

New South Wales Council of
Dean of Education
(NSWCDE)

Grassroots Research Strategy

For and with the NSWCDE, August 2023

NSWCDE + Acknowledgements

The New South Wales Council of Deans of Education (NSWCDE)

The NSWCDE is the peak body representing NSW Teacher Education Providers, University Faculties and Schools of Education. The NSWCDE leads the delivery and development of education programs, partnerships and research. It acts as an advocate for pre-service and in-service teacher education by:

- Providing a forum in which Deans of Education and others concerned with education meet to share information about education;
- Facilitating collaboration in education including facilitating collaboration of special interest groups within education;
- Encouraging and supporting research in education;
- Establishing mechanisms for monitoring the quality and status of education,
- Debating education issues of policy and administration;
- Providing independent professional comment and advice to Government and other agencies on issues in education;
- Providing an informed public voice on matters associated with education; and,
- Affiliating with other organisations with interests in education.

NSWCDE is the state affiliate of the Australian Council of Deans of Education for New South Wales (NSWCDE, 2021).

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The New South Wales Council of Deans of Education acknowledge the ancestors and descendants of the Country known as Wiradjuri (New South Wales) and recognise that this is sovereign, unceded territory. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' enduring connection to Country and pay our deep and ongoing respect to the Elders, past and present.

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“Everyone looks to the Deans for direction!”

(ROUNDTABLE 2 REGIONAL ADULT STAKEHOLDER)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New South Wales Council of Deans of Education (NSWCDE) Grassroots Research Agenda Setting Project was a 2022-2023 collaborative project to co-create an educational research strategy for and with the NSWCDE, the education profession and its key stakeholders.

As a peak body of Deans of Education, the NSWCDE activated this grassroots research agenda-setting project to respond to and challenge contemporary issues in education and to drive an innovative agenda for educational research. The focus was to identify new and enduring research priorities.

The participants included 181 regional and metropolitan educational leaders (principals and deputy principals), teachers, academics, curriculum/policy writers, departmental and independent sector colleagues, parents/guardians, and children and young people. Through a series of progressive group forums within three transdisciplinary world cafés, conducted both online and face-to-face, the participants responded to three videocast provocations as an orientation. They were then presented with eight questions as further provocations, to undertake a snowballing data collection and analysis process. Participants' responses were captured through multiple platforms to apprehend and co-create key research priorities.

The current pressing issues in education, including teacher retention and attraction, inclusivity and accessibility, and climate change, should and must be addressed through imminent educational research.

Recommendations that were generated through the forums emerged across six strategic research drivers, which centre the educational research agenda. They are:

- (i) Determining education for who and what;
- (ii) Authentic explorations on inclusivity and accessibility for all learners;
- (iii) Climate, Country and education as a pressing contemporary assemblage;
- (iv) High-quality education in contemporary times;
- (v) Attracting and retaining successful, motivated, and capable teachers; and,
- (vi) Effective, relevant, and attuned (quality) teacher education.

Educational research in Australia

Education is identified as vital for individual, national, and global development with various focal points for attention from local education strategies to global goals for sustainable development. These include but are not limited to the NSW Rural and Remote Education Strategy 2021-2024, the 2019 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration of goals for young Australians, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), as the premier national professional body for educational researchers, fosters a wide range of research through member Special Interest Groups (SIG), events, and its international high quality (Q1) publications in their journal *The Australian Educational Researcher* (AARE, 2023). AARE encompasses a broad scope, as indicated by approximately 30 SIGs, however, a recent AARE working party identified that educational research in Australia has become constrained and limited. They call for advocacy for a broader range of research and more support (Brennan et al., 2020).

Australian education peak bodies that articulate research agendas primarily focus on applied research for evidence to inform best practice. The NSW State Government require quality research that adds value to public education (2022). Similarly, the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) identifies pragmatic priorities related to aspects of learning, schooling, and access (2023). The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) postulates a 2015 Initial Teacher Education Research Agenda that focuses on quality and operational aspects of establishing the practices of early career teachers.

Despite the research objectives of these bodies, a recent report maintains that education reforms over the last decade in Australia have had little impact (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2022). In an Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) review of educational research funding, recommendations signaled that a stronger research culture is needed through collaborative, priority-focused research to maintain currency in educational research (Cutter-Mackenzie & Renouf, 2017). Commentators recognise that there are crises and uncertainties impacting on education such that they question if the current education offerings are relevant (Hare, 2022).

The Queensland and Victorian State Government education research priorities extend beyond learning and teaching practicalities to system, pathways, and community focus areas, addressing both current and future needs (DET Research, 2021; Queensland Department of Education, 2021). The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER, 2023) signals that their research supports the global Education 2030 agenda to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2015, P.1), aligning with a need for an education research agenda that includes future-focused research.

The NSW CDE has responded to the opportunity to shape contemporary educational research to be more expansive and future-focused by engaging in this grassroots research strategy project to identify research priorities co-created with a wide range of stakeholders.

Figure 1: Sketch Artist Katie Hotko's capture of participant responses from Roundtable 2 - Regional adult stakeholders.



