes root. (Academic/Teacher educator, open-ended survey response)

Data is not research, it's a part of research and schools are confused by this. (Systems leader, open-ended survey response)

Improving student learning outcomes through a research-literate profession requires that teachers, policy makers and teacher educators have the capacity to draw on knowledge from different sources in order to integrate that knowledge into their everyday work. As an exemplar of such an approach we provide here the Impacts of Practitioner Inquiry (IPI) project (Nichols & Cormack, 2016) as a case example of promoting research literacy. This study of practitioners and their experiences of inquiry noted that projects with significant impact were generally 12 months or longer and involved collaboration with external partners.

CASE EXAMPLE 2: PROMOTE RESEARCH LITERACY

The IPI Project recognised practitioners as ‘carriers’ of reform ideas and distinguished individual and private inquiries from the more systematic process of ‘designed research’ and the notion of ‘systematic inquiry made public’ (Stenhouse, 1975). Such projects have impact when the inquiry is connected to teachers’ sense of accountability, which is strongly activated by a desire to improve the learning experiences of students most at risk.

Professional bodies are also important in the state- and territory-based growth of a research-literate profession. For example, the *Professional Teachers’ Association of the Northern Territory* (PTANT) and the *Council of Education Associations of South Australia* (CEASA) both operate at a strategic level to support professional associations, have input to policy debates, and exchange ideas about research engagement. Both associations provide professional learning funding, with the NT convening a bi-annual *Festival of Teaching* to offer workshop, networking and keynote experiences.

In summary, **Key Message 2** points to the importance of understanding the need for research literacies in the context of an evidenced-based policy environment. While many participants felt confident about accessing research, there was concern expressed about costs and commercialisation. We also identified the need to develop a common language to explain what is meant by a research-rich and self-improving education system. There was a view that research needed to not only inform the status quo but provide challenging evidence from multiple perspectives.

Key Message 2 points to the importance of understanding the need for research literacies in the context of an evidenced-based policy environment.

KEY MESSAGE 3

Building research literacies is everybody's business.

Building a self-improving education system requires education professionals who have the capacity to undertake scholarly investigations into their daily practices and into the things they do not yet know. During this project we heard from a range of stakeholders about the importance of developing the intellectual capacity of teachers and educators as autonomous professionals working in highly complex, uncertain and relational environments. The data indicated strong agreement from all stakeholders about the importance of developing teachers with enquiry-based skills and knowledge, who are capable of enhancing their professional autonomy, judgements, and practice, and who can mentor others to do the same.

The research also pointed to the need for a greater focus on building capacity *for* the profession from *within* the profession, rather than relying on the commercialisation of research or on a small number of external experts engaged to tell teachers what their student data means

(see Figure 5). This requires partnerships and a conscious move to shift from thinking about researchers and educators as having differing interests. Researchers, educators and leaders are all part of education as a system and all have a focus on quality education for all. Figure 5 demonstrates the high number of survey respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that research in Australian education contexts is too often linked to commercial products to be used by teachers and educators in classrooms.

Overall, the findings suggest a desire to equip teachers and educators with the analytical, research and interpretative skills and dispositions to produce their own knowledge about effective practices in their classroom, school and community.

“It is important that teachers in schools are encouraged and more importantly, given the opportunities to be involved in research. (Teacher, open-ended survey response)”

