

# **The growing urgency of attending to the state of Education Research in Australian Higher Education**

**Report to the AARE Executive and Members from the Working Party**

**‘Protecting and extending research in education in Australia’**

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**Working Party members:**

**Marie Brennan, Amy Chapman, Lew Zipin, Sophie Rudolph, Rosie Barron, Bev  
Rogers and Annette Woods**

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Corresponding author: [Marie.brennan@unisa.edu.au](mailto:Marie.brennan@unisa.edu.au)

Australian Association for Research in Education

AARE Secretariat

Unit 11, 1 Geils Court

Deakin ACT 2600

<https://www.aare.edu.au/>

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## 2. Executive Summary

The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), as the premier professional association for education researchers in Australia, has strong interest in supporting high quality research and research capacity in the field of education in Australian higher education sector. Well before the Covid-19 Pandemic, members of AARE had noted shifts in university funding models and institutional policy and practice which already had serious implications for overall education research activity, and the current and future capacity of the education research workforce in Australia. The current context for universities under Pandemic conditions has exacerbated the already existing patterns. These conditions include:

- decreases in funding for the higher education sector overall;
- over-reliance on increasing student numbers to compensate for decreasing government funds;
- university funding models that have relied on increasing funds from an increasing international student population;
- significant costs associated with new technologies as universities move learning online and offer increasingly flexible options to students in an attempt to gain larger cohorts in a competitive student market;
- decreases to research funding included in basic operating budgets; and
- decreases to research funding.

These issues have required urgent attention for many years, and the current pandemic conditions only add to this urgency. Education researchers must be supported in the renewal of university directions as current pandemic conditions continue to shift.

This report identifies the findings and issues arising from a range of activities, organised through an AARE Working Party which was formed to identify issues and map the effects of inadequate funding and workforce casualisation on the research capacity of the Australian educational researcher and the quality of Australian educational research. The Working Party was tasked by **Annual General Meetings in 2017, 2018 and 2019** with mapping the research opportunities in the field of education in Australia and reporting to the Executive and membership on issues arising. The Working Party agreed to investigate and present on current activities and trends in educational research in higher education, particularly in schools and faculties of education.

The Working Party was established after strong advocacy by membership at the December 2017 AGM of the Association. Membership at the well-attended meeting had rigorous discussion about the urgent need for AARE to support strategies that build broad participation in research and teaching for academics in the Australian tertiary sector. There was a call to ensure that the Association support academic staff across all levels having

access to time, support, and work conditions that enable them to contribute meaningfully across service and engagement, research, teaching, and leadership. Concern was expressed that current funding and higher education policies continue to undermine the quality of education research and teaching in Australian universities.

A motion (Appendix 1) was passed unanimously by membership. It called for the AARE Executive

*to place these issues on its agenda and report back to the broader AARE membership on possible responses in relation to this important issue.*

Additionally, there was a call for action by AARE when restructures occurred at universities, with a call for AARE to

*release public statements in support of members and contest executive-managerial decisions that adversely affect the present and future of rich and viable teaching and research.*

In response to this motion an intergenerational Working Party was formed, which in the first instance included those members who proposed the AGM motion and the then President of the Association (2017-2018 President) but has since grown to include other interested members.

Since its formation, the Working Party has:

- Researched and mapped the issues;
- Connected with Association members to report on activities through conference presentations and meetings at shared Association gatherings;
- Communicated regularly with the Executive Committee;
- Forged relationships with BERA Executive Committee members involved in setting up similar work in the U.K. context;
- Contributed to AARE's submission to the Coaldrake Review: *What's in a Name?: Review of the Higher Education Provider Category Standards*, arguing for policy that strengthens the relationship between teaching and research in Australia's universities, and noting the risk that education research is already being undermined or significantly reduced in a number of universities, putting at risk the future quality of post graduate student research supervision and support for teaching and research academics in those institutions;
- Designed and led a *Special Session seeking ways to protect and extend educational research in the Australian university sector* at the 2018 AARE annual conference. The session was well attended with a cross-section of members from all levels (HDRs and

Level A through E as well as those in designated research leadership roles). Participants represented a range of universities across size, group and location characteristics. The purpose of the session was to collect perspectives from a range of researchers to document key issues and trends in institutional practice. This session was also an opportunity to trial the items of a survey to be administered to AARE membership;

- Developed a posting to promote discussion on the AARE's *EduResearchMatters* blog: Zipin & Brennan (January 29, 2019) *Universities are investing in teaching at the expense of research: Here's why we should fight it* (<https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?p=3635>).;
- Designed, trialled and administered a survey of members to map education research in higher education. The *Mapping Research Opportunities in the Field of Education in Australia Survey* was administered in June 2019, with ethical clearance from Victoria University. The survey collected data from 162 members over a three-week period;
- Reported on the results of the *Mapping Research Opportunities in the Field of Education in Australia Survey* as part of a symposium workshop at the AARE Annual Conference 2019, and also at the 2019 AGM of the Association.

In addition, the Postgraduate Student and the Early Career researcher members of the AARE Executive have provided feedback on issues nominated by their constituencies.

This report provides findings from these activities. The findings indicate major areas of concern for Australian education research, including in relation to the conditions that education academics see as supporting or constraining research growth. These issues are especially evident among early career researchers, although not exclusively so. It is important to emphasise that the field does not provide equitable conditions for Australia's education researchers, and that years of experience, university employer, university group, location, access to funding, ability to achieve increasingly untenable performance indicators, and field of study influence the levels of support available to Australia's educational researchers. Having said that, the current context is one of constraint and limitation across a diverse range of players within the field.

Implications for education research futures are discussed in this report. These implications raise questions about both the short and longer-term viability of research in education. Thus there must be consideration of an inter-generational academic politics that pursues: workload justice; keeping teaching and research connected (against trends that separate them); and broadening the numbers and range of education academics with time and opportunity to grow as researchers.

## **Findings**

The findings from the survey, conducted in June 2019, and related activities included:

- An expectation of overwork as a norm among research active, research and teaching, and teaching only staff, across all categories of university and all levels of staffing;
- There is systematic misrepresentation of workload in a number of institutions, particularly work that was under-estimated or invisible in workload allocation such as administration, course and program coordination, HDR supervision, the move to digital and online teaching, teaching preparation, assessment and student contact – thereby detracting from time available for research;
- Restructuring within universities, particularly a shift evident in a number of universities to separate academics into two categories: teaching only and research-only academic staff, has led to reduction in the number of teaching-and-research academics and resultant reduction also in the time available for many to undertake research
- Some universities continue to support educational research participation by the majority of staff, aiming for the 40:40:20 balance across teaching, research & service, although there remains invisible work, in relation to performative measures in particular, for all levels of staff.
- Lack of opportunity for most staff to participate in governance of their work in teaching, research, administrative and service, has contributed to the poor working conditions and institutional policy
- 46% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their research workload allocation, even without taking into account invisible work that reduced that allocation.
- 48% of respondents found their workloads unmanageable.
- The consequence of curtailment of opportunities and infrastructure supporting research for many Early-Career and Mid-Career academics (ECR and MCR) is that many expressed few options other than moving to teaching-only positions or needing to reach unrealistic outcome measures to achieve research workload allocations or research-only status.
- Budgetary constraints are leading to increased casualisation of academic work and this is of grave concern. Short-term contracts and casual positions were reported as being perceived by many HDR graduates and ECRs as the only option for entry to academia. This context means that new academics are often not provided with adequate induction into the profession and support for how they might become researchers over time, and the invisible labour of teaching, recruitment and supervision of casual staff is transferred to ongoing staff without recognition of this load. The result is highly skewed workforce, sometimes without ongoing staff in key positions for required teaching programs and less ongoing capacity for research.
- There is concern among higher degree students, including international students, about the lack of time in workload provided for academics to supervise their research and resultant impacts upon the quality of supervision being offered to

researchers in training. Additionally, retrenchment of staff within education faculties is leading to increased likelihood of supervisory changes mid-degree, including in some contexts to researchers without the requisite understanding of student topic or methodology, or specific factors related to students' cultural backgrounds.

- Institutional governance has responded narrowly to continuing government lack of funding of the sector, including through reduction of opportunities for academics to participate in the governing of their own work and in developing options for university futures relevant to changing social and planetary futures.

To summarise, AARE members have concerns for the future of the field of education research. Dangers expressed by respondents include:

- poor infrastructure for developing ECR and MCR capacity and the inter-generational injustice involved in current approaches;
- loss of numbers of those able to undertake research in education, build research track records sufficient to attract grants and supervise HDR students well;
- casualisation of academic work, often disaggregating tasks;
- breaking the research-teaching nexus, with implications for lowered quality teaching for the kinds of knowledge-abilities needed in the current and future society;
- education research, along with scholarship in humanities and social sciences (HASS) more generally, being judged by criteria developed for other disciplines such as the sciences, resulting in marginalisation of HASS research. This is occurring at a time when inter-disciplinarity is being foregrounded, and there are urgent social issues requiring transdisciplinary attention in Australian society;
- reduced experience of education and education research among leadership including those in roles of heads of school and Deans of Faculties. This translates to an unfamiliarity with the work and networks required of quality education researchers, and a lack of representation of education-specific issues in senior forums of the university. This is despite the significant percentage of students, both domestic and international, who are enrolled in education programs, including research degrees.

While there remain a number of universities who support a 40:40:20 balance across teaching, research and service/administration, and there is commitment from experienced and senior academics to mentor more junior scholars, overwork in the sector and lack of funding for education research more broadly still pose dangers to the future of research – and the quality of teaching – in the sector.

## **Recommendations**

1. That AARE advocate for education research with key governance bodies, seeking collaboration with other professional associations, recognising the difficulties of the

sector as a whole while insisting that research is central to teaching quality, to a quality university sector, and to the capacities of citizens educated through universities to deal with social, environmental, health, economic and political problems.

Particular issues requiring public naming, contestation and advocacy include:

- a. Restriction of HDR, ECR and MCR research trajectories through funding and institutional practices of workloads, governance, competitive and unrealistic performance measures;
  - b. Growing numbers of casual, teaching-only and research-only staff as the default setting for appointments or transfers of existing staff, diminishing the teaching & research academic fraction, with consequences for succession-planning, career trajectories and the future of Australian research and teaching quality in education and other fields;
  - c. Inappropriate measures, based on the sciences, used for judgement of research quality in education, and other humanities and social science fields, rather than international peer review
  - d. Inadequate workload allocations and invisible work that restrict capacity to undertake research and collaboration across institutions and internationally
  - e. Through all the above, the narrowing of the purposes and contribution of universities for Australia, with too strong an emphasis on vocational skill formation rather than capacitating citizenry to work within uncertain futures and new knowledge creation.
2. That AARE work with Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) and others with responsibility for education academic work to document and assess medium and longer-term implications for education research capacity. A past model for this engagement is available in the Strategic Alliance project between AARE, ACDE and ATEA that investigated strengthening a research-rich teaching profession in Australia.
  3. That, in light of the consistent and rapid changes in education, accelerated by the Pandemic, AARE lobby for an education-specific research fund, commensurate with student numbers, and the importance of the field to Australian and global needs and purposes. This recognises that strong research cultures are important for education workforces across all levels.
  4. That AARE expand the Working Party on supporting and capacitating the future of education research as a regular standing committee of the executive.

These recommendations and previous AGM motions need the development of new forms of politics from the organisation for changing conditions for universities and the education sector. In recognition of the over-riding support for this work within membership of the

Association we recommend that this report, once approved by Executive, be made widely available to members and other interested stakeholders. Members need to be advised of the actions to be taken by the AARE Executive in response to the work of the Working Party to date.