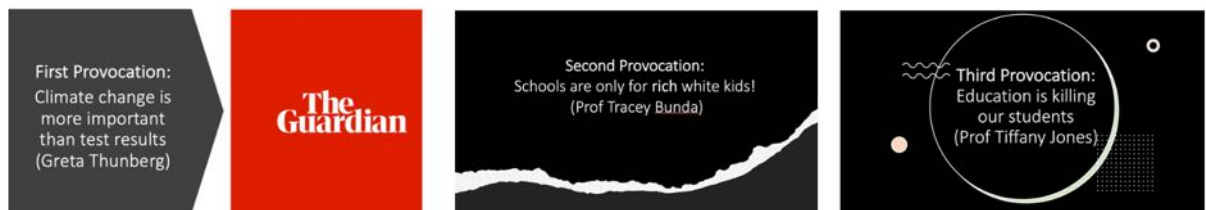
NSWCDE Grassroots Research Strategy Methodology

The overarching aim of the Grassroots Research Strategy was to establish a research agenda with and for the NSWCDE, and specifically, identify the ‘big’ research questions, ideas, and priorities.

In setting the NSWCDE research strategy, prioritising a grassroots approach ensured the contributions of stakeholders that ranged from education experts, academics and system governance to local ‘end users’, including educational leaders, teachers, children, young people, and parents/guardians, who were able to voice their perspectives. Participant organisations included universities, schools, preschools, early childhood education and care settings, homeschool, NSW Department of Education, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), parent associations, unions, and Indigenous stakeholders.

Through a series of progressive group forums within three transdisciplinary world café events (metro online - 78, regional online - 70, regional face-to-face - 33), 181 participants responded to three videocast provocations (see Figure 2), then eight questions (see Table 1) to undertake a snowballing data generation and analysis process, with data building on data. The face-to-face forum was with young people and therefore the questions were tailored to their contexts (see Table 1). Participants’ responses were captured through audio recordings, group facilitator and participant contributions to online sharing spaces (Padlet), butcher’s paper notes, and artist-observers’ sketches, to co-create emergent ideas and concepts about educational research.

Figure 2: World café videocast provocation titles



Analysis of all data identified trends, diffractive emergences, and notable absences. Six compelling strategic drivers emerged through this analytical process.

Visit <http://nswcde.org.au> to view the analysis in the roundtable data pack.

By building this research agenda with six strategic research drivers for and with education, the NSW CDE seeks to initiate local and national conversations, aiming to shape state and national education research agendas and concomitant policy.

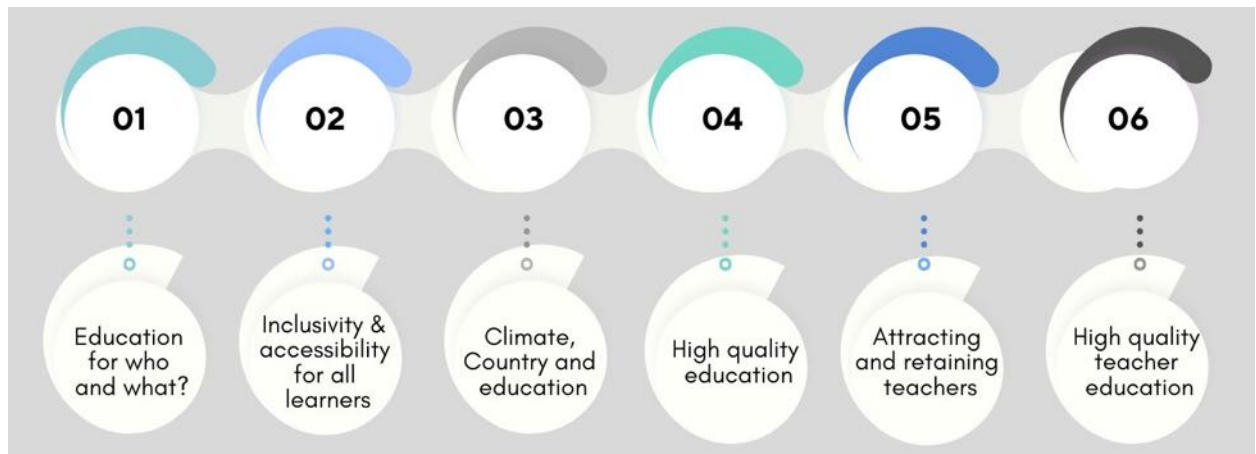
Table 1: Focus group questions

	Roundtable 1 + 2 (metro & regional adults) Questions	Roundtable 3 (young people) Questions
Question 1	What should be the biggest questions, ideas and priorities in educational research?	What should be the biggest questions to explore in educational research?
Question 2	What does high quality research cost?	In what ways can young people be involved in research? How can we make that work?
Question 3	Who should do the research?	Who should do the research?
Question 4	What does an effective partnership approach look like in educational research	Who else might be interested and/or involved in educational research? How can we make that work?
Question 5	How do we translate educational research into practice to ensure impact?	How can research make a difference to you and your education?
Question 6	What counts as evidence, and what is valued? How do we respond and/or shift it?	What counts as research evidence? What evidence is relevant to young people?
Question 7	What is the role of Deans of Education in supporting educational research agendas?	N/A
Question 8	What do politicians and influential decision-makers really need to know about educational research?	What do politicians and influential decision-makers really need to know about young people and education?