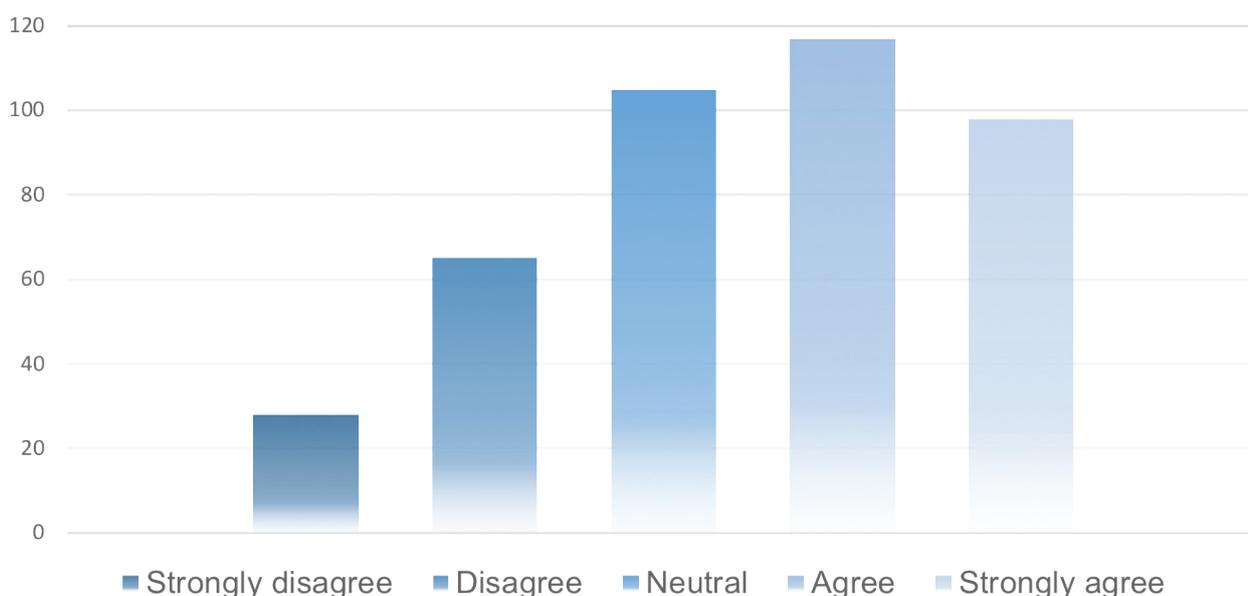


Figure 5: Education research in Australia is too often linked to commercial products for teachers/educators

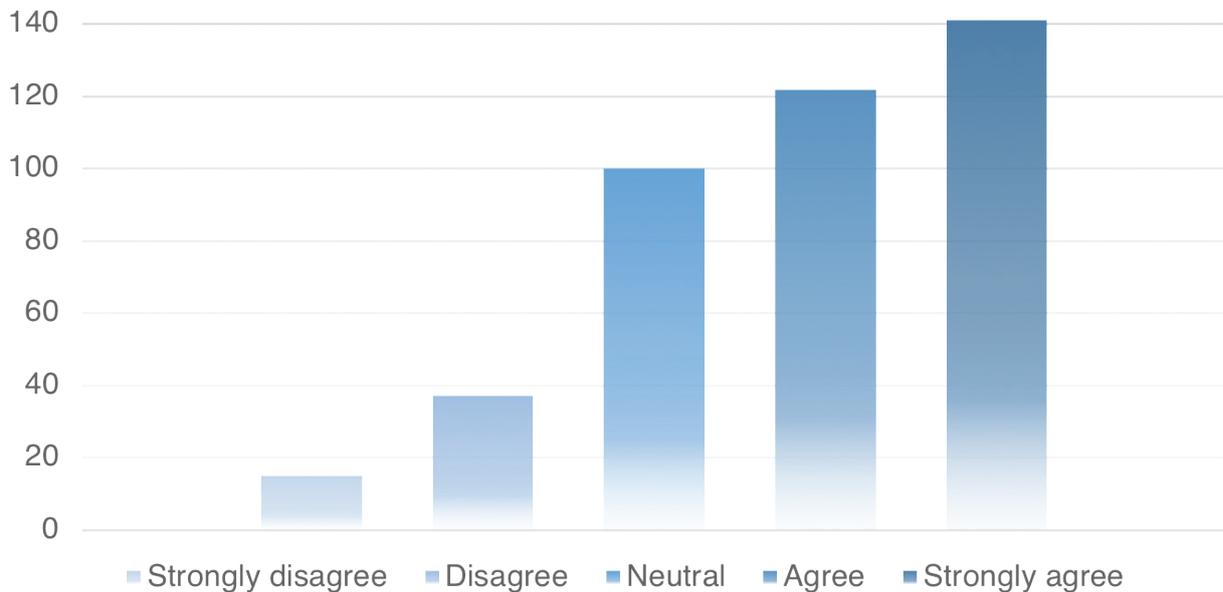


Figure 6: Frequent policy changes make it difficult to implement research findings that could benefit education in the long term

