Submission from the **Australian Curriculum Studies Association**
to the **Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs**
on the draft **National Professional Standards for Teachers**

The Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) is pleased to respond to the invitation to make a submission to the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership on the draft National Professional Standards for Teachers.

In responding to the draft ACSA makes the following constructive comments:

- The preamble does not give a clear picture of the context for the reason, use and purpose of the standards. In particular the following sentence needs unpacking with a more detailed explanation.

> They provide a transparent, objective, nationally consistent basis for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses, initial teacher registration, and performance appraisal and professional accreditation of teachers at higher levels of professional expertise during their career, as well as a nationally recognised and portable certification which will facilitate greater teacher mobility.

While the above sentence states that the standards will be used for particular purposes it is not clear how this will occur or what the process involves. For example, how are teachers recognised at different levels? What is the methodology that will be used to establish movement between each level? And, how will data about this be gathered?

- The draft Standards fail to provide a realistic and developmental teacher professional standards continuum. ACSA believes this is not a rich conceptualisation of teachers and the work they do. The way the teacher is discussed in this document is as a technician until they reach highly accomplished or lead level. For example, if teachers are to be proficient you don’t want them to just ‘apply’ content etc. The document should be using language such as ‘engage with’ and concepts such as ‘engagement with content’ and ‘assessment for learning’.

- As a continuum the Standards are highly situational specific. For example, a teacher may be highly accomplished in a particular context but may not reach that level when teaching outside that context.

- The draft Standards do not adequately reflect what we expect teachers to know and be able to do for each of the four levels. The descriptors provide a very restricted understanding of graduate teachers in particular; teacher educators would expect far more of graduate teachers.
For example, we would expect all teachers including graduates, not just Lead teachers, to have ‘expert and current knowledge of content’.

While the Melbourne declaration, with its global outlook, is referred to in the introduction it is not reflected in the rest of the document. The document presents a very narrow interpretation of what teachers might know.

We are concerned about the term ‘know the content’. Professional knowledge should be more than ‘know the content’ it should provide teachers with the ability to apply that content in a range of circumstances.

The importance of teachers updating their knowledge is not widely acknowledged in this document.

· We would question the term ‘Graduate’ it seems to be out of context with the other three titles ‘Proficient’, ‘Highly Accomplished’ and ‘Lead’.

· ACSA believes that attainment in both the ‘Graduate’ and ‘Proficient’ columns should be a requirement for registration.