



History Teachers' Association of NSW

ABN: 74 679 202 422

P O Box 219

ANNANDALE, NSW, 2038

PH: 02 9518 4940 FAX: 02 9518 8231

Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning
GPO BOX 5431
SYDNEY, NSW 2001

7th December 2020

Dear Minister,

We are writing in response to the recent decision to 'overhaul' the accreditation system for professional learning in New South Wales.

We are concerned by the decision to cancel the endorsement of all professional development providers except for the NSW Department of Education, Catholic Schools NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW. Most concerning is the fact that this decision has stripped the History Teachers' Association of NSW (HTANSW) of its previous endorsement and places our ability to efficiently plan and implement professional learning at risk. This decision, announced at the beginning of a major curriculum reform, has the potential to be highly problematic for quality teaching in NSW.

HTANSW has a long history of providing affordable, high-quality and well-evaluated professional learning for teachers in this state. Our professional learning program draws on the expertise of leading teachers, experienced HSC markers, university academics and members of prominent cultural institutions in NSW. It is founded on rigorous processes of planning and evaluation and informed by deep and relevant curriculum knowledge. The recently released Masters review (*'Nurturing Wonder and Igniting Passion'*, 2020) clearly foregrounds the importance of deep knowledge and subject expertise in effective teaching. Professional associations such as HTANSW, are best placed to provide this for teachers seeking to develop their subject expertise in the mandatory, elective and Stage 6 History syllabuses in NSW.

Importantly, HTANSW is not affiliated with any specific educational sector and the diversity of school systems in NSW is clearly reflected in our member base (which comprises several thousand teachers who are affiliated with HTANSW through individual and school memberships). Our professional learning events are always well attended by the three educational sectors and our relationship with these sectors is positive and mutually supportive.

For many years HTANSW has made it a priority to visit regional areas of NSW to ensure that teachers beyond metropolitan areas can readily access high-quality professional learning – these events are often run at a financial loss to our association but are considered a vital service to teachers in regional NSW. Any income from the HTANSW professional development program is reinvested in providing more services for our members and the teaching community.

Since HTANSW received endorsement as a provider of professional learning, we have always efficiently and reliably worked with NESA (and formerly BOSTES) to ensure that our events meet the high standards set for delivering teacher training. Our courses are consistently reviewed and our strategic directions are informed by regular surveys of stakeholders and teachers to ensure that what we plan and deliver targets the direct needs of the community.

Our association has played an invaluable role in NSW education for over 50 years and remains committed to providing the best support we can for our state's teachers. We sincerely hope that in any future deliberations about these matters, representative associations such as HTANSW are acknowledged as being integral to a robust and successful culture of professional learning in NSW.

The recent announcement that has stripped trusted professional associations such as HTANSW of their endorsement to provide professional learning is both disappointing and an unhelpful direction for teacher associations and the thousands of teachers they represent. We strongly request that the Minister reconsider these changes so that HTANSW can retain its formal recognition as an established and highly valued provider of quality professional learning in NSW.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn McKenzie
President, History Teachers' Association NSW