In building teacher research capacity, there was acknowledgement of the importance of building collaborative and generative research activities across centres, schools, systems and sectors. This could involve local partnerships between centres, schools, universities and systems. Based on this type of local enquiry – which can be informed by quality research from beyond the local context – teachers and educators may be better placed to identify practices that work best for them and their students.

There was recognition that some existing infrastructure could with little cost, effort or restructuring, strengthen elements of research-rich education systems. For example, one principal suggested that:

“the next revision of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers strengthens expectations on teachers (at all levels) as research consumers and as enquirers into their own practice. That pre-service teacher education programs in Australia develop a stronger emphasis on teachers and educators as research consumers and active enquirers into their own practice. That education systems take a stronger role as brokers in establishing research collaborations and networks across education institutions. (Principal, open-ended survey response)”

Finally, there was a sense of the ways in which building research capacity could increase the power and professional standing of teachers

and educators in ways that would give them greater confidence in making linkages between classroom practices, policies, and research. In the context of concerns about the impact of frequent policy changes on education (see Figure 6), these kinds of synergies become even more important.

“Education Departments need to value teachers with research degrees and encourage schools to use this expertise. Schools need to be encouraged to engage with research outside of accountability discourses and be assisted to identify opportunities to engage in research that is in partnerships with universities addressing specific school needs. Academic researchers need to move beyond writing for other academics if they want teachers at large to be consumers of their work. (Department Leader, open-ended survey response)”

Over many decades, Australia has had an excellent record of supporting research-led partnerships. The *Innovative Links Between Universities and Schools for Teacher Professional Development (Innovative Links)* Project (Case example 3), established in 1991, was a watershed project for teacher professional development. This project gave rise to the National Schools Project which in turn gave rise to The National Schools Network. This exemplified the capacity for government funding to be consistent in its approach to supporting an agenda for professional learning.

CASE EXAMPLE 3: RESEARCH-LED PARTNERSHIPS

Innovative Links involved 14 Australian universities in an action research-based professional development program. It supported teachers working in collaboration with colleagues from the university sector and in conjunction with teachers from other schools, through a network of roundtables and a national consortium. Each roundtable, representing both regional and metropolitan sites, consisted of academic associates, schools, union, employer and NSN representatives. In Sach's (1997) words, the key issue was to 'try out and refine new practices' (p. 460). A number of publications evolved from this initiative (see Down et al 1998; Grundy, 1995; Hogan & Strickland, 1998; and Yeatman & Sachs, 1995). Each of these studies identified key principles of professional learning that underpin today's contemporary literature on research-engaged schools and research-literate practitioners.

In summary, **Key Message 3** reflects the need to build the capacity of teachers and educators to not only read research more critically but also produce knowledge about their own practices. There was a view that relying on external experts – which is qualitatively different from partnering with researcher colleagues – can be helpful in some respects; however it is insufficient for building self-improving systems. There was a strong view about the benefits of fostering

collaborative and generative partnerships across universities, centres, schools, sectors and systems in order to gather evidence about what works best in particular localities. Central to this wider vision was a desire to rethink the nature of teachers' work to embrace research and ongoing professional learning as essential work practices. Finally, achieving a balance between local practices and larger research findings requires both engagement and partnerships.

Key Message 3 reflects the need to build the capacity of teachers and educators to not only read research more critically but also produce knowledge about their own practices.