Covid-19 conditions have seen a rush by universities to restructure academic work and move towards reduction of a significant number of positions. These moves respond to both the long-term under-funding of the sector, particularly in supporting higher education research, and the loss of income from international students, used to cross-subsidise both teaching and research. These changes in universities will compound the problems identified in this report, for which the Survey data was collected in June 2019. They will exacerbate the working conditions for research on education and research capacity for future education research.

## **2. Introduction and background: Attending to education academic research work**

The work of academics has undergone significant changes in recent years in Australia, as in much of the world<sup>1</sup>. In a context of fiscal constraints, management and Councils in many universities have restructured workforce positions and their relations. Effects include greater casualisation, widespread introduction of teaching-only positions, corresponding decline in teaching-and-research academics, and intensified non-research workload, as we discuss later. These shifts have disturbed many academics over recent years, including in education programs<sup>2</sup>. Such disturbances, reported by many AARE members, have been backed by recent studies<sup>3</sup> which emphasise narrowing options for early-career academics to pursue research pathways and intensification of workload overall, with implications for the very future of research in the field of education. The Covid-19 Pandemic has exacerbated these trends, creating fear among many – especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences – that financial constraints will be used as an excuse to further narrow and technicise the purposes of universities, redefining both teaching and research. It is thus urgent to examine how changes to academic work have been affecting education faculties, and their research.

As the premier organisation for education researchers in Australia, AARE has a widespread membership across the country, including in a range of organisations, among independent researchers and universities, and responsibilities to support and advocate for the field. In recent years members have expressed concern that researchers in education have inadequate support to sustain research agendas, with particular emphasis on the poor potential career trajectories of early and mid-career academics. Many academics have experienced new degrees of overwork, forced participation in performative claims on teaching and research autonomies, managerial takeover of academic boards, and an inability to participate in or influence institutional governance. Government funding and ‘speed policy’ has given universities uncapped student numbers, an over-reliance on international students for balancing institutional budgets, short-term planning in reaction to standardised data, and international league table games. Neoliberal managerialism, whilst past its use-by-date in terms of anything ‘productive’—it is now decidedly destructive—remains entrenched in government and institutional executives.

In 2017 a well-attended AGM supported a motion calling for the AARE to undertake a politics of concern and action on the future of university research in education specifically

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<sup>1</sup> See Bennett et al, 2013; Blackmore et al. 2010; Fischman et al. 2018; Teichler, Arimoto & Cummings 2013; and Thornton 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Seddon 2015; Brennan & Zipin 2019; Zipin & Brennan 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Rowlands & Gale 2017; Manathunga & Bottrell 2019; Richardson & Heffernan 2019.

as well as more generally across other disciplines. This was followed by formation of a Working Party of AARE members, who drafted a survey, which was trialled before and during a special Working Party workshop with volunteer members at the 2018 AARE conference. There was further discussion at the 2018 AGM and a report of activities conducted by the Working Party. The Working Party also reported on progress at the December 2018, February and December 2019 and February and May 2020 AARE Executive Meetings. AARE's *Professional and Higher Education* SIG has sponsored symposia and addressed these issues at conferences, and a number of publications have emerged on the topic. In addition, the Postgraduate and the Early Career researcher members of the AARE executive held meetings to explore issues nominated by their constituencies. The ECR sub-committee of AARE Executive conducted a survey of ECR, identifying lack of workload allocation and time, and the constantly changing policy parameters for research priorities at the institutional level, were the biggest barriers to establishing themselves as researchers.

It was clear before the COVID -19 Pandemic that Australian universities were in peril. The lack of income from international students resulting from Covid-19 is, as we write this report, threatening to send many universities into bankruptcy, demonstrating the results of poor funding models, especially in relation to supporting research<sup>4</sup>. Many have already signalled shifts in employment such as reduction of casual staff, increased teaching loads for academics, and reduction of research opportunities. The findings of the Working Party survey and associated activities indicate that such changes were already underway in a goodly number of universities, though not to the extent envisaged in the current time. Even when Higher Education was, until the Pandemic, the third largest export industry for Australia, there was little governmental support for research in education, and certainly no return to appropriate student per capita funding, increased operating grants, or allocations for research.

Unlike wheat, wool or other industries, education has not had a specific 'industry' research fund. Yet, as a largely public industry, there is little opportunity to attract public funds for education research and the infrastructure needed. Once, not so long ago<sup>5</sup>, education research was reported as 'punching above its weight' with high levels of citations internationally, surprising the authors of that study. They referred back to the time in the early 1980s when most research in education was conducted by state education authorities, with large research and development branches, when ACER was fully funded by the joint Ministers of Education, and when universities had only a small number of researchers in

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<sup>4</sup> We note here that the 40% cuts to university operating budgets in the late 1990s have not been returned, reinforcing the sector's reliance on international student fees and increased domestic student fees. In correlated findings, the Productivity Commission has noted a reduction in R&D in the sector.

<sup>5</sup> , McGaw, 1992 (interim report); 1994; NCVET 2015; Anderson, Johnson & Saha 2002.

comparison. By the late 1980s, as the McGaw report of 1992/1994 noted, just as the Unified National System had replaced the divided tertiary colleges and universities, universities had built strength in education research. The report provided evidence in the number of universities placing education as an area of research strength, the number of grants received by the sector, and its high esteem in international citation rates. While there were problems in low levels of funding (comparisons with health R&D expenditure were unfavourable 1.4%, compared to 0.35% of total expenditure), including low levels of support from business and philanthropic sources, stakeholders found significant reason to endorse and strengthen the higher education component of education research work, especially as state-level agencies had turned to commissioning external sources for their research needs. Earlier in the 1980s before United National System of universities, most education research was conducted by state education authorities and agencies, with ACER as a strong player, sponsored by state and federal Ministers.

Current judgements about research quality in the humanities and social sciences, in relation to ERA cycles have demonstrated serious problems with the benchmarks used, largely drawn from measures developed for the physical sciences<sup>6</sup>. Compounding these measurement problems have been increased academic workloads, loss of funding, included sector freezes and contributions to national budget savings. Public sector education authorities have had similar financial constraints, which have reduced their internal research efforts and sponsorship of external research. The last 35-40 years have thus seen both a significant growth and then decline in the opportunities and conditions for researchers in the field.

Unless universities are able to support research in education, the sector will not be able to adjust to changing conditions – such as the effects and strategies of increased pedagogical use of new technologies in teaching, as the Pandemic closure of schools and universities has demonstrated. Education and education research are also key to achieving redress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the inequitable conditions and extreme disadvantage that they have dealt with over many generations since invasion. To be a productive part of working as an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their fight for equity, as committed in the 2018 AARE Statement of Reconciliation (see <https://www.aare.edu.au/assets/documents/AARE-Statement-of-Reconciliation-v3.pdf>), AARE must fight for an academic culture where ethical, respectful research and partnerships are designed and promoted. Conducting high quality research cannot be done on a shoestring: infrastructure, including funding, staff time and appropriate induction of junior academics into the field is required. In the current context, this has not been provided, leaving the sector open to private, corporate and edu-business interests<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Larkins, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Ball, 2009.

This report identifies the findings and issues arising from a range of activities, organised through an AARE Working Party which was formed to identify issues and map the effects of inadequate funding and workforce casualisation on the research capacity of the Australian educational researcher and the quality of Australian educational research. The Working Party was tasked with mapping the research opportunities in the field of education in Australia and reporting to the Executive and membership on issues arising. The Working Party agreed to investigate and present on current activities and trends in educational research in higher education, particularly in schools and faculties of education.

The Working Party was established after strong advocacy by membership at the 2017 AGM of the Association. Membership had rigorous discussion about the urgent need for AARE to support strategies that build broad participation in research and teaching for academics in the Australian tertiary sector. There was a call to ensure that the Association support academic staff across all levels having access to time, support, and work conditions that enable them to reach their potentials across service and engagement, research, teaching, and leadership. Concern was expressed at the ongoing impact of tertiary education policies that do not attend to these important issues on the quality of educational research and teaching in Australian universities. A motion was passed unanimously by membership and called for the AARE Executive to *place these issues on its agenda and report back to the broader AARE membership on possible responses in relation to this important issue*. Additionally there was a call for action by AARE when restructures occurred at universities, with a call for AARE to *release public statements in support of members and contest executive-managerial decisions that adversely affect the present and future of rich and viable teaching and research* (see Appendix 1 for the full statement of this membership motion, which is also available at <https://www.aare.edu.au/research-and-advocacy/research/>).

In response to this motion the AARE Executive formed an intergenerational Working Party, which in the first instance included those members who proposed the AGM motion and the then President of the Association (2017-2018 President) but has since grown to include other interested members.

Since its formation, the Working Party has undertaken a range of activities. It has:

- Researched the issues;
- Connected with Association members through conference presentations and meetings at shared Association gatherings;
- Communicated regularly with the Executive Committee;
- Forged relationships with BERA Executive Committee members involved in setting up similar work in the U.K context;
- Contributed to AARE's submission to the Coaldrake Review of Higher Education Provider Category Standards, arguing for policy that strengthens the relationship

between teaching and research in Australia's universities, and noting the risk that educational research is already being undermined or significantly reduced in a number of universities, putting at risk the future quality of post graduate student research supervision and support for teaching and research academics in those institutions.

- Designed and led a *Special Session seeking ways to protect and extend educational research in the Australian university sector* at the 2018 AARE annual conference. The session was well attended with a cross-section of members from all levels (HDRs and Level A through E as well as those in designated research leadership roles. Participants were also from a range of universities across size, group and location characteristics. The purpose of the session was to collect perspectives from a range of researchers to document key issues and trends in institutional practice. This session was also an opportunity to trial the items of a survey to be administered to AARE membership;
- Developed a posting to promote discussion on the AARE's *EduResearchMatters* blog: Universities are investing in teaching at the expense of research: Here's why we should fight it (<https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?p=3635>). January 29 2019.
- Designed, trialled and administered a survey of members to map education research in higher education. The *Mapping Research Opportunities in the Field of Education in Australia Survey* was administered in June 2019, with ethical clearance from Victoria University. The survey collected data from 162 members over a two-week period.
- Reported on the results of the *Mapping Research Opportunities in the Field of Education in Australia Survey* as part of a symposium workshop at the AARE Annual Conference 2019, and also at the 2019 AGM of the Association.

In addition, the Postgraduate Student and the Early Career researcher members of the AARE Executive fed back matters of concern from their constituencies to the Working Party. The investigation via the Survey is thus only one part of what the Working Party sees as building a stronger politics for the Association, making public and advocating on behalf of the sector.

The report presents findings from the activities of the Working Party. Its main focus is the survey, including content analysis and preliminary options for wider analysis, in the context of current Australian higher education policy and practice. The report indicates major areas of concern for Australian education research, including conditions that education academics see as supporting or constraining research growth, especially among early career researchers. Implications for education research futures are discussed, including potentials for an inter-generational academic politics that pursues workload justice; keeping teaching and research connected (against trends that separate them); and broadening the numbers and range of education academics with time and opportunity to *grow* as researchers. In making recommendations to the AARE Executive, the Working Party keeps in mind that all work conducted by AARE, including the work of the Executive, is completed by volunteers, and

that these members are themselves subject to many of the deleterious conditions which are documented in the findings of the Survey. Without further action from AARE and other organisations, we fear for the state of education research in Australia.

