

MEDIA RELEASE

Population boom spurs demand for more teachers, new schools

11 March 2015: A new report released today by the Centre for Education Policy and Practice at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) reveals a growing population is increasing demand for teachers as well as additional classrooms and even new schools. The report shows that the population of students is already rising in primary schools, and will begin flowing through to secondary school from 2018.

According to ACER chief executive, Professor Geoff Masters AO, *The Teacher Workforce in Australia: Supply, demand and data issues* report usefully informs policy and planning decisions about current and projected workforce requirements, and the infrastructure required to maintain and grow a high-quality schooling sector.

The report by ACER Senior Research Fellow Dr Paul Weldon indicates that the population boom that began in 2008 will increase demand for teachers and require additional classes in existing primary schools every year until at least 2025. This significant increase in numbers may require the construction of new schools in areas such as outer metropolitan growth corridors.

Calculated on the basis of Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, New South Wales is projected to require the equivalent of 385 additional primary classes each year until 2020. Victoria is likely to require 448 additional primary classes each year, Queensland 443 classes and Western Australia 351 classes.

“*The Teacher Workforce in Australia* report assists school and system leaders to understand how many new teachers we will need to prepare and retain in the workforce in order to meet the growing student population, and that attention needs to be paid to particular locations and particular specialist subjects,” Professor Masters said.

“Supply generally has outstripped demand, particularly for generalist primary teachers, and in some secondary subjects, but this report indicates that the demand for teachers is currently strong and is forecast to remain high in most states for at least the next 10 years.”

The report identifies a likely shortage of teachers of secondary physics, computing and IT, mathematics and chemistry. About 20 per cent of mathematics and physics teachers are currently teaching out-of-field, with out-of-field teaching in some subjects likely to become more acute over the next 10 years if the projected rising demand is not addressed.

“We need to recruit high-quality candidates into rigorous teacher education programs simply to maintain the quality of Australia’s school system. This report shows that higher education providers, school systems and schools need to work together to ensure the supply and retention of high-quality teachers, which is essential if we are to achieve strong student outcomes,” Professor Masters said.

The report also indicates that Catholic and independent schools, which account for one-quarter to one-third of all schools, may not have the infrastructure to maintain their current share of students and cope with the resulting high demand in the short to medium term. This may lead to a rise in the proportion of students entering government schools, at least in some areas.

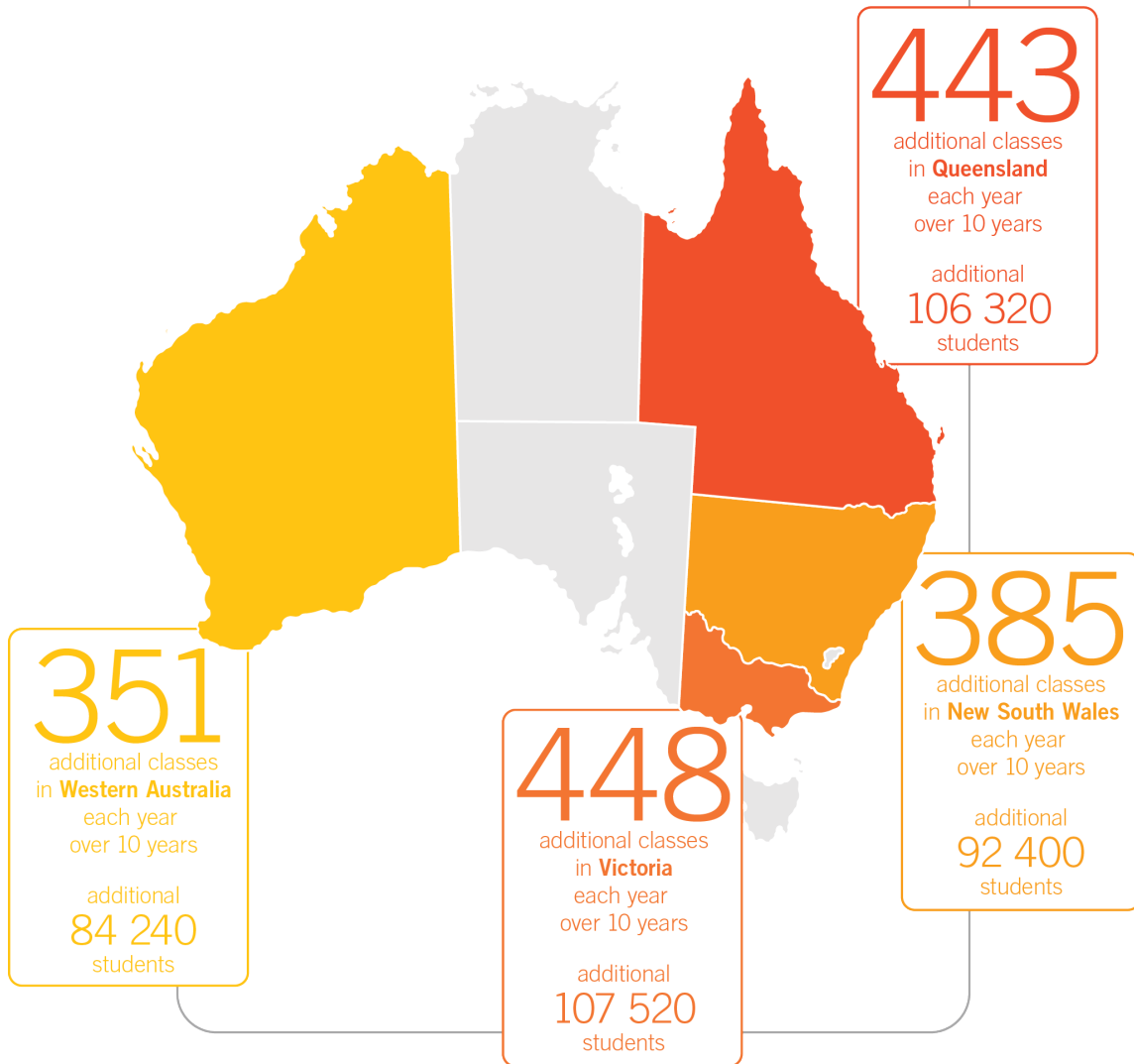
For further information visit < <http://research.acer.edu.au/policyinsights/2> >

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PRIMARY F-6 GROWTH FROM 2011-2020



Based on ABS 3222.0 Population Projections. Time Series B. Calculation assumes an average primary class is 24 students.