Six Strategic Research Drivers

The methodology and subsequent trends analysis identified six strategic research drivers or priorities (see Figure 3 and details below). There was acknowledgement across the participants that any research agenda-setting exercise represents a “battlefield of ideas” and there was deep questioning as to why some issues “are still on the ‘education’ agenda.”

Figure 3: Six Strategic Research Drivers



Strategic Research Driver 1: Education for who and what?

Across the three world cafes, a dominant trend was ‘education for who and what’ (see Figures 4-6). This driver is largely ontological and centres on the purposes of education in the contemporary national and global context. There was an overarching sense that the purpose of “school education” had “lost its way” in the modern context, and in children and young people’s lives. In keeping with this thought, is Sir Ken Robinson (2022, p.1) who asks:

What is education for? As it happens, people differ sharply on this question. It is what is known as an “essentially contested concept.” Like “democracy” and “justice,” “education” means different things to different people. Various factors can contribute to a person’s understanding of the purpose of education, including their background and circumstances. It is also inflected by how they view related issues such as ethnicity, gender, and social class. Still, not having an agreed-upon definition of education doesn’t mean we can’t discuss it or do anything about it.

Participants across the respective forums recommended the following research priorities about the purpose and recipients of education:

- “Who is school for? What is education for?” (Roundtable 1 and 2 - Metro and Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “Is it [about] conforming? Is it civilising? What about learning/educating for the future?” (Roundtable 1 and 2 - Metro and Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);

- “Why for example is maths and English prioritised over everything in schools - including a planet in peril? Why are certain learning areas more prioritised than others?” (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “It is a battlefield of Ideas. Why are the same things still on top of [the] agenda?” (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- “[Education that is] agile. Respectful. Responsive. On a continuum. Moving Forward.” (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response); and,
- “What signposts should inform our directions for education in the future?” (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response).

Young people’s (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3):

- “Understanding the learner in the current post-Covid context”;
- “Is what we are learning relevant to our lives?”;
- “Is school preparing students for life?”;
- “Changes [required] to meet needs of future”; and,
- “As the world develops, so should schools.”

These strategic research drivers represent challenges and opportunities for educational researchers and key stakeholders to engage in research processes for re-imagining education.

Figure 4: Sketch Artist’s (SketchGroup) capture of participants’ responses from Roundtable 1 - Metro adult stakeholders.

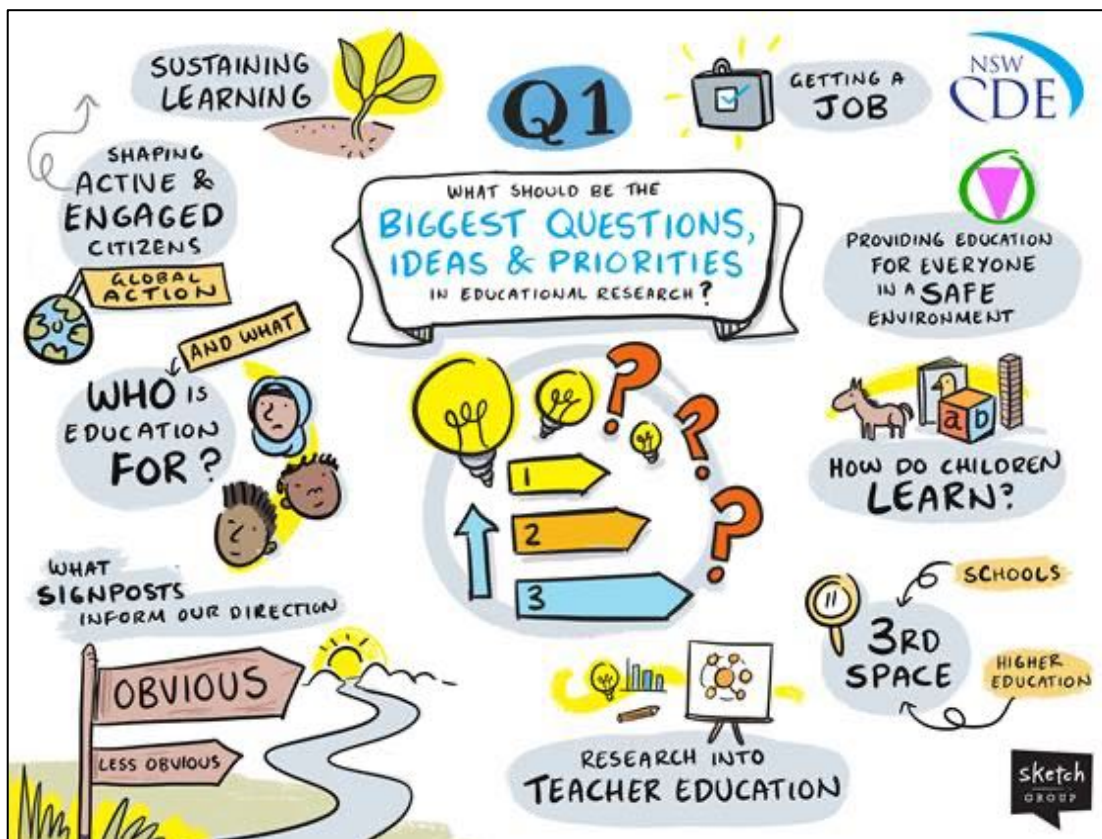


Figure 5: Sketch Artist's (SketchGroup) capture of participants' responses from Roundtable 1 - Regional adult stakeholders.