### **3. Investigating the state of Australian education research in higher education: Literature review**

The first major international comparative study of the academic profession was conducted in the early 1990s through the Carnegie Foundation (Boyer et al 1994; Altbach 1996). It found high agreement on satisfaction with their work (although with some differences between junior and senior academics) and high levels of academic freedom across countries, with some significant variations in working conditions in different nations (See Teichler, Arimoto, & Cummings 2013). Looking back at this earlier study, from 2013, Teichler and his colleagues noted three issues which were then identified as likely to attract attention in future decades: student access, governance and the balance of work across teaching, research and services. They conclude in their more recent study that the academic profession could not be depicted as suffering from status loss, resource restrictions or adverse administrative conditions” (2013, p.6). However, this study, which emerged covering 2004-2012, highlighted the very dynamic changes to which universities needed to respond, and identified three groups of issues in the intervening period which had changed the work of the academic profession: the emphasis on ‘relevance’ for teaching and research, the increasing emphasis on internationalisation, and the growth and impact of management (Teichler et al 2013, chapter 1). Since that time, there have been a number of shifts in the governance and organisation of academic work in Australian universities. In particular, the literature recognises the rise of teaching-only positions, with implications for the future of disciplines, and the breaking of the teaching-research nexus.

#### **The rise of teaching-only academic positions**

The salience of the idea of the research-teaching nexus in academia captures the ‘close, essential and undeniable’ link widely attributed to these two central functions of higher education (Tight 2016, p. 295). Likewise, the ‘traditional’ 40 percent research, 40 percent teaching, and 20 percent service model of faculty positions highlights the importance of the research-teaching nexus to what it means to be an academic (Probert 2013, pp. 7-8). This Anglo-Saxon model of higher education, which aims to achieve an even balance between research and teaching, is associated with countries such as Australia, the US, Canada, the UK, and Hong Kong (Arimoto 2014, pp. 23-24). Despite the importance ascribed to this connection, there has been a significant re-thinking on both a practical and philosophical level over the last two decades about how academic labour is being distributed between research and teaching in higher education, both in Australia and internationally (Cummings and Shin 2014; Locke 2014a; Locke 2014b; Nyamapfene 2014; Probert 2013; Vajoczki et al.,

2011). In Australia, Bentley et al. (2014, p. 371) concludes that this 'reconceptualising of academic work means the 40:40:20 principle has become increasingly obsolete for academics in combined positions', particularly at universities that are not members of the Group of Eight.

There are a variety of intersecting forces that are having a 'profoundly impact on the conceptualisations of academic careers' in Anglo-Saxon style higher education contexts (Bentley et al. 2014, p. 375). At its core, Macfarlane (2011) argues there has been an unbundling of skills and activities associated with the academic role. Locke (2014b, p. 334) notes the centrality of the research-teaching nexus is being destabilised by the growing importance being given to activities that constitute a 'third dimension' of academia (such as university-business partnerships and academic citizenship) as well as 'para-academic' work that is being performed by staff in non-academic roles (such as learning support, work-based learning, and learning technologies). In relation to teaching-only roles, factors driving the rise of these positions include increasing student numbers (Flavell et al. 2018, p. 190) and the significant competition for work among early career academics (Bennett et al. 2018, p. 277).

More broadly, the breakdown of this nexus is being supported by a prominent political argument that challenges the necessary relationship between research and teaching (Lucas 2007, p. 18). The separation of research from teaching can therefore be understood as an expression of neoliberal, technocratic strategies of increased specialisation and fragmentation (McAlpine and Amundsen 2018, p. 103; McCarthy et al. 2017, p. 1018; Shin and Cummings 2014, p. 383). In Australia, this political orientation is apparent in a report from the partly-government funded Grattan Institute, which argues that the level of research at a university does not systematically impact teaching quality (Cherastidtham et al. 2013). This argument is also reflected in Australian government funding structures that drive 'teaching and research resources in divergent directions', which in effect means that the 'combined teaching-research staffing model is not supported by funding policy' (Norton 2016, p. 53).

One major result of the reconsideration of the research-teaching nexus is a growing trend towards teaching-only faculty positions (Bennett et al. 2018; Cowley 2008; Probert 2013). Between 2009 and 2018 in Australian universities, the number of full-time and fractional full-time teaching-only positions quadrupled from 1,163 to 4,655 (Department of Education and Training 2018). This was a rate of growth that exponentially outpaced that of research-only and combined teaching-research roles, which rose from 13,093 to 15,353 and 26,610 to 27,010 respectively in the same period (Department of Education and Training 2018). In part, the rapid increase of full-time teaching-only positions was driven by the introduction in 2012 of entry-level Scholarly Teaching Fellow positions, which are continuing contract or permanent teaching-only roles that were conceived as a pathway to combined research-teaching roles. By 2018, almost 700 new full-time positions had been created for this new

type of academic (Dados et al. 2018, p. 49). These roles are not concreted in any particular university grouping although they are sometimes concentrated in clinical or professional programs (Probert 2013, p. 2 and p. 23). Teaching-only positions now make up 4.3 percent of all full-time and fractional full-time staff in Australian universities with the rest of the full-time and fractional full-time research-only staff being comprised of research-only staff (14.1%), combined research-teaching staff (24.8%), and non-academic staff such as faculty support staff and central administrators (56.9%) (Department of Education and Training 2018). The issue of teaching-only positions is even more pronounced when it comes to casual academic staff, 80 percent of whom work in teaching-only roles (Bennett et al. 2018, p. 272) and undertake an estimated 50 percent of undergraduate teaching (Bentley et al. 2014, p. 372).

The growth of full-time teaching-only positions has produced a range of advantages, which are championed by both institutional discourses around this trend as well as by the experiences of teaching-only academics. For some academics, a teaching-only role is appealing due to their passion for teaching and the belief it can provide a better work-life balance than a traditional 40-40-20 position (Bennett et al. 2018, pp. 277-278; McAlpine and Amundsen 2018). A Canadian study of 134 teaching-only academics, based on a survey and follow up interviews, found that while only 53 percent of participants originally aspired to this type of positions, 87 percent reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with these teaching-only roles (Vajoczki et al., 2011, p. 4). The participants in this study also overwhelmingly believed that their teaching-only roles had a positive impact on teaching quality and student learning experience, which they attributed in part to stronger pedagogical and curriculum development as well as increased teacher-student contact. They also reported that they felt that their roles created positive relationships between teaching-focused academics and students, which facilitated a greater sense of community within departments and increased the perceived value of teaching in the university. The participants also stated they believed that teaching-only roles increased their departments' pedagogical capacities and diversified academic pathways by providing an alternative to the traditional teaching-research role (Vajoczki et al., 2011, pp. 24-28). Many of these perceived benefits also resonate in the Australian context; for example, there was also a sense that these roles would contribute the valuation of teaching in higher education and increase teaching specialisation, which would in turn improve student experience (Dados et al. 2018, p. 52). Additionally, Australian researchers have widely identified teaching-only roles as a way to help address the issue of casualisation through the creation of additional full-time faculty positions (Bennett et al. 2018, p. 272; Dados et al. 2018; Probert 2013, p. 5).

Despite these benefits identified by teaching-only academics, there is no quantitative data that supports the perception that these specific positions increase teaching quality. There has also been no systematic investigation of how students have responded to the growth of these types of academics or even if students recognise the difference between teaching-

only and research-teaching academics. In Australia, positive overall ratings of teaching quality, as indexed by the government funded 'Student Experience Survey', were found to be 83 percent of commencing undergraduates and 78 percent of later year undergraduates (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, 2018, p. ii). This rating, however, has remained fairly steady over the last seven years, which may indicate that there has been no pronounced impact from any factors over this period, including no measurable effect of teaching-only academics on overall teaching quality from the perspective of students (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, 2018, p. iii). This is perhaps understandable because despite the growing number of these positions they still only account for a small portion of overall academic staff in Australian universities.

Furthermore, the trend towards more teaching-only positions also comes with significant drawbacks and limitations. As Lucas (2007, p. 28) argues, 'the increasing move towards fragmentation and division and status differentials between research and teaching indicate little benefit to staff or students'. This position asserts that 'polarising research and teaching as two separate activities' diminishes the positive impacts that are generated when academics produce and communicate knowledge through the research-teaching nexus (Lucas 2007, p. 18). It also points to the way this separation functions to create a hierarchy between teachers and researchers. Supporting these critiques of the fragmentation of academic labour, Vajoczki et al. (2011, p. 29) reported that teaching-only roles positions can be perceived as a 'second-tier' faculty group due to the fact that teaching is underrated in comparison to research. Similarly, a report on UK higher education found that teaching is generally less institutionally valued, especially at traditionally research-focused universities, and is rarely directly recognised and rewarded in promotion procedures (Locke 2014a, p. 20). This in part relates to the difficulty within current university systems of quantifying what constitute 'good' teaching (Bennett et al. 2018, p. 278). Bentley et al. (2014, pp. 364-365) and Bennett et al. (2018, pp. 276-277) concur with these findings in the Australian context and additionally note that teaching-only academic positions are often perceived as a negative career move. This fear is justified by research that indicates these positions limit academics' ability to gain promotions and to move into traditional research-teaching position (Cashmore et al. 2013, p. 27). Additionally, there can be a perception that teaching-only staff were less quality candidates in comparison to those who were hired in combined research-teaching positions. This can see them left off research teams and grants led by combined staff when they seek to undertake this activity in their own time (Dados et al. 2018, p. 56). When they are able to be involved in team-based research projects, they still may struggle to be granted research study leave (Dados et al. 2018, p. 56). Furthermore, critics of these roles see them as primarily about 'help[ing] to continue the privileging of research by increasing the workload of predominantly teaching-focused staff...and creating a false dichotomy between teaching and research' (Dados et al. 2018, p. 53). Thus, this 'teaching-research status divide' has the potential to create an academic underclass unless teaching is further professionalised in universities and these roles are institutionally valued

and rewarded (McAlpine and Amundsen 2018, p. 102; Marchant and Wallace 2013). Significantly, despite the fact that these teaching-only positions are considered less desirable than traditional academic positions, they are still highly competitive, which points to the oversupply of qualified early career academics and the precarity produced by casualisation.

The Scholarly Teaching Fellow initiative is one way that teaching-only roles are being professionalised in Australian universities. While these positions do offer early career academics a sense of stability and professional recognition, the teaching load they require is demanding and often unrealistic (Dados et al. 2018). Bennett et al. (2018, p. 273) says the role constraint of teaching-only positions, along with non-sustainable teaching loads, can lead to poor staff morale. Following this, some teaching-only academics report that their high teaching loads reduces the quality of teaching and leads to less diversity in terms of the range of teachers whom students experience throughout their degrees (Vajoczki et al., 2011, p. 24). Additionally, many academics who take on these positions often do so because they see it as a stepping stone towards a teaching-research balanced role in the future (McAlpine and Amundsen 2018). Bennett et al. (2017), however, notes that the ability to develop a research career from a teaching-only position is challenging. Teaching-only academics have little to no time for discipline-based research and largely have to undertake this work without remuneration in their own time in order to cultivate the research record needed to move into positions with a formalised research component (McAlpine and Amundsen 2018, pp. 99-101; Clarke et al. 2015).

Nevertheless, some teaching-only academics report being able to leverage their positions to help develop their research profiles. The ease of achieving this goal largely depends on individual institutional differences. In a study by McAlpine and Amundsen (2018) that tracked the early career trajectories of a small number of teaching-only academics in the US, one participant reported receiving time to attend conferences. This teaching-only academic also reported using her university affiliation to apply for and win research funding. Although the research still had to be done in her own time, she was able to hire a research assistant, publish scholarly work, and eventually move to another university to take up a combined research-teaching position (McAlpine and Amundsen 2018, p. 101). This is an example of one academic's strategy, supported in a limited way by her university, to develop a research profile while in a teaching-only role. However, alongside this sort of example is the broader financial constraints across the higher education sector in Western contexts. This has seen 'reductions or restrictions...on administrative support, staff recruitment, travel to conferences and meetings and library budgets', which has a negative systematic effect on individual and institutional research capacities. (Locke 2014a, p. 16). These financial constraints restrict the ability of all academics, but especially those in teaching-roles, to develop professional autonomy in relation to research (Locke 2014a, p. 25).

