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Reform of education agencies a chance to return teacher voice to the centre of education policy

The announcement by the federal Education Minister Jason Clare of a review of federal government teacher and education agencies provides a critical opportunity to restore teacher voice at the heart of the education system.

The government's proposal to consolidate the work of the four federal education agencies - Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), and Education Services Australia (ESA) - under a new, coordinated authority, the Teaching and Learning Commission, warrants careful consideration.

Our school leaders, teachers and school communities strive every day to deliver the highest quality education. They must, in turn, be supported by the highest quality resources and expertise from government.

To achieve better outcomes for students, these agencies must work in genuine partnership with the teaching profession.

The government must ensure that any new education authority is founded on transparency, educational expertise and respect for the profession. There is no place for politically motivated education culture wars. Teachers and their unions must play a central role in shaping the development and operation of any new authority.

Significant workplace change and potential restructuring also brings uncertainty for affected workers. The review must therefore include extensive consultation with staff and unions in the existing four agencies to minimise adverse impacts and job insecurity.

The government's plan is an opportunity to repair and rebuild an education system grounded in teacher voice and professional expertise.