Figure 6: Sketch Artist's (SketchGroup) capture of participants' responses from Roundtable 3 - Young people stakeholders.



Strategic Research Driver 2: Inclusivity and accessibility

There was a strong focus on social justice throughout each world café, identifying the need to consider and include supporting the diverse needs and perspectives beyond dominant norms and ensuring safe educational spaces for all. This aligns with the first goal of the Mparntwe Education Declaration that young Australians' education "promotes excellence and equity" (Education Council, 2019). Importantly, equity and discrimination are seen as the second most important issue of concern for young people in Australia by 18,800 participants in the most recent Mission Australia Youth Survey (Leung et al., 2022).

The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture and knowledges was noted as particularly important. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) instigated a focus on improving sensitivity to cultural diversity in schools regarding Indigenous perspectives, with a 2020 discussion paper to consult the community about enriching the Indigenous cultural competency of teachers. The paper highlighted the importance of taking a culturally sensitive approach to education:

Until recently, there has been limited recognition of the incredible diversity of languages and cultural practices among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In many ways, the idea of 'cultural competency' respects and embodies the recognition of this diversity, and the celebration of the cultural resurgence that is currently underway. Cultural competency also speaks to the idea of safety, recognising that no student can learn unless they feel safe and welcome at school (AITSL, 2020, p.5).

Participants across the roundtables recommended the following Inclusivity & Accessibility research priorities (see Figure 7):

- The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledges into curriculum and pedagogy;
- Diversifying to address and respect different cultural groups, values and flexibility;
- How to positively deviate from the standardised curriculum;
- Diverse and individualised learning - "What is education for all?" (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- Inquiry into if early childhood and school education are appropriate or "fit for purpose?" (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder response); and,
- Diverse collaborations to help disrupt entrenched ideas and approaches (Roundtable 1 and 2 - Metro and Regional - Adult Stakeholder responses).

Young people's (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3) (see Figure 8 & 9):

- "Providing education for everyone in a safe environment";
- "Address the gap in the teaching of Indigenous experiences;
- "[You] Can disappear in a public school and it doesn't matter! You're just another number";
- "ATAR/HSC is not a measure of intelligence. It's a one size fits all system. It's overwhelming";
- "You need to use multiple viewpoints";

- “More student inclusion in the curriculum – [with] more diversity...more ethnic minorities [and] people of different sexual orientations”; and,
- “Flexible learning, like learning from home during Covid.”

Figure 7: Sketch Artist’s (Katie Hotko) capture of participants’ responses from Roundtable 3 - Young people stakeholders.



Figure 8: Sketch Artist’s (Katie Hotko) capture of participants’ responses from Roundtable 3 - Young people stakeholders.



Figure 9: Sketch Artist's (SketchGroup) capture of participants' responses from Roundtable 3 - Young people stakeholders.



The participants clearly indicated that including and respecting diverse perspectives and approaches is needed so that young people feel safe and valued as individuals through education. According to children and young people, further research is necessary into inclusion and diversity perspectives, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island perspectives and knowledges, as well as gender, sex, multicultural and racial identities. Education for all and education for individuals need further interrogation through research.

Strategic Research Driver 3: Climate, Country, and education

A clear message from all stakeholders in the grassroots discussions was that climate and other environmental crises and uncertainties must be prioritised in contemporary education. In the most recent Mission Australia Youth Survey half of the participating young Australians, aged 15 – 19 years, nominated the environment as the most important issue of their lives (Leung et al., 2022). Globally, climate change through the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, Climate Action, is identified as the greatest challenge facing humanity, with education identified as a key solution or response strategy. In Australia, the Mparntwe Declaration identifies the third element of Goal 2 is for young Australians to become “active and informed members of the community” and “understand their responsibilities as global citizens and know how to affect positive change” (Education Council, 2019, p. 6).

The theme of drawing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges to address climate change was a trend throughout the data. Going beyond mitigation and adaptation strategies aligned with the penetrating theme from all roundtables of ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledges are included in education. Again, this resonates with national (Rousell and Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, 2023) and global climate action responses identifying Indigenous knowledges for key insights (IPCC 2007, 2023).

Participants across the roundtables recommended the following education research priorities to focus on related to the driver of Climate, Country and Education.