PART 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING A RESEARCH-RICH TEACHING PROFESSION

The tentative insights derived from the data point to three overarching recommendations for systems to achieve a research-rich and self-improving teaching profession in Australia. These are presented here, accompanied by suggestions made by project participants about how systems might enact these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Build research literacies at all levels of the education profession

Teachers, educators and leaders need more opportunities to critically engage with research *in* context. This suggests that a systematic approach is vital in providing opportunities for teachers and educators to *critically engage as consumers or readers of research* across diverse research outputs and approaches, as well as engagement in research *in* their own practice and in partnership with researchers in larger projects. The reciprocal benefits for researchers who are able to work in partnership with educators in education contexts are also recognised.

Teachers identified that engaging with data is an important part of their research activity but indicated that they desired more meaningful conversations about data, rather than simply complying with ‘*reporting models*’ demanded by ‘*outsiders*’ about their results. Teachers also wanted to analyse and interpret data beyond the scope of what is provided currently as part of national testing initiatives.

In considering how this Recommendation might be achieved, the following are **suggestions for building research literacies**.

- Develop and disseminate a continuum of research literacy practices across all stages of education careers, from pre-service education into early career employment, and aligned with the stages of career development such as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher.
- Position the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher roles as responsible for mentoring others and building research capacity within schools and early childhood services, and across centre/school-university partnerships.
- Utilise current policy moves for research engagement and impact to ensure that the system is incentivised for practices that encourage authentic, reciprocal research partnerships.

- Embed excellence in research literacies in leadership-level position descriptions.
- Create and operationalise models of professional learning that acknowledge the value of context-specific data when building the research literacies of teachers/educators.
- Create a more formal acknowledgement of research leading towards certification.
- Incentivise and enable professional associations to co-lead research and dissemination activities.
- Embed practitioner enquiry as a research practice in teacher education programs (both pre-service and in-service).
- Enable greater access to peer reviewed research.
- Promote access to data analysis opportunities by broadening access to existing education data sets.

The URLearning project (See case example 4) is an example of a integrated research partnership that involved an alliance between leaders, teachers, students and their families and communities at one school, the teachers' union, university researchers, and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and Elders.

CASE EXAMPLE 4: BUILDING RESEARCH LITERACIES

The URLearning Project (2009-2013) involved collaborative school-based reform in schools in communities of high poverty and cultural diversity. With the support of researchers and the industrial reconciliation of the union, teachers brought together new insights in media arts and digital literacies to reform their literacy teaching. Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and Elders in the pedagogical and curriculum decision making of the school, highlighted the strengths of the community and enabled strong and relevant partnerships to be built and sustained. School reform processes proceeded well in the early stages, but it was not until the researchers supported the teachers to engage their students in substantive content and disciplinary concepts that real change, improvement and reform was achieved. The project demonstrated that authentic, reciprocal partnerships between schools and systems, universities and communities are not only possible in the current context but also have the potential to lead to sustainable school reform (Woods et al., 2014; Dezuanni and Woods, 2014).

RECOMMENDATION 2

Mobilise and diversify a research-informed and research-engaged workforce

Creating an integrated and research-rich profession means building and mobilising a workforce that can move in and across the system. Competing roles and pressures erode the capacity of the education workforce. It is timely to explore new and hybrid approaches to workplace roles that might better support research-rich education systems. In considering how this might be achieved, **we suggest the following priority actions to enhance research-rich systems.**

- Mobilise and enable models of workplace and workforce alignment, including, but not limited to, reciprocal partnerships such as researchers-in-residence, leading teachers-in-residence, enquiry-based projects, and practitioner research.
- Identify regional research advocate roles focused on leadership development to foster research cultures across diverse contexts.
- Structure the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to align with research capacity building at all career stages and across regional or systems-based professional development frameworks, so that they accommodate career-long research based enquiry.
- Re-examine work arrangements in schools and universities to build better systematic and enduring opportunities for knowledge transfer, exchange and translation.
- Identify, record and disseminate exemplars of good practice in teacher-based enquiry, highlighting context-specific examples.
- Enhance collaborative research and reflection on issues of common interest.
- Develop participatory research initiatives sensitive to local social contexts.
- Encourage universities and professional associations to find ways for those working in schools and systems to have more open access to academic research to inform practice.
- Encourage various workplaces to systematically recognise and reflect in workload and role descriptions, the time and knowledge required to build authentic, reciprocal relationships.

