Revisiting professional teacher standards



Amanda Watson

Department of Education and Training, Victoria

Abstract

The Australian Society for Music Education's (ASME) involvement in the development of professional standards for music educators was a significant and active research time in the history of the Society. As ASME celebrates its golden jubilee, it is appropriate to revisit that history and consider the future prospects of subject-specific standards. ASME became a strong player in the professional teacher standards movement in Australia, as it was one of in excess of 20 professional teaching associations that developed subject-specific teaching standards. The focus of this paper is to highlight and explore the process adopted to write the ASME National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (2005), the intense activity that took place around Australian between 2005 and 2009 and the impact of the written subject-specific standards with a change in the brief of a new statutory body.

Key words: certification, generic, professional learning, professional teaching standards, subject-specific

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Historical background

At the outset I must acknowledge that this paper builds on and is underpinned by a substantial amount of published writing on professional teaching standards, this being previous work by Watson, Forrest and Jeanneret (2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d, 2004e, 2004f, 2004g, 2005a, 2005b, 2006); Watson (2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2007, 2011, 2013); Forrest, Jeanneret and Watson (2005), Jeanneret, Watson and Forrest (2005); Jeanneret, Forrest and Watson, A. (2007). This paper complements an in-depth review of significant reports and appropriate literature regarding the development and use of professional teaching standards (see for example Watson, 2011). Accompanying this paper is a summary timeline of national events recording publications and activities that have occurred between 1985 and 2013. Frenzied activity lead to three types of professional standards being considered for development,

however as history will reveal not all types were completed and found their proposed use in the Australian educational landscape. The three types influenced each other in structure, style and content.

The professional standards growth was triggered by a national forum co-hosted in Melbourne in February 2000 by the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), the Australian College of Education (ACE) and the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ASCA), setting a framework for developments that occurred later that year. In September 2000, a national discussion paper, Standards of Professional Practice for Accomplished Teaching in Australian Classrooms (ACE, 2000) was prepared and released by the three groups co-hosting the national forum. The writing of this discussion paper was informed by work that was at the time, underway in developing subject-specific standards for teachers of English and Literacy, Mathematics and Science. The writers sought to answer the fundamental question, "What constitutes accomplished teaching?"

Teachers and educators, in teams and as individuals, set about writing professional standards classified as generic, subject-specific and specialist. Generic teaching standards encompassed the teaching profession as a whole and were cumulative with standards at different career stages. This work occurred under the auspices of the teacher registration boards in most States and Territories. Taking a national focus, Teaching Australia (established with funding from the Australian Government as the national body for the teaching profession), worked with teams of teachers around Australia writing generic standards at four career stages - graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teachers. This completed work was published as the National Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). In December 2012 the publication was renamed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and republished with the original date. Following a decision by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) replaced all jurisdictions' generic teaching standards from January 2013. From this date, AITSL required all Initial Teacher Education programs, to be accredited using the national accreditation process, which is directly linked to professional standards and their use by the teaching profession.

Subject-specific standards were developed by professional teaching associations, some supported by Australian Research Council (ARC) grants, allowing release time from the workplace for research and writing. These varied with regard to career stages and Ingvarson (2010) noted that in 2009 there were in excess of 20 associations who had developed or were developing professional standards. Specialist standards were the last to be written and these referred to stages of schooling (e.g., middle school).

Involving ASME

The ASME National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (2005) was launched at the ASME National Conference, Melbourne 2005. The initiative to reach this goal and the activity that followed was driven by myself, with Neryl Jeanneret and David Forrest. A deliberate decision was made to publish in a mix of media to allow accessibility to teachers of music in all avenues of employment.

An Issues Forum was conducted at the ASME National Conference in Darwin 2003, Two accompanying research papers, placed on the ASME website and in all conference satchels. enabled the ASME membership, readers of the website, and conference delegates to contribute and respond individually. Equipped with an analysis of responses from forum attendees and other contributions, a two-day standards summit dedicated to writing draft music standards was held in Melbourne February 2004. ASME Chapter Chairs were asked to identify a knowledgeable person who was informed about developments on a local level to attend and invitations were also issued to Australian national music education groups. The draft document was distributed to ASME members and interested groups for comment.

On behalf of Teaching Australia, ASME hosted a forum for delegates at the ASME National Conference in Perth 2007. The stated intention was to gather responses from music educators on a national level, contributing to a publication by Teaching Australia, National Professional Standards for Advanced Teaching and School Leadership. A Consultation Paper (2007). A presented paper by Jeanneret, Forrest and Watson (2007) addressed Teaching Australia's work on national teaching standards, teacher accreditation and the accreditation of teacher education courses, and connected these with ASME's further involvement drawing on the ASME National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (2005).