Additionally, with the rise of teaching-only roles there is also the possibility that large teaching loads see academics teaching outside their area of expertise or even in disciplines they are not formally trained in, which can negatively affect the quality of their teaching (Locke 2014a, p.16). In interviews with Australian teaching-only academics Bennett et al. (2018, p. 275) found that there were 'particular concerns about maintaining the disciplinary expertise required for teaching when they had no workload allocation for research'. The lack of up-to-date disciplinary knowledge that is required to supervise post-graduate research students, a common component of teaching-only positions, is identified as a particular issue for these academics (Bennett et al. 2018, p. 275). This issue is arguably less pronounced at the undergraduate level as teaching-only roles at this level as seen as requiring stronger pedagogical skills rather than research-led teaching (Probert 2013, p. 22). This is particularly evident in relation to disciplines that are perceived as especially difficult for undergraduate students or have demanding curriculums, such as economics and physics, where '[e]ven the best-prepared students need excellent teaching to succeed' (Probert 2013, p. 22). Illustrating this, a number of first year academic directors in the fields of mathematics and science have been hired in recent years at a number of Group of Eight universities in Australia. Jenkins (2004, p. 27) also notes that the teaching-research nexus is seen as less important for effective teaching at the undergraduate level as the research being conducted by academics, especially in the sciences, often exceeds to level of difficulty required in these curriculums. Supporting this, Zaman (2005, p. 5) argues that the link between research and teaching 'is likely to be stronger at postgraduate rather than undergraduate levels'. Thus while the quality of teaching may improve by some measures with the increase in teaching-only roles, the fragmentation of the research-teaching nexus that is necessitated through their creation also separates these two parts of academia in ways that negatively impact the quality of both.

While teaching-only roles reduce the capacity of individuals to undertake research, there is also significant criticism that these roles are taking resources away from research at an institutional level. A recent example highlighting this is the warning from the National Tertiary Education Union that the growth of teaching-only roles at Flinders University would affect the quality of research at the university and damage its international reputation. The restructure was seen by the union, as well as some staff and students, as detrimental to a sense of academic community and to the meaningful relationship between teaching and research through an 'artificial separation' of these two elements of academia (Winter 2019). While this is undoubtedly a potential outcome, especially at non-research intensive institutions outside the Group of Eight, it is also important note that in Australia substantial research funding comes from revenue generated by teaching, especially from the fees of the increasing number of international students (Bentley et al. 2014, p. 362; Norton 2016, pp. 21-22). A report by the Grattan Institute entitled *The cash nexus: How teaching funds research in Australian universities* found that two billion dollars, or at least one in every five research dollars, comes from teaching surpluses (Norton 2015, p. 1). This revenue helps

universities maintain their research profiles by allowing those in traditional academic roles to focus on research through the support of teaching-only and casual academics who assist them with their teaching loads, particularly in relation to time consuming tasks such as administration and marking. Another report by the Grattan Institute notes that '[w]hile using student-derived revenue for research is sometimes controversial, it is unavoidable given the current structure of Australian higher education' and due to this, 'surpluses on teaching preserve teaching-research academic employment' (Norton 2016, p. 53).

Furthermore, in a major government report of teacher-only roles in Australian universities entitled *Teaching-focused academic appointments in Australian universities: Recognition, specialisation, or stratification?*, Probert (2013) suggested that there is a strategic effort to move research inactive staff (indexed by ERA recognised output) into teaching-only roles to improve a universities' research rankings. This highlights the fact that under Australia's National Protocols of Higher Education, 'research and teaching are institutional responsibilities, not individual responsibilities' (Bentley et al. 2014, p. 366) and 'illustrates the dominant university culture in which more teaching can be seen as a punishment for poor performance in research' (Probert 2013, p. 13). In Australia and the US, there has also been a related growth of education-focused positions where the research requirement is solely around pedagogical innovation and scholarship of teaching and learning (see McAlpine and Amundsen 2018, p. 102; Flecknoe et al. 2017). These range of institutional issues demonstrate that the rise in teaching-only roles is concurrently increasing the research capacities of certain academics and institutions while decreasing these capacities for other types of academics and institutions. Ultimately, there is a significant tension in the fact that quality research and teaching cultures in universities are being maintained by severing the research-teaching nexus upon which higher education is traditionally built.

### **The future of research and disciplinarity: The case of teaching-only roles in education**

The issues around the re-structuring of the research-teaching nexus and the subsequent rise of teaching-only roles is also importantly inflected by the issue of disciplinarity (Tight 2016, p. 299). As Probert (2013, p. 21) notes in the Australian context:

There is...a new form of disciplinary differentiation in the appointment of teaching-focused academics which is, paradoxically, most visible in the most research-intensive universities. It is a development that bears particular scrutiny because it has been driven at the discipline level by a desire to sustain the highest international research rankings at the same time as improving the quality of undergraduate teaching by devoting more specialist resources to it.

The field of education is an especially notable case in this regard due to the specific history of teacher education in Australia. Up until the 1980s, teacher education was largely confined to specialised colleges of advanced education, which took an applied, craft-orientated approach to teacher training (Aspland 2006, p. 152). However, in the context of

broader reforms in the public sector in the 1980s, the federal government under the Education Minister John Dawkins merged teachers' colleges into an unified national higher education system in 1988. According to Sachs and Groundwater Smith (1999, p. 219), 'for teacher education, it was believed that the nexus between research, scholarship and practice' produced through this amalgamation 'would contribute to an increasing professionalisation of teaching'. During this transition, the practical approach to teacher education in teachers' colleges was replaced by more theoretical, research driven one in the university. Following this, Aspland (2006, p. 152) notes the Australian reforms 'have had a long-term impact on the context in which university academics and teacher educators now operate'. In particular, the re-negotiations of the field of education that stemmed from the changes of the late 1980s continues today in education departments in Australian universities. This is specifically apparent in the fragile relationship of the discipline to the university as an institution, which is an effect of the history outlined above. Along with this institutional fragility, there is also a tenuous relationship within the discipline to research as both a practice (that is, as something fundamental to the everyday work of being an academic in the field of education) and an orientation (that is, as something fundamental to conceptualising what teacher education means and should do in the contemporary university).

In terms of this fraught relationship between teacher education and research, the issues around this transition in the Australian case are also apparent in a wide range of other national contexts. The standing of education in higher education still largely perceives it as a 'professional field in universities organized around scientific fields, which traditionally reward theoretical/experimental paradigms in research' (Fischman et al. 2018, p. 1). A broad issue in these global cases is that former college staff who moved into universities had to adjust to a new system and reward structure along with the expectations of a place where 'research and scholarship had much higher visibility' (Moon 2017, p. 89). In Scotland, for example, Lucas (2007, p. 20) documents the issues that arose when academics in the field of education 'move[d] from a situation of no involvement in research to one where they are expected to be significant contributors to the research cultures within university departments'. She argues that, for the research potential of these type of education academics to be developed, it needs to be embedded in communities of practice that draw on and enhance the research-teaching nexus for both the academics themselves but also their students. Returning to the Australian context, Probert (2013, p. 23) found that while some institutions have 'adopted a strategic university-wide approach to their distribution [of teaching-only roles] across all programs', other universities have concentrated these positions in certain disciplines, namely the health sciences and education. In education, this is often associated with the rise of Master of Teaching degrees that are 'clinical style' programs (Probert 2013, p. 23).

Considering this historical relationship of research-teaching nexus to the field of teacher education is therefore key to understanding the specific impact teaching-only roles on the discipline. The persisting tension in the field of education in relationship to research complicates the contemporary place and effects of these roles in significant ways. Thus, the question of how a field with an already tenuous historical relationship to research-based scholarship can continue to build its research capacities in the face of broader changes around academic labour in Australian higher education is a complicated one. This is particularly important question as research has been identified as one of the key mechanisms in strengthening teacher education in the university in terms of both legitimacy and status (Moon 2017). What are the consequences for teachers, researchers, students, universities, schools, and communities when research is seen as a dispensable part of the field of education? How can the discipline sustain itself when there is a systemic de-valuation of research?

There is a sense that the trend towards severing the research-teaching nexus could signal a return to the teacher college model of teacher training, especially for institutions outside the Group of Eight who have access to less research funds, due to the perception that this relationship 'is what distinguishes universities, new and old, from other higher education providers and TAFE institutions' (Probert 2013, p. 24). Thus, to support the researching-teaching nexus, Moon (2017, p. 92) advocates for a 'much stronger role for the teacher educator as the mediator between research and practice' in order to make the 'relevance of research in professional life ... more apparent'. This goal, however, faces a number of everyday practical hurdles. The importance of praxis-based and action research implied in Lucas' (2007) and Moon's (2017) arguments relies largely on small scale research projects that help improve teaching or situations in schools with academics working alongside school teachers and communities to solve problems. However, increasing teaching loads and diminishing opportunities to secure a permanent position with a research allocation can discourage and block academics from undertake these projects (Bentley et al. 2014, p. 373). Teaching-only roles effect the ability of academics to do this type of research due to a lack of research hours in their workload allocation, a lack of funding, and a lack of time to go into school communities to do this work. These issues also effect ERA researcher whose research output requirements do not support them conducting small scale research interventions in schools.

#### **4. Project design**

It is important for this study that Australia has been represented in earlier international studies, noted in the opening of the literature review, in order to be able to judge the significance of the pressures on academic work, and the extent of changes, if any.

Supporting the potential for future international comparative work, the Working Party consulted Fischman and his colleagues (2018) who drew on these earlier international studies when investigating research and knowledge mobilisation in a small sample of USA *education* faculties. Harman and Meek in their early 2000s study (2007, p. 144) point to the centrality of the Australian sector's turn to entrepreneurialism, a market-oriented policy climate and managerialism in the two decades since the UNS, noting increased working hours, grant orientation, higher productivity and low morale. We further note that this includes the National Tertiary Education Union's survey (2019), The History Association's study of the impact of casualisation of teaching for their field, work from the LH Martin Institute at Melbourne University, especially the work of Larkins (e.g. 2018) and a number of articles in the Australian Universities Review (e.g. Kenny 2016; Kenny & Fluck 2019).

The Working Party undertook a range of activities to explore, understand and support education research. It sponsored a workshop for a sample of volunteer academics at the 2018 AARE annual conference, to document the experience of diverse groups of researchers, including higher degree candidates, early career, mid career and senior academics. An early draft of a survey was piloted in 2018 and discussed at the special session at the annual conference. A provocative entry was provided by Zipin and Brennan for AARE's *Edu-Research Matters* Blog on the teaching-research nexus (February 2019) to stimulate public conversation. The Working Party was able to discuss two case studies of universities where restructuring had significantly affected workloads. The Professional and Higher education SIG sponsored discussions at their annual conference meetings, while the AARE Postgraduate and ECR networks provided venues to examine conditions that supported research under current institutional and policy regimes. This range of activities informed the design of the survey so that it would bring out Australian experiences of academic research in education. This report draws on all the activities, while giving centrality to the findings arising from the 2019 survey. All quotations included in this report are from the Survey.

