

**University of Sydney, Faculty of Education and Social  
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**'Learning for Leadership': developments and challenges in Australia  
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Despite an abundance of literature relating to school leadership, the professional learning of school leaders remains under-examined. Whilst investment in the professional development of school leaders is difficult to quantify, the vast array of development activities is testament to the growing interest in this field in Australia. This presentation highlights some of the recent developments and challenges for school leaders, researchers and policy makers.

The presentation highlighted three projects in school leadership that the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is undertaking or had recently completed.

**Two projects ACER is currently undertaking have been commissioned by DEST:**

***Staff in Australia's Schools survey*** – This is an Australian-wide voluntary survey that ACER is conducting with the support of the Australian College of Educators (ACE).

The survey, which is still in its developmental stage, will seek to collect information directly from school teachers and leaders about their background and qualifications, their work, their career intentions, and factors which reduce or contribute to the appeal of the profession.

***Australian Country Background Report*** – This project's Report, due for submission to DEST this month, will form one part of Australia's involvement in the OECD *Improving School Leadership Activity*.

The Report seeks to address questions to do with:

- roles and responsibilities of school leaders under different governance structures
- what seem to be promising policies and conditions for making school leaders most effective in improving school outcomes addressed in the CBR
- how school leadership can best be developed and supported.

The Report is structured into seven chapters according to the Guidelines for Country Participation. One of the seven chapters reviews the professional learning of school leaders in Australia. The work of the project has been facilitated and supported by a National Advisory Committee, established by DEST.

**A third recently completed project was commissioned by Teaching Australia – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership:**

*Standards for School Leadership* – This project was commissioned by Teaching Australia in June last year to review approaches to standards for school leadership and options for a national system for assessment against standards for prospective and established school leaders.

The project involved a literature review, national consultation on issues related to standards for school leadership and a National Forum, which examined a range of purposes for such standards and principles on which they may be based.

In particular we chose for further review five examples of systems where there was evidence of the standards being used for professional learning and recognition purposes: Western Australia, England, Netherlands, Scotland and the US.

To interrogate the examples a set of questions guided our review. Questions about standards (who and how and what was in the standards); the infrastructure for professional learning (how organised, who are the providers) and recognition.

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