Becoming a frequent flyer ... let the standards festival begin

Established by the Australian Government, the support of the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL), 2004-2005 and Teaching Australia–Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (Teaching Australia) 2006-2009 was invaluable. I was invited to present and participate at many events around Australia, including as a respondent to consultation documents, and as a member of reference groups over the years 2005-2009. Through the National Education Forum, I was a member of the group that responded to initial consultations about the development of standards for teachers. I was in a position to present continual progress of ASME's professional standards development at ISME World Conferences 2004, 2006 and 2008. Also outside Australia, a paper was presented at the Asia-Pacific Symposium for Music Education Research (2003) and published in the Asia-Pacific Journal for Arts Education (2004) and the USA based MayDay Group (2004). In addition to NIQTSL and Teaching Australia, my link with the intense activity of this time was further strengthened as a member of the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations (AJCPTA), a national peak body that was involved with reviewing the drafts of the National Professional Standards for Teachers. This group changed its name and legal entity, and as a result I became a Director of the Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA), My membership opened doors to attend briefings and extended activities, many of which are referenced below.

ASME was invited to present a workshop at the Sharing Experience: Ways for Forward with Standards conference (2005) convened by NIQTSL. This was an invitational national conference for the teaching profession and the ASME contribution, 'Issues about the development and dissemination of teaching standards' was presented. The workshop provided an opportunity for small

groups to explore issues related to developing subject-specific teaching standards, such as representing stakeholders, preparation for the development process (including funding), ways of reaching shared meanings, writing collaboratively, disseminating results, responding to feedback, and communicating teaching standards (p. 15).

Teaching Australia–Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited was established in November 2005, and a standards reference consultation group was created. As a member of that group, on behalf of ASME, I provided written responses as required to published consultation material about the development of professional teaching standards. In addition, I was invited to participate in the Teaching Australia strategic planning workshop (2006-2009) in March 2006. The attendees represented a broad cross section of personnel involved with education in Australia.

The Teaching Australia Network, formed in 2007, was a formal collaboration of more than 30 national professional associations representing teachers, principals and teacher educators, and Teaching Australia Network Fora were convened in 2007, 2008 and 2009. ASME was invited to present a report to the Forum on national professional standards for advance teaching and school leadership (2007). I presented a report titled, 'Issues around professional standards from the Australian Society for Music Education's perspective'. The report addressed issues concerning the planning and processes leading to the publication of the ASME National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (2005) and plans for the expansion and use of the initial Framework.

An electronic standards group was formed in November 2007 by Teaching Australia to support those members of the profession who were selected to write national professional standards for advanced teaching and for principals. The electronic standards group, as its name implied, contributed to the material developed by the standards writing group, by email and served as a consultative group.

The Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession (Teaching Australia, 2008) was developed as a collaborative effort through discussions, brainstorming and writing of individual members of national professional associations together with Teaching Australia personal. Throughout 2007 and 2008 I made contributions to this group at meetings and electronically. ASME was one of 33 professional associations that endorsed the Charter.

Change ... introducing AITSL

With the closing of Teaching Australia at the end of 2009 and the establishment of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (AITSL) in January 2010, the collaborative work of the professional teaching associations waned. Partially completed work under the auspices of Teaching Australia on the development of primary teaching standards (supported by the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, AAMT) and early childhood standards-as specialist areas within stages of schooling-were passed onto AITSL, however these were not completed. The draft work of Teaching Australia on writing national professional standards for advanced teaching and for principals was completed by AITSL and published separately as National Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011d), renamed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and National Professional Standard for Principals (AITSL, 2011c). The Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession was republished unchanged by AITSL in 2011.

I attended AITSL briefings in 2011 and 2012 (as an APTA Board Director), and with relevant questioning, kept the value and goal of subject-specific standards current. The initial reasons for writing these standards, many of which targeted the accomplished level of teaching melted into oblivion. The language used by professional teaching associations in the subject-specific standards was more appropriate for the highly

accomplished teacher, as it spoke to all of them in their disciplines.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers became an important document for the future work of AITSL. The standards were written as generic descriptors and needed elaboration for the purposes of certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers in Australia and used for implementing performance review processes in schools. Elaboration was suggested as a use for the completed sets of subject-specific standards. Conflicting advice existed about whether to map subject-specific standards against the APST and personnel associated with the larger disciplines of English, mathematics, science and geography possibly commenced this work. AITSL had met with national professional teaching associations to determine how subject-specific standards could be used for certification.