This report offers preliminary analysis of academic research work in the field of education in Australian universities. It does not systematically put these findings into the broad context of the experience in other countries and other disciplines, but the Working Party hopes to undertake further analysis in future. In designing the survey, it was seen as important to understand the dynamic context in which the Australian higher education sector is operating, and to see changes to academic work and the place of research by putting Australian academic work in an international context. In order to make future comparative work possible, the Survey built on the questionnaire and foci of earlier international studies (Altbach, 1996; Fischman et al, 1996; Teichler et al. 2013; Locke & Teichler 2007). An extension to the current report ought thus to be able to make some estimation of changes in academic work, and to place changes in the Australian field of education research and its social and contexts within such broader international findings over time. Further, the 2019

timing of the survey will be important in providing data prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, as a base line for later comparisons and studies.

### **Overview of the Survey: Mapping research opportunities in the field of education in Australia Study**

The survey, *Mapping research opportunities in the field of education in Australia*, sought to map academic perceptions and reports around their current research experience of education research in Australian universities, with a view to mapping the diversity of that experience to inform members of AARE and the wider education research community, contribute to focussed advocacy for education research, and assist in policy development nationally and at institutional levels. The study and its survey instrumentation were given ethical clearance by Victoria University (HRE19-09). The Survey was conducted online, with the invitation circulated to AARE members; members could also circulate to non-members of their faculties. It was opened initially for two weeks, with a further extension opened up, given the inter-semester timing in June 2019.

The Survey (see Appendix 2) was divided into four main sub-groupings of questions. *Demographic information* was sought, including age, cultural background, gender, disability, qualifications, nature of current position, length of employment in the sector, and the university network (Go8, regional etc). The second set of questions explored *Workload*: its allocation and allocation process, hours worked in different categories of work, research engagement over a career, and hours spent on research. *Institutional policy and practice* in relation to research were the focus of the third set of questions. Here perceptions of university policy and practice were requested: the university's perceived valuation of diverse categories of different elements of work, especially research work and how this fitted with the respondent's own valuing of those activities, its use of metrics and benchmarks, provision and support of research development opportunities, and research culture. The final section asked respondents to suggest support/infrastructure they would value, including making suggestions for how AARE could contribute to support research, and whether in their view, the essential work of education faculties/schools was being fulfilled.

162 responses were received. Each category of questions provided opportunities for people not to reply to certain questions, and also to provide additional comments, if desired. The sample is primarily made up of those working/studying within tertiary institutions, with a large number of the respondents indicating that they worked or studied at a university at the time they were responding to the survey (87%, n=142), and only 6 respondents (4%) indicating that they neither worked or studied at a university. A further 14 respondents (9%) indicated that they were not working within a university at this time but had worked at a university in the past.

There was a good spread of roles held by the respondent group. These included: funded students (n=12), unfunded student (n=7), level A (n=6), level B (n=37), level C (n=24), level D (n=21); level E (n=26), those paid on a HEW level scale (n=7), 1 respondent preferred not to say and 16 respondents had other roles and descriptions. More than 50% of these participants indicated that their role was teaching-and-research focused (n=84, 54%), while 55% (n=86) were in full time continuing arrangements. Of those respondents who worked within a university, respondents indicated that they had worked between <5 years to 45 years, with the largest group (28%, n=44) indicating they had worked in universities between >5 years to 10 years.

In relation to the university that the respondents were affiliated with, the largest number of respondents worked within a GO8 (31%, n=46). Almost 30% of the respondent group either did not know what network their university was a member or indicated that their university was not affiliated with a network (27%, n=55). The largest number of respondents worked or studied at a university located within a capital city (80%, n=121) with approximately 8% (n=12) of the respondent group working in a university in either a provincial city/large town, or a rural/regional area.

162 respondents for a long survey is a statistically significant percentage of AARE members, who are themselves a sample of researchers in the Australian field of education research.

That there were a significant number of additional comments, including demographic details, illustrative examples and wider commentary – a total of over 1300 separate comments from the respondents highlights the importance a significant number of education researchers/would-be researchers place on this issue and suggests to AARE. It underscores the urgency felt by those proposing the motion to the AGM in 2017 is continuing.

What term best describes your current academic role? If you hold more than one role please indicate the role you consider to be your main role.		Response Percent	Response Total
Student - funded		7.69%	12
Student - not funded		4.49%	7
Level A		3.85%	6
Level B		23.72%	37
Level C		15.39%	24
Level D		13.46%	21
Level E		16.03%	25
HEW level		4.49%	7
Rather not say		0.64%	1
Other (Please specify)		10.26%	16

Total # of respondents **162**.  
Statistics based on **156** respondents; **0** filtered; **6** skipped.

**Table 1: Spread of Respondents' Academic Roles**

It is important to keep in mind, however, that most respondents represent conference-going or research-active AARE members; there is an absent-presence of those who do not produce scholarship to get them to conferences, and/or who cannot afford conferences, for whom the questions of the field's research capacity also matters. More than that, the future of research in universities, as part of the rationale for how a university sector should contribute to social futures, are matters of overarching concern. Education's research contribution as part of the Humanities and Social Sciences disciplinary and professional domains is numerically significant within Australian higher education, and very relevant, we argue, to how the sector and its knowledge-work is renewed towards the future.

## 5. Findings

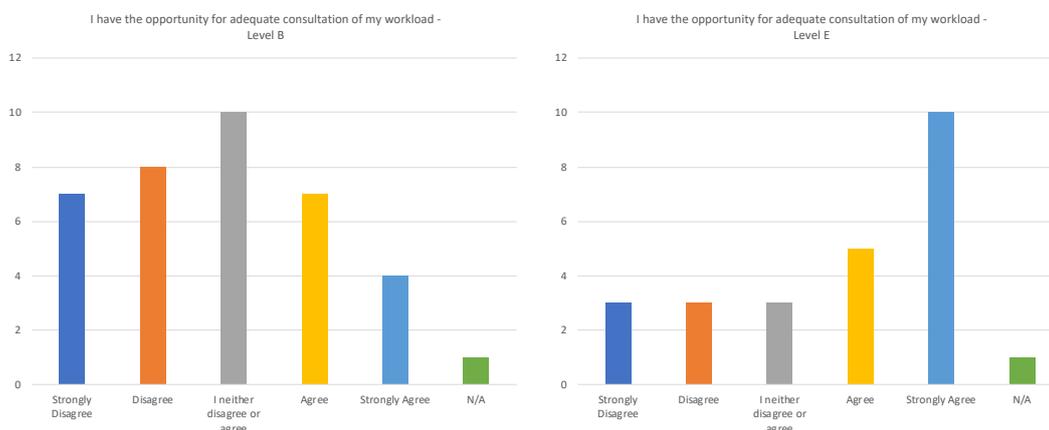
### Research Workload and Work Allocation

Respondents indicated that they spent approximately 14 hours a week on research, typically indicative of a 40:40:20 model, yet also indicated that on average they spent an additional 8.68 hours a week on research that was not in their workload. In relation to research workload allocation, 46.2% of respondents indicated they were not satisfied with their research allocation, whilst almost 13% were neutral. 34% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied. Of the thirteen Teaching-Only respondents, eight did not have an opportunity to have adequate consultation about workload; twelve worked more than their official load and ten were not satisfied with their allocation of research and scholarship.

48% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that their workload was manageable; 26% agreed their workload was manageable, with 7.33% strongly agreeing. Among Level Bs, the disagreement/strong disagreement was around double the agreement level. This calls into question the accuracy and appropriateness of many workload models, even if endorsed in Enterprise Agreements, with almost 50% reporting their workload not manageable in this survey. Those who do find it manageable still report significant levels of work in their own time.

In relation to research workload allocation, 46.2% of respondents indicated they were not satisfied with their research allocation, whilst almost 13% were neutral. 34% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied. There appears to be a significant difference on capacity to discuss or negotiate workloads, as the comparison of Level B and E answers to this question shown in Table below.

# I have the opportunity for adequate consultation of my workload



**Table 2: Comparison of Level B and E on workload consultation**

Respondents also reported spending an average of 5 hours per week completing work related to their scholarly and disciplinary communities through roles such as reviewing and editing. Qualitative data indicated that almost all respondents worked longer hours than their workload documented, but there was great variability in the assignment and nature of invisible work and its distribution across institutions and academic levels.

- *Since moving from a G8 university, I am not expected to work over my official load (Level A)*
- *I am currently employed as a Research Assistant. I resigned from a full-time role (Teaching-Research focused/3-year contract) at another university because I could not manage the workload, my PhD and family life. I wish there was an opportunity to discuss my prior role because it took me nearly a year to recover from the experience (Level A)*
- *I aim paid for 37.5 hours a week. I estimate that I work 60-65 hours each week to stay on top of just my teaching responsibilities. I do not have enough time to dedicate to research under my position and yet am expected to and will be measured on output for career progression (Level B).*
- *My teaching load is high but I have opportunities for research collaborations that as an ECR I need to be involved with even if there is not enough research time in my workload. It is a chicken and egg thing – as an ECR I do not have enough evidence of research activity to gain a workable time allowance for research. But without the time allowance it is hard to achieve a research track record – so I fit this into out of*

*hours time at the expense of sleep and family/friend activities! This is not sustainable so I am currently wondering if academic work is for me (Level B).*

- *I reduced my time fraction so I have time to undertake research - if I continued to work full time as a Teaching Specialist, I have no time for research which stymies my career. I essentially work a day for free, but know this is the only way to advance my career (Teaching Specialist, Level B).*
- *I refuse to work over my official load. I have worked at my university in a complex multitude of casual/hourly paid roles since 2006. I am not shown any loyalty by the university in terms of more secure work, so I don't feel any loyalty to the university, nor to my supervisors. Hence, I have made a conscious decision to do only as much as I absolutely have to while still maintaining my credibility as a research assistant.*
- *I would say on average I work 10-20 hours a week extra. This is mostly due to the demands of teaching admin that has increased, as well as supporting a larger number of students with mental health and anxiety related issues. The volume of email is enormous - I constantly have to remind myself that email is not my job. Admin related to research is also increasing. Constant changes to systems are exhausting. The pressure to get competitive grants (Cat 2-3) means having to develop applications fast and under pressure above your workload. All of these things tend to have to be dealt with after hours (Level D)*
- *About 30 hours more each week. I work every evening and every Sunday. I never take public holidays. I use my annual leave to write (in other words, to work) (Level E).*
- *I typically work 10-12 hours/day, five days/week, and 5-10 hours on weekends (minimum). My official load is 37.5 hours/week (Level E).*

Whilst almost 28% indicated that their research allocation expanded as their career progressed, almost 15% indicated that their research allocation had been reduced with approximately 40% saying it had stayed the same across their careers. Whether supervision and completions count as teaching or research makes a difference to work allocations.

Allocation of workload is most often retrospective based on previous publications, grants and track record, where the previous year's output is used to allocate time allocation for the current year. Concern was raised by more experienced academics that, at its worst, people in their early careers are disadvantaged:

- *colleagues that are early career researchers are finding it impossible to gain traction research wise and end up teaching 80%-90% of their workload and it creates a cycle where they don't get a chance to conduct research or even join research teams ... creates a competitive work environment ... When the whole system is so (unnecessarily) competitive, individualized and performative, it continually rewards those at the top of the ladder and the conditions keep them there, as their research*

*track records are so impressive, they are rewarded again when awarded more research funding and the cycle continues.*

Some reported that the supervisor has a lot of say over their workload, while others reported that workload decisions are often made by professional staff. The use of workload templates in annual performance reviews may offer flexibility if meetings are used, while in other cases more adherence to 'rules' based on publications, grants and supervision, with full loads made up with teaching if not (funded) research. One person commented that their university was using the metrics to avoid supporting teaching-and-research academics, but to separate out Teaching-Only and Research-Only staff. In this, the allocation process becomes:

- *an elaborate process of back-mapping and forward-mapping research output and activity.*
- *The only way to get >40% research time is to bring in substantial external funds.*

For Teaching Specialists, 'scholarship' is counted only as 'scholarship of teaching', and the academic cannot gain research active status – even if they have publications.

