

MEDIA RELEASE

Teaching snapshot reveals ageing workforce

12 November 2014: The Australian report from the second cycle of the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of teachers and principals of students in Years 7 to 10, released today, has found that the number of teachers aged 50 years and older is rising, while the number aged 30 years or younger is falling. It also reveals that only two-thirds of teachers say their teacher training program prepared them for the job, and between five per cent and eight per cent of teachers are teaching out of field. The Australian report complements the international report released by the OECD in June.

The report, *Australian Teachers and the Learning Environment: An analysis of teacher response to TALIS 2013*, prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) for the Commonwealth Department of Education, reveals that:

- 59.2 per cent of Australian teachers are female, compared to the TALIS average of 68.9 per cent, but 38.6 per cent of Australian lower secondary school principals are female, significantly lower than the TALIS average of 49.4 per cent; and
- the average age of the Australian teacher is 43.4 years, compared to the TALIS average of 42.9 years, while the average age of the Australian principal is 53.2 years, similar to the TALIS average of 51.5 years.

ACER's Director of Educational Monitoring and Research, Dr Sue Thomson, said the survey provides a snapshot of the teaching workforce and learning environment.

"The internationally comparable information made available through TALIS addresses teacher demographic characteristics, school leadership, professional development, feedback and appraisals for the teaching workforce, school effectiveness, and teacher practices and beliefs. This enables policy makers and others in the education sector to examine and benchmark best practice from education systems around the world," Dr Thomson said.

"While the average age of the Australian teacher is 43.4 years, 37 per cent are 50 years or older and the proportion aged 30 years or younger has decreased from 18.2 per cent in 2008 to just 15.7 per cent in 2013. This has significant implications for policy makers and system leaders in terms of succession planning."

According to the report, only 62.2 per cent of Australian teachers say their teacher training program addressed subject content knowledge, while 64 per cent say their teacher training addressed pedagogical content knowledge. Both proportions are lower than the TALIS averages of 72.5 per cent and 69.6 per cent respectively. Nevertheless, Australia has one of the highest educated teacher workforces with virtually all teachers holding an undergraduate or postgraduate diploma or degree or above, compared to the TALIS average of 90.9 per cent.

In terms of out-of-field teaching in Australia, 8.7 per cent of foreign language teachers, 7.2 per cent of English teachers, 5.6 per cent of science teachers and 5.3 per cent of mathematics teachers have received no formal education or training in their subject area.

The report, *Australian Teachers and the Learning Environment: An analysis of teacher response to TALIS 2013* (PDF: 204 pages, 2.6 MB), is available from the Commonwealth Department of Education website < <https://www.education.gov.au/school-teacher-workforce-data-reports> >

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