Part of the descriptor for Highly Accomplished teachers, one of the four career stages, reads:

Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast in their specialist content area or across a range of content areas for generalist teachers. (AITSL, 2011d, p. 6)

This quote has significance in the future work of AITSL, implementing models for professional learning and certification. The descriptor of a Highly Accomplished teacher is included in *Certification of Highly Accomplished Teachers and School Leaders. Principles and processes* (AITSL, 2012c, p. 14), where the Highly Accomplished and Lead Career stage national standards are an appendix to that paper.

Since the publication of the professional standards, AITSL's work has focussed on three interrelated topics with papers to accompany each. These topics are establishing a performance and development culture, certification of teachers at the Highly Accomplished and Lead Career

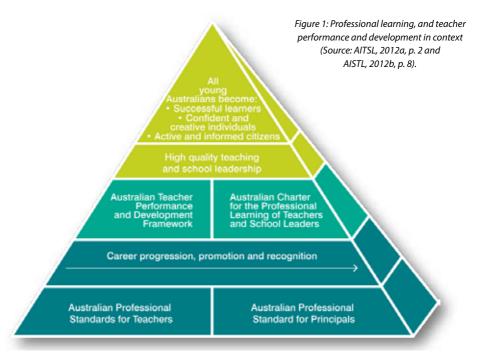
stages, and national accreditation of initial teacher education programs offered by all higher degree providers.

The two prongs that are most relevant to the use of subject-specific standards are professional learning and certification. In August 2012, AITSL released two interconnected publications, the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL, 2012a) and the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2012b). Both documents only take a focus on the APST (with no reference to subject-specific standards) and teacher professional learning goals and career stage development only relate to the Standards. However making a link to part of the descriptor for Highly Accomplished teachers (as quoted) is possible; "Performance and development should support the career progression of teachers, including through formal processes

such as promotion and certification as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher" (AITSL, 2012b, p. 8).

With reference to the progression of a graduate teacher from provisional to full registration, AITSL (2012b) acknowledges that the Standards "provide a more coherent and visible pathway through the career stages" (p. 8). That pathway is also important for teachers entering the upper levels of the career stages with clear and tangible expectations of teacher quality expressed the Standards. The Charter (2012a) "articulates the expectation that all teachers and school leaders actively engage in professional learning throughout their careers" (p. 2).

The pyramid model (Figure 1) is presented in the two aforementioned papers with headings relevant to the focus of the publication, namely, "Professional learning in context" (AITSL, 2012a, p. 2) and "Teacher performance and development in context" (AISTL, 2012b, p. 8). It illustrates a



number of concepts that impact on teachers and school leaders: ongoing professional learning, annual reviews through performance and development, promotion through school-based processes and recognition through portable certification.

Certification was introduced in 2013 with all State and Territory Governments agreeing to national consistency in the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. Five publications accompanied this activity: Certification of Highly Accomplished Teachers and School Leaders. Principles and major features (AITSL, 2011b), Certification of Highly Accomplished Teachers and School Leaders, Principles and processes (AITSL, 2012c), Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished Teachers and School Leaders in Australia (AITSL, 2013c), Certification documentary evidence supplement. Highly Accomplished Teachers (AITSL, 2013a) and Certification documentary evidence supplement, Lead Teachers (AITSL, 2013b). The supplement publications are subtitled 'Companion document to the Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished Teachers and School Leaders in Australia'. However, certification is not available for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Oueensland, Victoria and the Catholic sector in Western Australia. Therefore the statement that certification is portable across all jurisdictions and sectors is not accurate (2012c, p. 4). Consistency is further compromised as the term 'accreditation' is used in NSW. Without national consistency, the pyramid model does not represent the promotion and recognition of all teachers in Australia.

Principles and major features (AITSL, 2011b) and Principles and processes (AITSL 2012c) are relevant to the discussion in this paper, drawing the focus back to the use of the subject-specific standards. Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers: Principles and major features is noted by AITSL as "a companion paper to the National Professional Standards for Teachers and is designed to ensure that the processes for certification of

teachers at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages are rigorous and authentic" (AITSL, 2011b, p. 1).

One of the five principles of the proposed approach to the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers is standards-based, "Certification is against the National Professional Standards for Teachers. It represents an assessment against the Standards, independent of any use it might then be put to by teachers, their employers, or others" (AITSL, 2011b, p. 2). Principles and processes (AITSL, 2012c) acknowledge that, "Those who apply for certification will closely examine their own practice and receive comprehensive feedback against professional teacher standards. Teachers committed to improving their practice are vital to student success" (AITSL, 2012c, p. 2).