Systems are mobilising a number of strategies to enable research-rich environments. These can be seen for example, in the NSW-based *Quality Teaching Rounds* (QTR) initiative (Gore, Smith, Lloyd, Bowe, Ellis, Taggart & Lubans, 2016), which draws on the NSW Quality Teaching pedagogical framework in conjunction with practical facilitation of professional learning communities (PLCs) and instructional ‘rounds’ primarily to improve the quality of teaching in schools. Secondary outcomes include impacts on school culture, professional relationships, enhanced understanding of the knowledge base for teaching and enhanced collaboration. In addition to addressing quality teaching-issues, the QTR approach mobilises a research-rich workforce through a notion of research-informed professional development. Another example of mobilising research is outlined in case example 5.

CASE EXAMPLE 5: MOBILISATION RESEARCH

The Northern Territory's *Innovation Fund for School Improvement* is a recent initiative to support systematic enquiry focussing on school-based initiatives and collaboration between schools. This initiative provides seed funding for government schools to address a problem of practice. Applications are school-based with options to work with other schools, corporate partners, academics, researchers, the community and industry. <http://newsroom.nt.gov.au/mediaRelease/24387>

Creating an integrated and research-rich profession means building and mobilising a workforce that can move in and across the system.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Incentivise research-led partnerships within and across education systems

Participants in the research told us that frequent education policy changes make it more challenging to embed and sustain research-informed practices (see Figure 6). Partnerships that are sustainable enable new kinds of professional learning to occur between teachers/educators and academic researchers, and also help in the creation of new, more powerful kinds of knowledge to inform teaching and schooling. Digital technologies can support diverse models of engagement, noting that they also present new challenges for systems and practitioners: to stay abreast of the pace of change; to face an often bewildering selection of decisions and an ever-increasing array of information; and, for those responsible for maintaining websites, to be ever vigilant about currency and avoid the ‘page not found’ syndrome prevalent in the digital era.

In considering how research-led partnerships might be incentivised across systems the **following are suggestions for priority actions to build research-rich systems.**

- Enable and foster co-designed and collaborative models of research with educators, teachers and education academics.
- Universities to further recognise partnership work beyond professional experience to include research partnership endeavours as part of policy reform.

- Foster and incentivise school-led practitioner enquiry/action research projects, as one part of research engagement.
- Teachers/educators and academics to be further incentivised to research and publish together, with professional associations facilitating publishing opportunities and access to research reports for teachers and educators.
- Identify structural and funding mechanisms to enable joint collaborative research projects between stakeholders where teachers/educators and context are integral to the research.
- Develop learning networks in which research and renewal are regarded as essential work practices for all participants, including early childhood educators, teachers, academics, school leaders and administrators.

Different states and territories provide research funding to incentivise collaborative research partnerships. The Queensland Education Horizon scheme (see case example 6) is just one example provided.

CASE EXAMPLE 6: RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Queensland’s *Education Horizon* scheme aims to build knowledge in areas of strategic priority for the Department. Grants are available in a range of categories, often with a particular focus. For example, in 2017 the theme of ‘transitions’ spanned early childhood education and care, schooling and vocational education and training. Partnerships and investments for larger innovative and collaborative programs of research have demonstrated significant benefit. Funding is substantial (up to \$100,000) with key projects in 2017 being awarded a maximum of \$98,000 and at the lower end \$18,000). The initiative provides an example of high-level engagement between systems, universities and schools/agencies involved in learning. Infrastructure to support the initiative includes web resources for research presentations, publications and teacher resources, as well as examples of research translation. <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/research/education-horizon.html>

PART 5

CONCLUSION

This report is not simply a report of workshop and survey data. It draws on multiple data sources and forms of expertise to address the overarching question of how to enhance research-rich and self-improving education systems in Australia. Workshop field notes, survey results, Reference Group minutes, case examples, and the expertise of Steering Group members have each contributed to a partial glimpse of the perspectives of teachers, educators, education academics, and systems leaders about the ongoing role of research in developing self-improving education systems in Australia.