- What is climate change education and how is it understood in/by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures? Specifically, how can teachers shape active and engaged citizens for local/global action?;
- How can schools have significantly less environmental impact?;
- Climate change as a “more prevalent” driver for schools. “Climate action (focus on climate change) - top of mind for all!” (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “I believe that climate change should absolutely be a significant focus in education in schools, not just as an optional topic” (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder response);
- “How does education teach people 'for' planet?” (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- “What is it to be a good human?” “How does education help people move out of strong-pulling areas such as poverty, oppression, lack of understanding?” (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses); and,
- Shaping active and engaged citizens. “How do you become an active and engaged citizen if you're not informed?” (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response).

Young people’s (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3) highlighted (see Figure 10):

- “Deal with issues now not later”;
- “We have urgent issues to address;”
- “(Climate) relevant to my passions;”
- “We must change.” “Power in numbers to change;”
- “How can we make our schools more environmentally friendly (less impact)?”

- “Closing the gap is needed – racism makes us a poorer nation for not centering Indigenous Knowledge in learning. Recognise Indigenous science & culture;” and,
- “Climate and Country, rather than climate change alone. Climate change in and by itself isn't at front of mind, rather climate change as understood in/by Aboriginal cultures.”

Figure 10: Provocation One – Greta Thunberg. Artist: Katie Hotko



It was very clear from the data that a multifaceted climate change response as a core educational imperative was strongly indicated and supported.

Strategic Research Driver 4: Quality education

During the world cafés, the topic of education quality sparked animated conversations, particularly among the adult participants. There was a collective emphasis on redefining the concept of quality education – just what is meant by ‘quality’ - with a shared agreement that a broader perspective is necessary. Adult stakeholders highlighted the importance of exploring education quality beyond the limited scope of identifying successful teaching strategies, with some contentious opinions expressed about current requirements for narrowly prescribed and focused educational research. The youth participants also advocated for an inclusive approach to examining quality education, with a focus on

allowing them, as the "generation of tomorrow," to actively engage in educational research that addresses their needs.

The grassroots stakeholders' aspirations for quality education and quality education research align with leading perspectives in the field. Participants' views on quality resonate with the guidance provided by the Mparntwe Declaration, which emphasises the promotion of excellence in the Australian education system. According to the Declaration, excellence entails providing high-quality education that empowers learners, personalises instruction, offers support, recognises diversity, and fosters varied, challenging, and stimulating learning experiences (Education Council, 2019).

Similarly, Australia's Youth Policy Framework, articulated by the Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills and Employment, aims to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and capabilities necessary for lifelong success (2021). Globally, SDG #4 emphasises the importance of quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals worldwide (UNESCO, 2017).

The majority of roundtable participants, along with influential educationalists (for example, Reid, 2020), contend that the current reality of education and educational research is governed by managerial approaches. As a result, the definition of quality education has shifted away from aspirational goals of preparing young people for the future. Instead, it has become heavily influenced by data and testing, driven by governmental efforts to quantify the complex dynamics of learning interactions and experiences that occur within educational environments.

Cutting to the heart of the debate, the youth participants emphasised the need to ask the right questions in order to obtain meaningful answers. Participants across the roundtables recommended the following education research priorities to focus on related to the driver of Quality Education (see Figures 11-12):

- "What is teacher quality? The grey area." Specifically, what is quality of education in structure and diversity? (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- "Educational research should focus on trying to improve the quality of education. For example, widen the structure. More diversity in teaching/learning pedagogies?" "That education is not one-size fits all" (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- "Educational goals in policy." "There are many high-level goals that don't translate into policy" (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- "Who measures the quality?" and "Who decides what research to use?" Further, bias in deciding on quality education is highlighted through comments such as "Is evidence just what we want to see?" (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- "No single 'right' answer" (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- Look to the less obvious as well as the obvious "signposts to inform our direction" (Roundtable 1 Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- "Curriculum needs to adapt" and stay pace with contemporary needs, such as well-being. Consider that "emotions are involved in change" and consider "emotional well-being". (Roundtable 1 and 2 - Metro and Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- Need to plan "beyond 3-year term [of politicians] for long-term educational change" and "avoid knee-jerk reactions" (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);

- “Looking at education as extending beyond educational institutions into life-long learning in the real world.” (Roundtable 2 Regional Adult Stakeholder response); and,
- Quality education conceptualised through diverse perspectives – an inclusive conceptualisation of quality enables “key stakeholders” agency in researching education, including children and young people.

Young people’s (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3) signal aspects of quality education to consider from a student perspective (see Figure 13):

- “We are not idiots - we know what we need”;
- “Want education to diversify and respond to what is going on in the world”;
- “Engaging”;
- “How do we create more flexible learning?”;
- “Ask the right questions for good answers”;
- Include “student needs”, “agency” and “opportunity for students to co-design learning with educators”;
- “Real world assignments”;
- “More independent learning”;
- “Qualitative research and less surveys”;
- “Gather evidence from multiple sources.”

Figure 11: Sketch Artist’s (Katie Hotko) capture of participant response from Roundtable 1 - Metro adult stakeholders.



Figure 12: Sketch Artist's (Katie Hotko) capture of a participant's response from Roundtable 2 – Regional adult stakeholders.



