

Re: Decadal Plan for Australian Education Research

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Decadal Plan for Australian Education Research 2025–36.

The development of a national decadal plan represents an important opportunity to strengthen the visibility, coordination, and impact of education research in Australia. As the consultation paper notes, education plays a central role in promoting equitable futures and informing policy and practice across early childhood, schooling, tertiary education and vocational education. The following comments are offered as a combined response in the interests of supporting the development of a plan that strengthens Australia's education research over the next decade.

- The consultation paper highlights that education research is relatively under-resourced compared with other sectors such as health. For example, government expenditure in education research is significantly lower than in health despite education representing a major area of public investment. The decadal plan could more strongly articulate education research as a form of national knowledge infrastructure essential for evidence-informed policy and system improvement.
- The plan could more explicitly emphasise the importance of methodological diversity and rigour in education research i.e., not just the '*what*' but '*how*'. High-quality education research should include co-design, collaborative-partnerships, stakeholder perspectives/voices, in addition to experimental/quasi-experimental designs, longitudinal studies, implementation research, and mixed-methods approaches, capable of informing policy and practice.
- While the consultation paper recognises the importance of collaboration between researchers, policymakers and practitioners, the plan could further articulate the strengths of the link between research–practice. This may include collaborations, partnerships, embedded researcher models, and system-level evaluation programs.
- The consultation paper appropriately highlights significant data gaps across Australian education systems, including limited longitudinal data. The decadal plan could prioritise the development of a national education data infrastructure that enables linkage of administrative, learning, and wellbeing data across the schooling and post-schooling years to support high-impact research and key policy priorities. They have done this sort of data linking in health.
- Declining higher degree research enrolments and academic employment present a serious risk to Australia's future research capability. The decadal plan should explicitly address strategies for sustaining the education research workforce.

In summary, the Decadal Plan provides an important opportunity to strengthen Australia's education research ecosystem and enhance its contribution to policy, practice, and equity. The opportunity to contribute is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

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