The overall picture is one of education professionals who aspire to inform teaching and learning at all levels through a variety of forms of systematic enquiry. The data point to a profession with a strong desire to do the best for students, a recognition of the importance of context, and a willingness to be a part of a scholarly community. At the same time, participants identified considerable barriers to research consumption, engagement and participation, as well as strategies that could be employed by system leaders to overcome or mitigate some of these barriers.

Policy settings, as well as practice environments, clearly have a major influence on the development of research-rich systems. This project was undertaken from the premise that systems and system leaders have considerable influence in developing policies to create environments that enable systematic use of local, national and international forms of knowledge to benefit student learning. This focus on student learning does not always need to default to initial teacher education, nor to classrooms in schools. A self-improving system pays attention to the diverse sites of education and the communication that occurs between sites such as early childhood services, vocational education and training sites, schools, and universities as a whole-of-system improvement agenda.

Research-rich, system-level enquiry, such as the case examples offered in this report, are characterised by several features. First is a commitment to reciprocal learning relationships at all levels of engagement. These relationships provide the platform for explicit and agreed roles and responsibilities, and genuine collaboration and responsiveness. As experienced researchers ourselves, the members of the project Steering Group do not underestimate the work required to establish and maintain system-level relationships while respecting existing roles and processes. Further challenges are posed by the need for sustainability of improved practices and, where appropriate, the application of new practices at scale.

The limited number of participants involved in this project, relative to the size of Australia's education workforce, means the findings and recommendations of this project cannot be treated as an exact reflection of workforce perspectives. Indeed, as the project Reference Group advised at the commencement of the project, the construct of 'research' is itself problematic in the context of professional conversations, despite the adoption of the broadest possible definition in this project.

However, generalisability and consensus were never the aims of the project. Instead, the three funders aimed to work together, inspired by the BERA-RSA (2014) report, to begin a discussion about possibilities for enhancing self-improving education systems by cultivating research-rich teaching and learning environments. This conversation needs to continue, whether through similar investigations on a larger scale, development of further case examples, shifts in professional standards and expectations, or reconsideration of the pre-service and in-service development of teachers and educators. The purpose of this report is to provide a useful stimulus for these ongoing conversations.

REFERENCES

BERA-RSA. (2014). *Research and the teaching profession: Building the capacity for a self-improving education system*. London: BERA.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2006) *Teachers as Researchers*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: Melbourne

Dezuanni, M. & Woods, A. (2014). Media literacy through arts education in Australia. In B. De Abreu & P. Milhailidis (Eds.), *Media literacy education in action: Theoretical and pedagogical perspectives* (pp. 69-76). New York, NY: Routledge.

Down, B., Hogan, C., & Swan, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Reclaiming professional knowledge: New ways of thinking about teachers' work*. Perth: Murdoch University.

Gore, J., Smith, M., Lloyd, A., Bowe, J., Ellis, H., Taggart, W., and Lubans, D. (September 2016). *The impact of quality teaching rounds: Report on the results of a Randomised controlled trial. Final report to the NSW Department of Education*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, University of Newcastle.

Grundy, S. (1995). *Action research as professional development*. Occasional paper no. 1. Innovative Links Project. Perth: Murdoch University.

Hogan, C., & Strickland, L. (Eds.) (1998). *Learning journeys: Working together for school change*. Perth: Murdoch University.

McAleavy, T. (2016) *Teaching as a research-engaged profession: problems and possibilities*. Education Development Trust: Reading, Berkshire, UK

Nichols, S. & Cormack, P. (2016). *Impactful Practitioner Inquiry: The Ripple Effect on Classrooms, Schools, and Teacher Professionalism*. Teachers College Press: USA.

Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG). (2014). *Action now: Classroom ready teachers*. Canberra: Australian Government. Available online at: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/action_now_classroom_ready_teachers_accessible.pdf

The URLearning Project, (2009–2013): An Australian Research Council Linkage scheme project LP0990289 (2009-2013) including Annette Woods, Vinesh Chandra, John Davis, Michael Dezuanni, Karen Dooley, Kathryn Doyle, Beryl Exley, Amanda Levido, Allan Luke, John McCollow, Lesley McFarlane, and Kathy Mills.

Woods, A., Dooley, K., Luke, A., & Exley, B. (2014). School leadership, literacy and social justice: The place of local school curriculum planning and reform. In I. Bogotch & C. Shields (Eds.), *International handbook of educational leadership and social (in)justice* (pp. 509-520). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Yeatman, A., & Sachs, J. (1995). *A formative evaluation of the first year of the Innovative Links Project Between Universities and Schools for teacher Professional Development*. Innovative Links Project.

PART 6

GOVERNANCE OF THE STUDY

PROJECT SPONSORS

Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA)

Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE)

Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)

PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Professor Simone White, Chair of the Alliance Project Research Team

Simone was the President of ATEA at the beginning of the Alliance project. She was the Chair of the Steering Group throughout the project. She is currently the Assistant Dean (International and Engagement) in the Faculty of Education at QUT. Simone's publications, research and teaching are focused on the key question of how to best prepare teachers and leaders for diverse communities (both local and global). Her current research areas focus on teacher education policy, teacher development, professional experience, and building and maintaining university-school/community partnerships.

Professor Joce Nuttall

Joce was the President-Elect of ATEA at the beginning of the Alliance project. She is Director of the Teacher Education Research Concentration in the Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education, Faculty of Education and Arts at Australian Catholic University. Joce's research describes, implements and theorises effective interventions in professional learning in schools and early

childhood settings, particularly in childcare. Most recently, this work has focused on capacity building among educational leaders in early childhood and junior school settings, using system-wide analyses and actions. Her most relevant research to this project focuses on initial and continuing teacher education and teacher educators' work.

Professor Martin Mills

Martin was the outgoing President of AARE at the beginning of the Alliance project. He was the Head of School at University of Queensland, and part way through the project moved to take up a position as the Director of the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, at the Institute of Education, University College London. Martin researches in the area of social justice, pedagogies, school reform, teachers' work, alternative education and gender. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences Australia, and has held Visiting Professorships at Kings College London, Roehampton and Queen's Belfast.

Professor Annette Woods

Annette was the incoming President of AARE at the beginning of the Alliance project. She is a Professor in the Faculty of Education, School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education at QUT. Annette's background in literacy, multi-literacies, social justice, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment supported her contribution to the Alliance project.

Professor Sue Shore

During the project Sue held the position of Chair of the Community of Associate Deans of Research in Education (cADRE), a research network comprising Associate Deans (Research) and Higher Degree by Research coordinators in Schools of Education from 42 universities around Australia. This role also includes membership of the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) Board. Sue works in the College of Education at Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory and is the Founding Director of the International Graduate Centre of Education. Sue's insights from cultural studies, schools as workplaces, and the importance of regional and remote voices in Australian educational research motivated her to be involved in the study.

Professor Barry Down

Barry was appointed to this project as an ACDE representative. He is a Professor in the School of Education at Murdoch University in Perth. He has been involved in teaching and teacher education since the 1980s. His research focuses on young people's lives in the context of shifts in the global economy, school-to-work transitions, poverty, and student engagement for learning.

Dr Katherine Bussey

Dr Katherine Bussey was the Project Manager for the project. She is a Project Manager and Senior Research Assistant at the Learning Sciences Institute Australia, Australian Catholic University. Katherine facilitated all seven of the roundtable workshops, and contributed to project design, data analysis, ethics reporting, financial management of the project, and co-ordination of all project activities.

PROJECT REFERENCE GROUP

Representatives from peak national education bodies comprised the Reference Group. Each of the following organisations nominated a representative to provide advice, direction and feedback to the Steering Group throughout the project.