Figure 13: Sketch Artist's (SketchGroup) capture of participants' responses from Roundtable 3 - Young people stakeholders.



Participants were in agreement that education quality is a complex and variously conceptualised concept. There was however general agreement that quality in education (and consequently educational research) needs to be considered more broadly in order to strive for these aspirational goals for education.

Strategic Research Driver 5: Attracting and retaining teachers

A recurring theme that emerged from the data was the issue of retaining current teachers and attracting new teachers to the profession. The 2022 Education Ministers' Meeting National Teacher Workforce Action Plan clearly identified this widespread problem: "We have a teacher shortage right across the country... we need to attract, train and retain people in the profession" (p. 3). The participants indicated an immediate need to address the continuation of teacher supply. A participant from Roundtable 1 (Metro Adult Stakeholders) highlighted the problem of attracting and retaining teachers, and teacher education students, as sector-wide, "across the whole education spectrum, from Early Childhood to Secondary".

Teacher shortages have been an issue in Australia and other countries for several decades (Borman & Dowling, 2008). However, there has been an increase in teachers leaving the profession with a recent Australian survey showing that only 41% of respondents were planning to continue teaching, while the majority intended to leave the profession due to "heavy workloads, health and wellbeing concerns for teachers and the status of the profession" (Heffernan, 2022, p. 196). Seddon et al. (2021) maintain that community negativity towards the teaching profession has had an impact on teacher supply, identifying a need to re-establish teaching as a respected profession. As Heffernan's study identified, "an increased understanding or awareness of the complexity of teachers' work, and a subsequent shift in the way schools are perceived and teachers are treated by the wider public, including students, parents/carers and in the public discourse" is needed to elevate perceptions of the profession (2022, p. 205). Reid (2020) suggests that teachers need to be perceived as creative professionals and not technicians, calling for a focus on working creatively and less on managerialism in the profession. Reid advances that "if the task of educators is to develop in children and young people the learning dispositions and capacities to think critically, flexibly and creatively, then educators too must possess and model these capacities" (p. 3).

A collective agreement and discussions were clear across the two adult stakeholder roundtables, where education leaders, policymakers and practitioners recommended the following priorities for research related to attracting and retaining teachers:

- "How can the profession bolster and retain teachers?" (Roundtable 1 - Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- "How to get and retain more teachers?" (Roundtable 2 - Regional Adult Stakeholder response);
- "Attracting/retaining teacher education students, across the whole education spectrum." (Roundtable 1 - Regional Adult Stakeholder response);

- “How do we get more teachers?” (Roundtable 2 - Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- “Deans can “inspire & advocate; provide direction.”(Roundtable 1 - Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- “Shifting perception of value” with politicians and influencers needing “to engage and value education” (Roundtable 2 - Regional Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “Competing is undermining our sector – sectors need to collaborate” (Roundtable 1 - Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “Teachers are already getting data overloaded” (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses); and,
- “Research into teacher education” (Roundtable 1 - Metro Adult Stakeholder responses).

Young people’s (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3) also indicated an awareness of problems within the teaching profession:

- “Pay teachers more and they will be in a better mood”;
- “How do we create more flexible teaching and learning?”;
- “Stress-free environment”;
- “Recognising different kinds of intelligence”;
- “Motivation is paramount. Younger generations depend on it”;
- “More independent learning”;
- “Career based learning”; and,
- “Changes to meet needs of future.”

All stakeholder groups remarked on the structural problems within the teaching workforce. The adult stakeholders in particular exhibited a high level of concern about the immediate concerns of maintaining teacher supply while also directing educational research attention to longer-term goals of improving the systems of the profession.

Strategic Research Driver 6: Quality teacher education

Interconnected with Drivers 4 and 5 (Quality Education; Attracting and Retaining Teachers), across the three world cafés, there was a distinct focus on quality in teacher education. A participant at Roundtable 2 (Regional Adult Stakeholder) explained, “Teacher quality is based on collective explorations of teaching futures” and “Teacher quality should start with ITE [Initial Teacher Education] time”.

As Schleicher identifies, the profession in our uncertain times “requires innovators who challenge institutional structures ... innovators who are sincere about social change, imaginative in policy making and capable of using the trust they earn to deliver effective reforms” (2020, p. 4). Across the metropolitan and regional adult stakeholders, there was recognition that teacher education that enables beginning teachers to be the educational leaders and innovators of the future requires quality considerations beyond standards compliance.

A recommendation for teacher quality from all three roundtables was that teacher educators spend more time in schools and for close collaborations between universities

and schools (see Figure 14-15). Seddon et al. (2021) identify issues with government policy that create tensions that set up universities and schools as opponents, particularly in relation to a theory-practice dichotomy.