- *With no semester off from teaching, I have no time to go and present at conferences and also no funding opportunities to go. Hence when I do, I take personal leave and fund it myself - hardly a holiday. This is meant to progress my career but is taken for granted and expected. If I put my foot down and refuse, I suffer, nobody else does.*
- *I complete research in any spare moment that I have, which is non-existent. I already work on completing teaching administration and marking on weekends and am doing 12-hour days Monday to Friday so unless I stop teaching as much (contractually obliged), I have no time for research without leaving zero work/life balance that is already completely out of whack anyway.*

For a number of respondents, the processes of metrics are opaque and seem confusing, a mystery. There is uncertainty associated with it:

- *... I am always worried that I'm not measuring up, or that the benchmark is such an impossibility because I do not conduct positivist, quantitative, research.*

Better management and monitoring of teaching and service workload is needed to reveal 'hidden' dimensions of workload:

- *This would help protect research time. The increasing precision and prescriptivism of teaching workload allocation tools hides certain work. Including minimising number of teaching days (not 5). Not overloading people to work 1.3 workload and ignore it. In effect there is no research time.*

- 40% of what – the regulated 37.25 hours per week or 40% of 50-60 hours or more?

There are also universities who do not adhere to the use of metrics and have more negotiation about the actual work done. For example, in some universities a standard academic appointment is 40:40:20 regardless of outputs:

- *This is a good arrangement for ECRs generally in that they don't have to 'earn' their research time and (in theory at least) are able to make use of the 40% load from the beginning to build their research and publication track record (Level D).*

The problem of overwork was recognised as making it difficult to expand research engagement. When asked about which activities or outcomes that respondents would like to do more of but do not get the time or opportunity to undertake, there was a wide range, across all levels, as seen from 67 respondents commenting, as listed in Table 3.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Count</b>
Attend conferences, professional development opportunities, professional reading	5
Better teaching	1
Collaboration with colleagues	3
Community engagement	6
Contributing to the profession	4
Editing	1
Editorial activities	1
Exhibiting work in creative contexts	1
Mentor new staff	4
Mentor students	1
Mentoring	1
More a matter of what I would like to do less of – compliance activities, reporting, attendance at consultations when it is clear that decisions have already been made, trouble-shooting issues caused by there not being enough people to do jobs and the people that are there not having the skills, etc.	1
Networking	1
New skills of analysis	1
Non-academic publications/outputs	2
PL for in-service teachers	3
Policy work, media, dissemination	1
Read and think	3
Research	5
Research active status considered as Teacher specialist	1
Research decisions in project – I am not valued	1
Research project invited onto	1
research that is not fruitlessly begging someone for money	1

Rest – sleep, work life balance, connecting with family	2
Spend time in local schools	1
Strategic policy research with education systems	1
Supervise HDR students	2
Working on equitable pathways to university; working on resources to assist community and teachers	1
Write	3
Write more books – but destroys publication pipeline	1
Writing and reading	1
Writing books, chapters	2
Writing research grants	3
Writing retreats	1

**Table 3: Research-related activities desired but not able to be undertaken.**

There are particular issues associated with **workload and research allocations for early and mid-career academics**. We concentrate the following paragraphs on their experiences as a way of pointing up *the intergenerational issues at stake for the sector*. 67 respondents identified as at Level A, B or C academics and 19 as students; 18 were sessional staff. Level A, B and C academics consistently reported workload being unmanageable, with the majority reporting they work over their ‘official’ load. This group of academics were employed in a range of different capacities, including as research assistants, research only with sessional teaching on top of that, including teaching and research roles. Key themes emerging from their data include: mis-allocated and hidden workload; mis-calculation of time needed to do the work; and the impact on health, wellbeing and life balance. The ways in which workload is allocated differs across respondent experiences, with some reporting that teaching coordination gets counted as leadership and service rather than teaching, and others describing how subject coordination, RHD supervision, writing and service are ‘uncounted’ parts of their work.

One respondent listed meetings and moderation as being tasks not counted in their workload allocations. Respondents discussed how the time allocated for different tasks was inadequate. One respondent stated:

- *I spend many more hours than those officially allocated for tasks associated with teaching and coordinating units. This is not a choice. The tasks cannot be satisfactorily completed in the time officially allocated and to do less would be to compromise quality and that would affect both the student feedback as well as my chances for promotion.*

Another who engages in sessional teaching wrote:

- *The hours allocated for sessional teaching are inadequate for the work I am expected to perform, especially in relation to marking, but also teaching preparation and responding to student emails.*

A Teaching Scholar points to a major compromise required to keep a career trajectory:

- *I reduced my time fraction so I have time to undertake research - if I continued to work full time as a Teaching Specialist, I have no time for research which stymies my career. I essentially work a day for free, but know this is the only way to advance my career.*

Other respondents noted the heavy burden of marking and course development during the semester and the lack of time between semesters to do teaching preparation. Many respondents spoke of the overwhelming time that teaching takes up in their work, regardless of how much time is allocated to it in their load. Teaching, co-ordination of subjects and marking were listed as being tasks that are severely under-allocated in time. As a number of respondents noted, this leads to research activities being marginalised and overlooked in the lived reality of the workload, regardless of how much time is allocated to research in the workload allocation.

Since the time required to do both teaching and research tasks, workload is underestimated or even mis-calculated in most workload models. Respondents noted that research is the activity that typically gets done on weekends, during leave periods and generally in one's 'own time'. This leaves early and mid-career researchers with unreasonable choices about whether to pursue the research side of academic work or to just keep up with the teaching expectations and perhaps some element of personal/family life.

The resulting impact on health, wellbeing and life balance is significant, and important for the future of the education sector. Respondents reported difficulty managing their academic work, study and family life. Some spoke of changing roles because they couldn't cope with the demands of the work and having to spend large amounts of time recovering from the burn out experience. Others reported making a decision to not work over their allocated hours in order to look after their health while being aware that this decision was having a detrimental impact on career aspirations, such that overwork is normalised and seen as the only way to progress. This leaves early and mid-career academics feeling like they have to choose between their health or progressing in their career. One respondent stated:

- *I have decided that this is not sustainable and am prepared to sacrifice opportunities for future promotion in order to maintain a reasonable level of health and job satisfaction.*

Another ECR respondent also noted the systemic and normalised nature of overwork in their institution:

- *I also think that if you want to progress, you have no choice but to work over your official load-this (is) seems like a built-in expectation.*

Another respondent reported working through public holidays and university breaks as the marking period coincided with these breaks. It was common for respondents to do research during their leave as this is the only time possible to do this work due to the blow out of teaching work at other times. Still more reported that it is difficult to find a time during the year to take leave as teaching semesters have lengthened, there has been a move to trimesters, or there is overlap with summer and winter teaching intensives.

One ECR reported having to do research in their own time, stating:

- *so I fit this [research] into out-of-hours time at the expense of sleep and family/friend activities! This is not sustainable so I am currently wondering if academic work is for me.*

The overwhelming nature of the teaching workload and the compromises that these early and mid-career academics feel they have to make in order to sustain themselves as researchers indicates a serious problem for the education research community. As reported earlier, this overwork is not restricted only to sessional, ECR and MCR academics.

Of the total number of respondents, 35 were studying at a doctoral level. 12 respondents described their candidature as funded, seven as unfunded. Given that 14 respondents listed “student” as the best description of their circumstances, the remaining doctoral students may be employed by the university in another capacity while undertaking their studies, and may have responded in relation to this employment more than their experiences as students.

In response to the question regarding hours of unpaid work, one funded student who also taught on a sessional basis spoke of how *“The amount of paid hours allocated per course is never sufficient”*, particularly in terms of the time allocated for marking. A student undertaking research assistant work at different universities, alongside their studies, claimed that, for most employment engagements, they had exceeded the time allocated and were only paid for this extra work on some occasions, estimating that they complete an average of 20 hours of unpaid work per week. Another funded student worked in excess of 10 hours over their load each week. There was only one response from an unfunded student in response to this question, who works as a casual tutor: they also reported working above their load, noting that time allocated was significantly insufficient, and highlighted student feedback surveys as a contributing factor. Being offered an opportunity

to move from casual work to contract or permanent positions was also noted as key by more than one HDR student. Some responses were more particular to respondents' sub-field of research or area of study, especially where these were under-recognised and ill-funded – such as disability – or challenging to conventional wisdom. One unfunded student, for example, called on the AARE to “accept conference presentations questioning the validity of 'research' which is viewed by education schools' leadership as being ideologically correct (but is not necessarily empirical or replicable)”. Support for Practitioner Research was mentioned by Sessional, HDR and ECRs as lacking.

There are important issues for AARE here. Almost 50% of respondents are dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with their research allocation. Respondents spend an average of a day a week on research that was not in their workload and spent close to a day a week maintaining the disciplinary research communities through peer reviewing and editing. What is interesting is that, while most noted significant hours (over)worked, these appeared to be taken for granted – normalised – although for some there was determination to refuse to do this for much longer. Eight of the thirteen Teaching-Only respondents, however, have engaged in research development opportunities and six self-fund these – almost all of which were above load. 36% indicated they self-funded their own research development. Research opportunity has contracted for almost 15% of respondents, another 40% indicating that their research allocation had stayed the same, approximately 27% indicating it has increased and 18% indicating 'other'.

From the data collected in the survey, education research is now not only being subsidized by significant amounts of unpaid labour but also the direct financial contributions of individual academics trying to keep their main form of research development available.

At all levels many respondents reported that their health and wellbeing was being severely strained. Older academics with long experience in the field may have been able to build up to a productive career including research in a less competitive and performative era. They may also be able to conduct research and teaching more efficiently, as a result of that experience. However, they may also be under more pressure to perform, bring in grants, write reports, provide policy advice, employ more staff, mentor more junior scholars, supervise more doctoral students than they can manage, at the expense of their own health, as some at the 2018 special session and trial of the questionnaire confirmed. More recent or more junior academics experience constant pressure to perform, often without necessary infrastructure to do so.

One response pointed toward directions that may have the potential to positively impact the current state of research opportunity in faculties of education across the country, when one institution instituted a good workload policy:

- *...However, I would say that my colleagues doing undergrad teaching still struggle with far too much invisible workload, if not as extremely as before the new workload model ..., there were historic tensions between staff who would have liked time for research but could not manage to write for publication while carrying so much teaching/admin, as against those who researched – located in two research centres – and mostly taught postgrad. The latter probably worked as many hours; but those hours included research and writing, not utterly overwhelmed by teaching and admin. There was a shift in culture towards greater cooperation and collectivity; however, as the new workload model was accompanied by strategically purposeful mentoring, and collaborative reading and writing collaborations, easing tensions and expanding the range and output of scholarship. ... Real gains were made, even though teaching workloads in undergrad programs were still excessive... (Level C-Other)*

Yet as one qualitative response summarised, whilst intensifying in recent times, many of the current issues have plagued education research for the respondent's last 15 years in academia.