The role of the referees in the certification process is described as, "Referees nominated by the applicant are required to provide verification and evaluative statements against specific focus areas of the Standards about which they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice" (AITSL, 2012c, p. 6). At Stage 1 this involves "assessment of evidence submitted against the Standards, which includes annotated evidence of teacher practice, a written statement addressing the Standards, observation reports and referee comments" (AITSL, 2012c, p. 7). Some of the principles which apply to both career stages are:

- evidence will be drawn directly from the teacher's work
- evidence demonstrates the impact of the teacher's work on student outcomes, that could include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing
- evidence of the impact of the applicant's practice on others
- evidence must clearly reflect the teacher's individual contribution and demonstrate impact over a period of time. (AITSL, 2012c, p. 7)

Examples of evidence are suggested as:

- lesson plans and supporting documentation that detail the planning and delivery of a teaching sequence and its impact on student learning
- annotated samples of student work
- analysis of student performance data and outcomes, demonstrating how this has influenced teaching strategies and planning
- documentation of assessment strategies, and their links to the intended learning outcomes
- student/parent feedback drawn from regular practice
- evidence of participation in professional learning, how it has improved teaching practice and the strategies/knowledge been applied to improve student outcomes
- documentation used to support engagement with parents, the community and colleagues.
 Evidence of the impact of this engagement should also be included. (AITSL, 2012c, p. 8).

All of this material clearly illustrates the value in using subject-specific standards for certification, although they are not acknowledged.

Where are we now?

Over a decade has passed since the ASME National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (2005) was written and published and the landscape has changed. At the time this document was completed, it was acknowledged that a cyclical review of the ASME Standards would be needed. Just when ASME was completing the process for the first time, the professional teaching associations that had published subject-specific standards at least three years earlier, had commenced revision of their original work. Four other areas were identified for possible expansion of the ASME Standards, each of which required further writing to match the relevant topic: for initial teacher education

students training as music generalists and music specialists; for the novice teacher of music; for the intermediate teacher of music with 10 years' experience; and for conditions of teaching and learning of music. One reported use was as the basis to write the reference for an applicant for the National Awards for Excellence in School Music Education, administered by ASME. Another potential use is for annual performance reviews in schools, where it will be necessary for primary and secondary music teachers (classroom and instrumental) to make reference to the ASME Standards in their performance goals. It is only with this use that they will begin to have relevance and be recognised in the school environment.

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers remains the most effective use of subjectspecific standards. However as the sets that were written have faded from the collective memory, with only those who actually wrote them being aware of their existence, we need to promote their use by the teacher applicants for certification, commencing with the Highly Accomplished stage. Gathering of artefacts, submitted as an example of evidence, involves using subject-specific standards. As applicants prepare their portfolio for assessment against the seven professional Standards, they are well placed to make written reference to standards for their discipline written by their peers - members of a professional teaching association. The applicant must address the domain of professional engagement and this is another opportunity to refer to subject-specific standards. Referees reports and the judgements of the assessors are only informed by the Standards "at the relevant career stage and in the applicant's context", and the pro-active teacher is in an obvious position to acknowledge the work of the profession (AITSL, 2012c, p. 9).

The final word in this paper, I leave to Lawrence Ingvarson (2015) who has advocated for trust to be placed in the hands of the teaching profession and supported the writing of subject-specific

standards by members of professional teaching associations. Ingvarson advocates for teaching to have its "own national professional body, independent of government and other employing authorities" (n.p.). Teaching in Australia does not have its "own national system for providing teachers with a widely recognised and respected certification" (n.p.).

Building a rigorous certification system that is recognised nationwide provides a valid basis for lifting salaries and attracting more of our ablest graduates. That is unlikely to happen with 25 different certifying authorities, as is currently the case – a situation that other professions find hard to believe, and a clear sign that our governments do not believe teaching is up to the task. (Ingvarson, 2015, n.p.)

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Amanda Watson PhD is an Instrumental Music Teacher with the Department of Education and Training, Victoria. She is the ASME Victorian Chapter Treasurer and a member of the ISME Constitution and Bylaws review committee. Previous voluntary positions include ASME National Secretary, member and President of the Committee of Management of the Council of Professional Teaching Associations of Victoria, and a Board Member of the Australian Professional Teachers Association. Amanda is a trained panel member on the Victorian Institute of Teaching Accreditation Expert Group, having served as the Government secondary teacher representative on the Accreditation Committee for 10 years.