As a collective, across all three world cafés, the grassroots participants articulated many recommendations to traverse the fine line between teaching and ITE learning quality. Listed below are the stakeholders' recommended teacher education research priorities (see Figure 15):

- “What is quality teacher education? Specifically, how is quality ITE evidenced?” (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “How best to do teacher education!” (Roundtable 1 – Regional Adult Stakeholder response);
- “Higher education accord” (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “Transitions” (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- “Shift from compliance to collaboration” (Roundtable 2 – Metro Adult Stakeholder response);
- “Work as a collective - strength in numbers” (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- Get the educational community “together & talking” to translate educational research into practice (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses);
- How to foster relationships and connect universities and schools to ‘walk’ together and nurture this “3rd space” of education and “reciprocity” (Roundtable 1 and 2 – Regional and Metro Adult Stakeholder responses); and,
- “Too much focus” on accreditation (Roundtable 2 – Metro Adult Stakeholder response).

Young people’s (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3) focused on bigger picture education and research issues that impact on teaching, learning and, by implication, teacher education:

- “See the patterns” and “gather evidence from multiple resources”;
- “As the world develops so should schools” and “teaching needs to be modern too”;
- and,
- “Changes to meet needs of future”.

Figure 14: A popular Padlet entry in the Question 1 focus group in Roundtable 1 – Metro adult stakeholders.

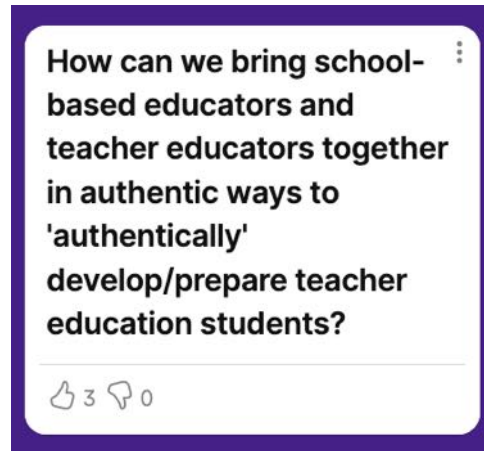
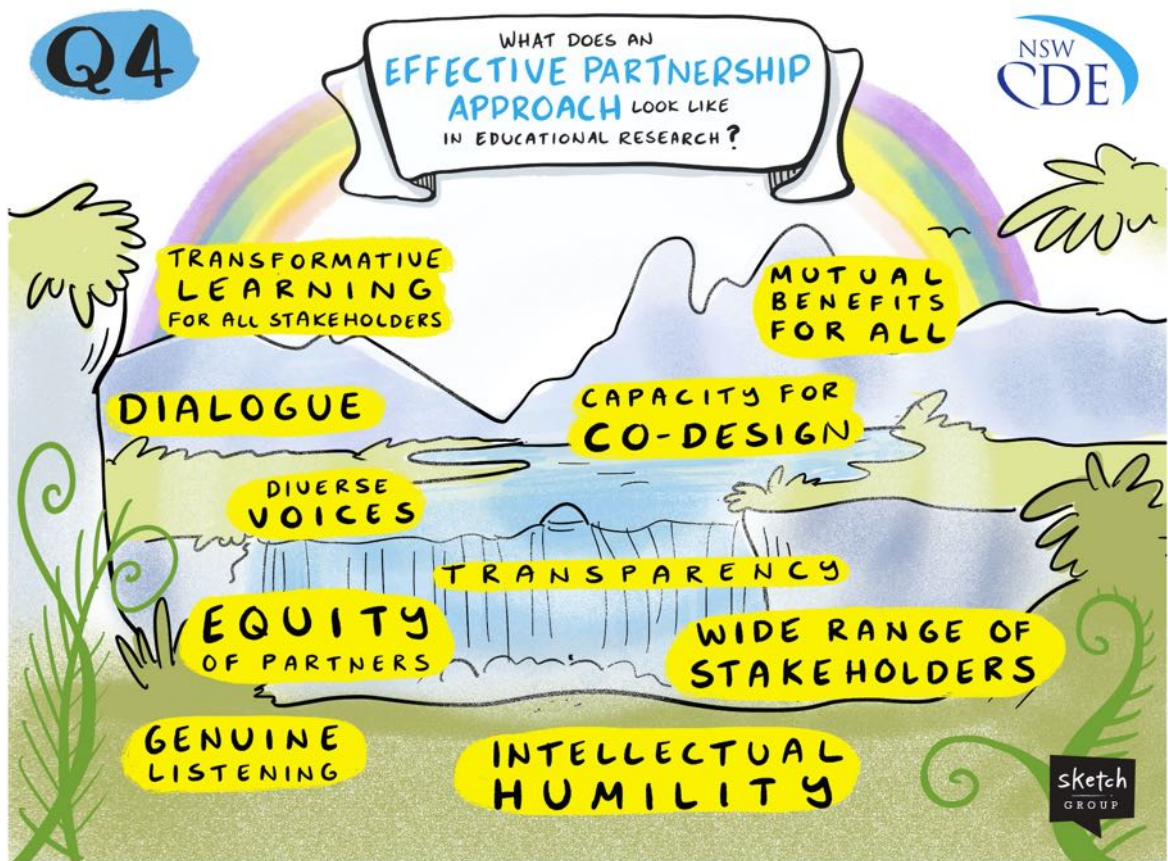


Figure 15: Sketch Artist’s (SketchGroup) capture of participants’ responses from Roundtable 2 - Regional Adult Stakeholders.