- *What I found [at a new institution] were colleagues employed as 'teaching-and-research' but were de facto teaching-only due to workload. At first, I was astonished at how little resentment there was towards me for carrying a research-primarily load with ARCs, as compared to resentments that mostly-teaching colleagues had towards mostly-research colleagues in my previous university. I came to the interpretation that this was because colleagues with intelligence, knowledge, dispositions and capacities for research, but who did not have options to move elsewhere, had 'settled in' to being de facto teaching-only and did not resent what they had ceased to 'aspire' towards. Many had drawers full of data from practitioner projects that they had never found time to turn into papers for publication. Nor, in reality, did the university want them to be more than teachers. Over the years from 2011 - 2016, Management and Council restructuring of academic work and workforces, and the games they played with workload models, intensified invisible workload for most staff ...to a degree that my de facto teaching-only colleagues lost satisfactions of feeling they were even able to do good-quality teaching, let alone scholarship. I found this painful to witness and redoubled my union activism around workloads (Retired).*

In many contexts recent workplace restructures have resulted in redundancy and early retirement programs, and the flow-on effect has been increased workloads for academic staff, and increased casualisation across the sector particularly in level B and C academic positions. We believe that this has profound implications for educational research and teacher education. The absence of education academics from decision-making positions,

has removed knowledgeable participation from institutional governance. The longstanding issues with workload and research time allocation for academics in education has led to the current situation, exacerbated by lack of perceived valuing of research in the education, by poor funding of the sector overall, by global preference for commercialisation of research, among many other factors.

### **Institutional Policy and Practice**

There are a wide range of options used by institutions, Schools and Faculties to encourage and support research, in addition to workload allocation of time. Research support provided by institutions varied significantly. Close to 75% had access to some form of research grants, 45% access to mentoring, 48% had access to a research community or culture that provided feedback on grants and publications and 60% support for conference attendance. Just over 61% had access to study leave.

However, over half (53.47%) indicated that the composition of academic staff in faculties did not support a strong research culture. A poor or individualised research culture tends to be reflected in the level and processes of support within Schools/Faculties and the university overall. From the comments, access to research support is a serious inter-generational issue, especially when combined with the overload of hours worked. Some Schools/Faculties have continued to offer a range of research support to all staff, while in other sites, such support was directed mostly to active researchers.

Conference attendance was the most popular form of research development with just over 92% identifying it as a source of research development. Yet, 36% also indicated that their research development activities were self-funded as compared to 28% who accessed university funding or 14% who utilised a research grant.

Much of the overall university infrastructure for supporting research is devoted to the 'high flyers' and gaining grants; it tends to be generic, not necessarily helpful to specific fields, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Some institutions bring together women for research mentoring or have regular meetings of the professoriate.

When asked *whether the essential work of a school/faculty of education is being fulfilled*, a significant number expressed doubts, or believed that work was being done at the expense of staff. In many forums, the loss of academics in leadership positions with experience in the field of education, with national standing or networks, and the loss of stand-alone faculties was noted as a serious issue.

- *Yes, we have a good framework for academic development and strategies to support the framework.*

- *Yes. And teacher educators are putting their mental health and wellbeing at risk in order to fulfil this essential work. Teacher educators are pulled between different agendas. The university wants research output in specific journals, schools want face-to-face interactions with available staff, pre-service teachers want teacher educators to be constantly available, and policy makers want teacher educators to establish and maintain partnerships with schools, while providing little support or funding to enable this.*
- *Yes, in terms of research growth. No in terms of expansion of research participation. Indeed, the strategy here is to actively discourage most non-elite researchers from publication.*
- *No. Not at all. The traditional research-teaching-service academic does not exist, is not valued, and is poorly understood in the field of education. For far too many years, education in universities, is understood to be teaching. The sector has not been prepared for teaching-research-service. The move towards teaching only positions is only making matters worse. It's a glorified high school in this country.*
- *Barely. Not enough hours to [go] around.*
- *In some ways, yes. But the staff doing that work are not being treated well and their commitment to those elements is continually exploited.*
- *People are overworked and under enormous pressure and need to work a lot of unpaid hours to fulfil these essential roles. This is a norm and universities take advantage of this.*
- *Our school ... has been almost demolished by the restructure – there are no organised meetings by management, and a total absence of understanding of education in relation to research and teaching.*
- *Casualisation increases and institutions devalue teaching with lower pay rates and standardised courses and planning*
- *Quality of service is being reduced to things that can be measured, rather than influences and supports that provide growth and learning over a long period of time*
- *The term 'blue sky research' now means 'your focus doesn't fit with our stated research goals' ... it is not about impactful research, but research that fits current government policy preferences and funding opportunities*
- *No: because research and the \$\$\$\$ that brings in is all that is valued*
- *No - researchers are restricted to doing only studies in areas which are viewed as ideologically correct*
- *It is challenging to engage in innovative, intellectual work. I have found it necessary to actively pursue a collaborative, relational dialogue between academics in my faculty. There is a great deal of individual activity and isolation that is evident and unless you push back against that, it is the predominant model of working.*
- *Teaching has become an opportunity for universities to widen their doors to international students to make more money off [them] without investing money in*

*preparing educators for this, training them or supporting international students once they are at the institution*

- *No support for educators under duress from this process.*

A significant portion of respondents at all levels indicated they had little understanding of the research metrics in operation at their institution. The most common theme in the qualitative feedback was the opaque nature of both the metrics system and its application – and thus relevant to whether respondents had access to support and research work allocations. A sample of replies to the question about institutional use of metrics and benchmarks indicates something of the complexity experienced by academics in a fast-changing performative set of policies and institutional practices.

- *We have benchmarks, but they are extremely ambiguous. They essentially outline what a professor is required to do and every other level needs to guess what this means for them as they work towards this benchmark (Level B)*
- *The system for allocating research time and workload at my university is very nebulous and appears uneven. It is not clear how decisions are made and it looks like some people get overloaded whereas others do not. It is very confusing and frustrating. It seems like a case of 'to them who have, more will be given'... not just in terms of time, but also in terms of resource allocation (research assistance etc) (Level B).*
- *I am a teaching scholar as it was the only way I could get a promotion because I haven't been able to secure external research funding. I still research and this comes under my scholarship allocation. As a teaching scholar I don't actually have to produce anything or provide any evidence.*
- *It uses both income metrics and publication points to allocate individual research workload (with a cap of 60%).*
- *Yes - I am required and expected to bring in more income via grants.*
- *Previously we had a 30% cap for pubs. This year an incentive of 2% for Q1 pubs was introduced which gave a small number of us a bonus points windfall. Perhaps high publishers could be better utilized to assist low publishing colleagues to get outcomes. Workload is allocated always on individual basis which makes us into competitors for limited resources rather than considering ourselves as communities. (Level D).*
- *Not so much, the metrics are more used for hiring, probation, and promotion.*
- *At present it doesn't. A standard academic appointment has a 40% research, 40% teaching and 20% service allocation, regardless of outputs, grants or anything else. .... It becomes more difficult down the track because 40% is allocated regardless of whether you have large research grants or not. I do realise that having large grants is a very privileged position to be in, but over the past couple of years I have had to decline to be involved in grant bids (or been involved but been quite relieved when*

*they haven't come off) because there's just no way that I could jam another large research project into the time available.(Level D).*

The consequences of the use of metrics, usually tied to ERA cycles, can be serious across the institution, and for Education as a field:

- *There is an increased focus on ERA, HDR completion, and cutting administrative support staff. Thus, there is a push for higher quality publications at a higher volume, more HDR completions on time with higher quality supervision, and an increase of administrative work that academic staff have to do.*
- *There is a strong movement away from expectations of universal participation in both research and teaching by all academics, toward a research elite managed and supported separately from teaching-focused (yet PhD qualified) workforce. Changes to assessment involve a greater proportion of exams and quizzes that can be marked without paying anyone, then paying casual staff to mark essays and other assignments.*
- *The shift to teaching-only as an institution. These developments have seen a drastic migration of scholars, including supervisors, either into early retirement, or to seek opportunities at another institution.*
- *YES. Focus on FoR code 1300 for publications. National research priorities just don't match what we do in education. Education is the ghetto. Nice women will continue to do the work regardless.*
- *The days of each academic having equal access to conference support (eg \$3000 pa) are long gone and we have a competitive application process for much smaller amounts of funding.*
- *Heads of school and deans are now lashed to KPIs that have metrics and they chase those metrics at any cost. We have had all support cut (eg conference funds) and entirely tied to metrics of grant applications.*
- *There is an increased devaluing of Education as a research area. A range of people publish in FoR code 13 and it reflects badly on Education schools. ERA is driving everything and education gets a raw deal when compared to the sciences.*
- *I'm unsure about this. I think as a School we do but much of it rests on the goodwill of our senior people and their capacity to mentor and support more junior colleagues.*
- *There has been a research intensification strategy whereby researchers have been appointed to enhance the university's research profile while existing staff have been denied opportunities and been dissuaded from doing research as a result of all the roadblocks implemented. Many staff members have been forced to select a teaching only pathway as a means of survival.*
- *There has been a major restructure of professional staff and academics that has meant lots of people have left, [or] have been forced to teacher specialists. Recent ERA results have been credited to changed agenda plan even though the years are*

wrong. We have now lost many people who contributed to increased ERA numbers. Most are devalued except for 'research stars' who publish in Q1 and bring in lots of grants.

- Research that falls outside of strategic research foci is not eligible for internal funding
- Education research is not even on the radar at my institution.
- ERA has officially been used to value certain areas, but it did not stop my university from disbanding an 'above world standard' grouping with a lot of doctoral students. It seems that senior people make decisions and look for whatever they decide is worth supporting, using whatever excuse they want. They don't say 'we can't afford it', even though that is the truth.
- ERA is of extreme concern and shame with FOR education codes static over last two times 2. impact has led to thorough resourcing of the development of Impact cases, with an excellent and well-regarded case developed in education being a source of community pride. Recruitment of a strategist from [international context] was a university wide strategy. 3. Cuts to funding have meant we are encouraged to seek out cat 2/3/4 funding to prop up school and where possible to fund our own research training or networking from above-load consultancies. We are very busy on lots of little low-level projects to scrape in money to get ourselves to conferences where possible.

Asked if they believe their university has a plan for growing education research, respondents note that there is a lot of policy change, and what planning occurs either does not include Education or does not consult academics from the area.

- There is little strategic planning - and VERY little inclusion of faculty staff in strategic planning
- Unsure. I don't think senior management at the VC level gets that education, through the amalgamation of teachers' colleges in AUS, has been done in an ad hoc way.
- Education research is at the bottom of the pile of research priorities
- Definitely NO!
- Yes, but it is still a moving feast so I can't be specific.
- Only those already established not early career academics engaged on short-term contracts
- No, or if they do the plan is simply to support high flyers rather than across the board.
- Hard to say for sure, but it seems to me that the University has other priorities - ones that can bring in more money than education is able to.
- I believe they think they do: heavy focus on ECR
- I'm sure someone has a plan, although it's not really communicated clearly throughout the school. ECR's seems to be mostly excluded from these discussions.

- *No. Not at all. They have no long-term plans whatsoever. Everything is short term. Nothing is more than 18 months at most.*
- *I believe they have had a knee jerk response and are publicly making demonstrations of intentions in the right direction and opportunities, but these are not sustainable and have not taken into consideration that with casualisation of the workforce that the expectations for long term research, there is no congruence or stability.*
- *My university once had a great research culture but this is diminishing.*

Respondents' views on what Universities valued tended to mirror ERA and other standardised metrics. Peer reviewed journal articles were seen as most valued by their institutions, with only 28/141 seeing books or book chapters as highly valued by their university. 48 out of 140 respondents suggested that their institutions did not value any publication that was not refereed, which seems to undermine questions of impact and engagement, and distribution of research more widely. Research funding was seen as more highly valued than research, though both were priorities for the majority of universities. Universities were seen as not valuing conference attendance and presentations. Service to local communities and service to the profession, including research-related activities such as editing and refereeing, were perceived as not valued by universities. In terms of what respondents themselves valued in research-related activity, the highest form of research activity was peer reviewed articles, alongside conducting research. However, writing books and book chapters and writing non-refereed papers were also highly valued activities and HDR supervision and mentoring were also more highly valued by respondents than those same respondents felt that their universities supported these activities.