Appendix: Summary timeline of national events in Australia

General Professional Standards	Subject-Specific Standards
	1985 Special Skills required of the Music Teacher/Co- ordinator (ASME Victoria)
1994 Australian Teaching Council established	
	1995 Arts Education (Senate Inquiry)
May 1996 Consideration of a National Forum of Teacher Professional Associations	
1996 National Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching (ATC)	
October 1996 Enhancing Teacher Professionalism: Towards a New National Body for Teacher Professional Associations (ACSA)	
	1997 Australian Guidelines for Dance Teachers (AUSDANCE)
1998 Report of the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Project completed (Adey, ACDE)	1998 Australian Standards for Dance Teachers (AUSDANCE)
1998 A Class Act: Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession (Senate Inquiry)	
	1999 Teacher Learning Technology Competencies (ACCE)
February 2000 National forum on professional teaching standards (AARE, ACE, ACSA)	
September 2000 Standards of Professional Practice for Accomplished Teaching in Australian Classrooms (ACE, ACSA, AARE)	
October 2000 AEU position on Professional Teaching Standards adopted	
February 2001 Analysis of Responses to the National Discussion Paper on Standards of Professional Practice (ACE)	2001 Position Paper on Working Conditions for Teachin and Learning in Drama (Drama Australia)
	November 2001 Professional Competencies for Beginning Teachers of Primary Physical Education – Years P-6: Professional Competencies for Beginning Teachers of Secondary Physical Education – Years 7-12 (ACHPER, Victorian Branch)
April 2002 Teacher Standards, Quality & Professionalism: Towards a Common Approach (DEST)	2002 Standards for Teachers of English and Literacy in Australia (AATE & ALEA)
November 2002 A National Framework for Standards for Teaching – A Consultation Paper (MCEETYA TQELT)	2002 Excellence in Teaching Mathematics in Australian Schools (AAMT)
December 2002 National Statement from the Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality & Professionalism: A Working Document (ACSA)	2002 National Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science (ASTA), revised August 2009
May 2003 National Statement from the Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality & Professionalism (ACE)	
July 2003 Approval given to A National Framework for Standards for Teaching (MCEETYA TQELT)	
September 2003 Report of a National Forum on Teacher Standards, Quality & Professionalism (DEST)	
November 2003 A National Framework for Standards for Teaching (MCEETYA TQELT)	

General Professional Standards	Subject-Specific Standards
November 2004 National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership established	2004 Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians (ALIA, ASLA)
	2004 Standards for highly accomplished special education teachers (AASE)
August 2005 Sharing Experience: ways forward with standards (NIQTSL Conference)	July 2005 ASME National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (ASME)
October 2005 Quality Teaching and School Leadership (Watson)	2005 Teacher Standards for ESL (ACTA)
November 2005 Teaching Australia – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited established	2005 Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures (AFMLTA) 2008 Language specific annotations: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, Spanish (AFMLTA)
May 2006 Our Profession Our Future (Teaching Australia)	2006 Standards for Teachers of History (HTAA)
August 2006 Teaching Australia Standards Reference Group established	2006 Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners (CICA), revised 2007
August 2006 Standards for School Leadership (Ingvarson et al.)	
August 2006 Professional Learning using the Mathematics Standards (Bishop et al.)	
August 2006 Standards for Advanced Teaching (Ingvarson & Kleinhenz)	
September 2006 Professional teaching associations and profession standards: embedding standards in the 'discourse of the profession' (Hayes)	
February 2007 Teaching and Leading for Quality Australian Schools. A review and synthesis of research-based knowledge (Zammit et al.)	
March 2007 National Professional Standards for Advanced Teaching and School Leadership. A Consultation Paper (Teaching Australia)	
July 2007 Teaching Australia Network Forum (Melbourne) Teaching Australia Network established	
May 2008 National Professional Standards for Advanced Teaching and for Principals. Second Consultation Paper (Teaching Australia)	
July 2008 Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession (Teaching Australia) 2011 republished by AITSL	
June 2008 Teaching Australia Network Forum (Sydney)	
March 2009 Standards for accomplished teachers and principals. A foundation for public confidence and respect (Teaching Australia Network)	
March 2009 Conceptualising a voluntary certification system for highly accomplished teachers (Mayer)	
Aug 2009 Teaching Australia Network Forum (Brisbane)	
January 2010 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership established	2010 Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of School Geography (AGTA)

General Professional Standards Subject-Specific Standards February 2011 National Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL) December 2012 renamed as Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL) July 2011 National Professional Standard for Principals (AITSL) October 2011 Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. Principles and major features (AITSL) April 2012 Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. Principles and processes (AITSL) August 2012 Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL) August 2012 Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL) March 2013 Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia (AITSL) March 2013 Certification documentary evidence supplement. Highly Accomplished Teachers (AITSL)

March 2013 Certification documentary evidence supplement.

Lead teachers (AITSL)