Levers for success and recommendations

In the initial world café, one participant astutely asked, “What are the tools needed to conceptualise educational research in 5 years' time, 10 years' time, 20 years' time?”

The six research drivers identified by the participants are dependent on various levers for success. In the words of the grassroots participants, via the Roundtable 1 (Metro adult

stakeholders) Padlet contributions and discussions, these levers for success include (see Figure 16):

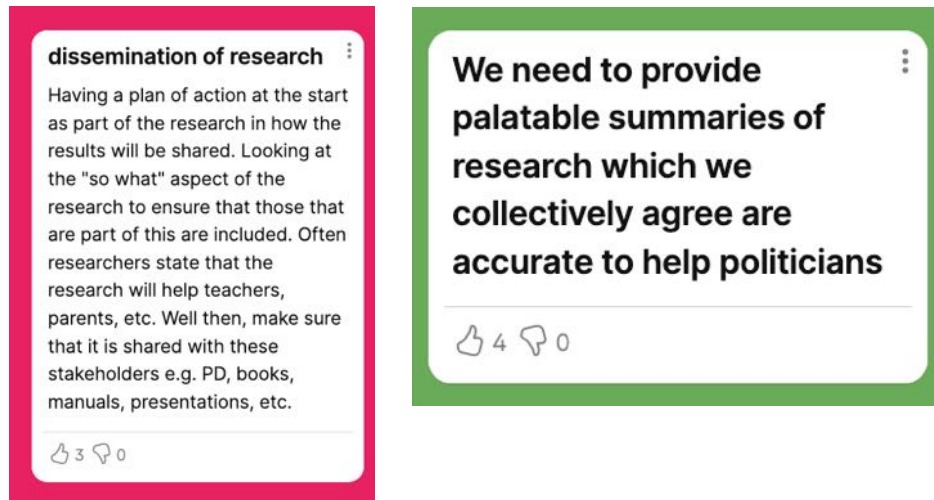


Figure 16: Sketch Artist's (Katie Hotko) capture of participants' responses from Roundtable 1 - Metro Adult Stakeholders.



The youth stakeholders participating in the grassroots research project (Years 7 – 11 students) identified that research enables us to “see the patterns” – patterns of sameness and patterns of difference. The patterns that emerged from this research are framed as six strategic research drivers for advancing educational research.

The provocations that initiated each of the stakeholder events are acknowledged as a potential influence on the participants' discussions. Yet there were notable commonalities observed between the adult and youth participants and between metro and regional adults, regarding what is important in education. A resounding message emerged that 'big picture' issues are important to consider and respond to in developing education that can effectively support modern young people in a variety of ways. This aligns with both national and global guidelines, recognising the need for education to keep pace with the shifts and uncertainties of our time, rather than becoming entrenched in a metrics focus and outdated approaches.

Identified during the grassroots discussions were significant gaps and absences in education and educational research. These included conceptualisations of education, suitable educational approaches for contemporary youth and their futures, and the necessary strengthening of the teaching profession to foster a healthy education system. These identified gaps call for new research imperatives. Both educators and young people expressed a keen interest in a research agenda that transcends the constraints of outdated structures and systems, delving into the realities of contemporary life and the future. They emphasised the importance of addressing ethical aspects alongside more pragmatic dimensions of education. A poignant question raised by one of the metropolitan adult stakeholders in Roundtable 1 encapsulated the sentiment: "There's so much research on what works. What about what's not working?"

By mapping the imperatives of stakeholders, Education Deans and education research policy, through this grassroots research, the NSW CDE has co-created and set an educational research agenda with six strategic research drivers. These research priorities reflect imperatives to support education now and into the uncertainties of the future. The priority drivers for research are expressed through the voices and questioning of education stakeholders, from young people to government ministers, illuminating realities of driving imperatives for research inquiries.

In Roundtable 1, the adult metro educators expressed a desire for the Education Deans to "inspire and advocate, and provide direction". This research agenda-setting project represents a significant step towards fulfilling this goal. The NSW CDE aims to advance educational research within NSW and nationally and address the absence of a state or national strategic education research agenda through this project.

Based on the concerns, perceptions, and aspirations for education and educational research expressed by the stakeholders, key focus areas for educational research have been identified. Stakeholders across the educational landscape, including educational governors, researchers, sector educators, and students, recommend a strongly collaborative approach to educational research.

The policymakers and decision-makers present at the metropolitan adult stakeholders' roundtable highlighted that "genuine and respectful discussions with teachers are necessary for organically forming a grassroots research agenda".

Similarly, the regional adult stakeholders in Roundtable 2 identified the need "to work as a collective" to ensure impact, instead of practicing linear, hierarchical models. They

emphasised the importance of transcending divisions and competition, fostering genuine listening, and fostering a culture of sharing. By engaging in collective educational research, stakeholders believe that educators and young people will be supported to navigate an uncertain future and undertake research that matters. To these ends, this grassroots research agenda is “our shared responsibility” (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: ‘Research is’ Sketch Artist’s (SketchGroup) capture of participants’ responses from Young people’s (Years 7 – 11) responses (Roundtable 3)



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