Universities Australia (UA)

Research Education Network (REN)

Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Teacher Education (AILITE)

Australian Alliance of Associations of Education (AAAE)

Australian Education Union (AEU)

Early Childhood Australia (ECA)

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)

Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA)

Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA)

Catholic Secondary Principals Australia (CaSPA)

Australian Catholic Primary Principals' Association (ACPPA)

National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA)

APPENDIX 1

DATA COLLECTION MATERIALS

Four questions were presented to the workshop participants.

1. How do you encounter research at present in your professional life?
2. What are the barriers to participation and engagement with research for education professionals in Australia?
3. What unrealised opportunities are there for participation and engagement with research for education professionals in Australia?
4. What are your recommendations for overcoming these barriers and realising these opportunities?

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION	ITEMS
Section 1 Demographics	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Age2. Gender3. Professional group4. Length of time in current role5. Work location6. Current Australian Professional Standards designation?7. Identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person8. Qualifications9. State10. Workplace type
Section 2–23 Likert scales (scale1–5)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Education professionals use a wide range of traditional media to access research insights, e.g. journals, research reports, etc.2. Professional journals are an important source of research insights for teachers, educators, and others in education.3. The gap in understandings about research between researchers and schools/early childhood services is growing.4. Education research has a low status in Australia.5. Education research in Australia is too often linked to commercial products for teachers/educators.6. Pre-service and in-service teacher education needs to prepare teachers to engage in and with research.7. Education professionals in Australia use a wide range of traditional, digital, and social media to access research insights.8. I regularly mentor others to engage with research.9. Professional learning is an added cost in my role that is not covered by my institution.10. The educational institution where I work provides me with adequate funding for professional learning activities.11. I feel confident about accessing and interpreting good quality research findings.

SECTION	ITEMS
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. I participate in research-informed professional development about my work. 13. I attend research-based conferences. 14. The cost of professional learning limits my opportunities to engage with research insights. 15. Teachers, educators, and other education professionals would benefit from having access to academic journals. 16. My workplace has the capacity to participate in research partnerships with other institutions, i.e. schools/early childhood services and/or universities. 17. I currently participate in research, e.g. action research, self-study, university study, policy analysis, funded research projects. 18. Frequent policy changes make it difficult to implement research findings that could benefit education in the long term. 19. My research engagement is mainly with data and evidence about learners that is collected in my workplace. 20. Applying education research findings to student learning is a regular activity in my workplace. 21. School teachers and leaders view the use of NAPLAN data to understand individual children as a research activity. 22. I can readily access educational research that is relevant for use in my education context. 23. I know how to access and interpret data and evidence collected in my own education context.
<p>Section 3</p> <p>Ranking recommendations (Provide top 3 recommendations from set of 10)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That pre-service teacher education programs in Australia develop a stronger emphasis on teachers and educators as research consumers and active inquirers into their own practice. 2. That education systems take on a greater role in supporting schools/early childhood services to access and use high quality research. 3. That education systems provide incentives for teachers/educators to lead and participate in research and practitioner inquiry 4. That education institutions (schools, early childhood services, etc.) re-emphasise the role of school/centre-based evidence and data in relation to assessment and planning. 5. That the next revision of the <i>Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</i> strengthens expectations on teachers (at all levels) as research consumers and as enquirers into their own practice. 6. That education systems actively promote, report, and celebrate research completed by and with teachers and educators . 7. That education systems take a stronger role as brokers in establishing research collaborations and networks across education institutions and systems. 8. That universities and education systems actively collaborate to support exchanges between researchers and teachers/educators through mechanisms such as secondments and fellowships. 9. That education systems focus on the Highly Accomplished career stage to build and incentivise research capacity in and across schools and other education systems. 10. That data collection and analysis about students be more institution and context specific (e.g. sensitivity to location), with teachers given greater autonomy to respond to students' local needs in their teaching. <p>Opportunity to add additional recommendations.</p>