### **How could research be better supported in workload?**

All dimensions of teaching, research, leadership, administration, governance and service to disciplinary and wider community need to be appropriately acknowledged and negotiated with staff, rather than leaving this to be dependent only on a fixed template which leaves much assumed and relied upon and which dictates 'what counts'. Often it is the invisibility of teaching, including marking and coordination work, that reduces or eliminates time for research and scholarship. At other times, the contradictory pressures of gaining grants and workload allocations fail to match:

- *Enable negotiation of higher research workloads when these are justifiable. Eg running several large grants, and continuing to bring in income (as this is key to university income) is what I do - yet my workload for this is 40%. It should be a simple and accepted practice, that if this is occurring, then logically more research workload is acceptable.*
- *People need to be nurtured, mentored and supported as they develop their research trajectory. This means allocating workload time to junior academics for this purpose.*

*It also means acknowledging the role of senior academics who should provide support as a peer.*

A research culture that values a broad church of methodologies and is inclusive of academics at diverse stages of their life and career needs to be developed – within each institution and supported across institutions.

Different measures for education research need to be developed, alongside colleagues in the humanities and social sciences, so that quality, reaching appropriate audiences, impact and networking can be richly taken into account – largely through peer review, which has a long history for most education-based sub-fields of research.

- *when major grants are won, the faculty abides by its sign off for release, quite simple really*
- *It is supported very well in my institution - there is significant capacity building and opportunities for internal seed funding and it has a 40% allocation.*
- *I think it makes sense that workload be outcomes-linked; however there need to be incentives and training for ECRs trying to get started. eg secondments, mentoring, writing focused interventions. Teaching should not be an excuse for avoiding research even when teaching loads are high.*
- *The metrics used have not helped. Workload formulas drive quantity over quality. Teaching and Research should be valued equally. Study leave periods are based on competitive applications. Principles of equity are rarely applied to enable ECRs to have time to build a profile. To succeed as a researcher you need supports beyond your willingness to live on casual employment contracts. The higher education sector in Australia is all consumed by market ideology.*
- *Strategies such as more efficient admin teams, white weeks, meeting free research days, and so on can help foster cultures that incorporate research as core business. However increased precarity of tenure makes it almost impossible for casual and contract academics to be supported develop research trajectories.*
- *Workload allocation for School presentations and attendance at staff and HDR student presentations - with associated accountability*
- *HDR supervision workload needs a reality check*
- *Better communication from my supervisors (e.g. actually responding to emails would help).*
- *By listening to staff about workload issues. My faculty tells us we are bad time managers if the teaching encroaches on research*
- *I'm not sure there is a one size fits all answer. I see Level B staff who have been appointed without PhDs struggling to work full time and get their doctorate so time release would help them. Less casualisation of staff would help so as to distribute the admin/management loads more equitably*

- *Research requires planning - applying for grants for future years, proposing future papers, conference presentations etc. The best way my research could be better supported would be by continuing work.*
- *Involvement of management in helping people to maximise blocks of time for research.*
- *Rethinking the imposition of tasks that are not necessary or useful. By this I mean that there seem to be a lot of strategy and vision statements that aren't needed and removal of basic administrative service roles, such as front line student advisors, coinciding with a proliferation of more senior roles that seem to create extra layers of work, much of it in crisis mode.*

Lack of research funding for the sector, apart from the top ARC or RCT-methodology commissioned research, is seen as a serious problem:

- *To be regarded as research active (and have more time for research) in our workload profiles you must have external income - hence very few Education academics are regarded as research active as there is not a lot of external funding around in education.*
- *More funding opportunities, there are zero opportunities for mid-career researchers at my institution and, obviously, the national funding situation for education research is beyond dire.*

Scholarship of teaching needs to count as education research, since teaching and learning, curriculum, policy contexts for teaching and other teaching-related research are core areas of FOR 13. There was caution, however, about how other disciplines move their outputs related to teaching into FOR 13, as a way to avoid counting sometimes low-level publications in their own disciplinary field.

- *However increased precarity of tenure makes it almost impossible for casual and contract academics to be supported develop research trajectories.*

There was recognition of the inter-dependence of professional and administrative staff – whose numbers have been downsized in many universities – as key to increasing research activity – including through project management, managing finances, applications, grant management, annual reports, recruitment processes, or support for research assistants, where they have been contributed to research productivity and culture in the past.

There were a number of practical suggestions made for School/Faculty-level support:

- *Strategies such as more efficient admin teams, 'white weeks', meeting-free research days, and so on can help foster cultures that incorporate research as core business*

- *I feel very supported in my research time. I am, however, conscious of early career researchers who have limited output and therefore productivity allowance. Therefore I have started a writing group to support ECRs so that they can change their workload outcomes. This has been working really well.*
- *Make good use of breaks and try to block out diary time. Try to get a day working at home on research to save travel.*
- *Career breaks would need to be factored into the workload. We should be 'credited' with workload associated with publications shortly after their acceptance. The delay in their recognition contributes to the catch 22.*
- *For ECRs and MCRs it would be great if they could guarantee 1 light load teaching semester each 18 months.*
- *Research supervision should be counted as research. [Others also noted this should count as research since it contributes to completion metrics, part of the university's funding infrastructure \$\$\$. Still others saw it as taking away from time for one's own research projects.]*
- *Hours could be separately allocated to research administration in addition to research. For example, for active researchers, hours could be allocated for submission of ethics applications, funding applications, manuscripts, reporting, project management, formalised partnerships, etc*
- *Ensure whole days are available rather than teaching every day. The exhaustion associated with teaching makes rigorous intellectual work difficult.*

Such activities rest to an important degree on academic participation in negotiating workload, determining priorities and contributing to policy and strategic future discussions.

### **AARE's support for research in Education**

Many respondents appreciated the diverse efforts made by the Association to support members in research in the two to five years prior, as the following comments illustrate:

- *AARE already does a lot, all of which is valuable.*
- *Continue lobbying for value of educational research.*
- *Continue providing space for connection and collaboration*
- *I think that there was a good deal of important work completed over the past 2-5 years.*
- *I think generally that AARE does a good job.*
- *AARE is doing a terrific job in my view.*
- *Any support by any entity or organisation that advocates on behalf of academics in education is needed and welcomed.*

- *Continue the work you are doing to continue to highlight the salience of the issues facing researchers who are at times working against the odds to achieve their aims, such as equitable learning outcomes for all students.*
- *The theory workshops are an excellent initiative, as are preconference ECR days.*
- *The SIG activities and especially small grants for events are great.*
- *Several years ago the grant writing workshops were fantastic.*
- *Conducting research like this to form a foundation for policy advocacy as well as to add to knowledge of the discipline is important.*
- *The journal is ... an important activity and is very well managed.*
- *Keep up theory workshops*
- *I try and attend the AARE conferences, which are always excellent and provide opportunities for networking, learning about other research and researchers' problems.*
- *Keep up the profile, grow membership, support greater international presence*
- *Continue to advocate for and create opportunities to sprout the importance of research in education. Uphold and promote high quality research both within the organisation but outward facing promotion too.*
- *AARE is doing a great job of making education research more visible in the public sphere, which I think is a necessary step toward changing the discourse about education research and why it matters.*
- *Thank you for doing this work as volunteers for the membership of AARE - and know it is appreciated.*

There were a number of suggestions about what AARE might consider doing, significantly emphasising the political work of lobbying and advocacy. Recognition of actual work in workload and more job security were seen as key foci for lobbying and public awareness:

- *Make the case for research to be a fundamental requirement in all academic workloads.*
- *Promote better conditions for early career academics, reduced workload allocations, more time to do research and write, and more mentoring support*
- *Advocate for more secure work.*
- *Be more vocal about the problem of insecure work that many researchers (particularly research assistants) experience.*
- *Call out inequitable behaviours.*
- *Create culture for provision of negotiating - extending research workload as appropriate. And a culture that can embrace this as valuable (eg researchers can give much back to schools and faculties).*
- *Advocate for greater slices of the funding pie; esp. by encouraging ARC reviewers to be fair and supportive of applicants. My own experience ... is that education*

*reviewers tend to be much harsher, and this damages us as a profession (esp. as we are in with all of SBE, and tend to lose out on funding)*

- *Promote a culture of collaboration rather than competition.*

HDR students particularly emphasised the political leadership of the organisation:

- *Oppose further privatisation and monetisation of education; work to restore education as a funded public right and service... (funded student)*
- *I think the AARE needs to prioritise being politically active on issues affecting our field for the sake of its future. This is one way of supporting members — past, present and future — without whom the AARE does not exist (funded student).*
- *If someone wants to move from casual employment to more permanent employment then it would be great if any opportunity is also offered to casuals (unfunded student).*

Gaining a higher profile in the media for education research is recognised as difficult but respondents suggested that this remains essential:

- *Public awareness raising in media*
- *Lobby and campaign for a rich understanding of the profession and the work it does, and for research opportunities to be distributed.*
- *AARE should take the lead, representing the academia, in negotiating the workload of the academics. Cost cutting and overloading academics will have a cyclic impact on the quality of education and therefore its contributions to the economy and development of a country.*
- *Convincing the bureaucracy about the importance of research especially educational research should be done.*
- *Fight vigorously to engage the broader community and the higher education institutions in Australia to value and demand high quality research.*

Suggestions were made for AARE's own SIGS, Workshops and Conferences:

- *Make key sessions available by pod casts for those unable to travel*
- *Support regional networking opportunities*
- *Support design workshops for collaborative design and application for multi-institutional research project.*
- *would be good to see maybe some mid-career researcher support as well as ECR; the research theory workshops are great but maybe a similar style for mid-career researchers on grants (Cat 2-3)*
- *Conference costs are very high which is difficult for ECRs and people in precarious conditions*

- *Focusing on ways to support researchers' engagement with teachers and increasing understanding of what research is, how it can inform teaching and vice versa*
- *Encourage SIG activities throughout the year*
- *Advertise more about the SIG grants. I know that sometimes they hardly get any applications. Perhaps celebrate these at the annual conference as well*
- *supporting ECRs in writing workshops at the conference and throughout the year would be good. Perhaps some of the professoriate could run these*
- *Would prefer conference papers to be peer refereed to improve quality of conference and let newer researcher know the expected quality standards in the field.*

Many responses here and in related forums highlighted the need to work with other professional organisations, including the Academies of Humanities and Social Sciences, HASS and other professional associations, on issues such as creating more of a balance with STEM disciplines, increased research funding and changing the use of inappropriate metrics for research. Working with other organisations was suggested as critical for building support for change.

- *Support meeting of research-leaders (cADRE) to reflect on the findings of this study.*
- *Help formulate stronger partnerships between universities and schools.*
- *Support more inter-institutional mentoring for HDRs, ECRs, & MCRs. Whilst mentoring opportunities within one's institution can be valuable; they may not provide the anonymity that an inter-institutional opportunity might. In addition, these types of opportunities may provide access to scholars outside one's institution who actually has a better finger on the pulse of certain sub-fields (e.g., history of education, anthropology of education, science education).*
- *Lobby Universities Australia, ACDE, governments to consider the consequences of decisions.*
- *Work with ATEA closely.*
- *More active engagement by the association with university leaders. At present, many of our DVCRs don't even know that AARE exists (I have spoken with two in the last three months who had no idea what AARE is, or that is the largest education research association in the country/region). Improving the profile of the association at that level, and facilitating some sort of partnership arrangements or formalised network of universities that support AARE in some meaningful way, might go some distance toward changing the perception of education research within universities. This in turn could be a useful step in changing the ways that universities position and value their education researchers.*
- *[analyse] what educational research looks like in disciplinary contexts outside of Faculties of Education - this is an urgent need.*
- *Lobby union to ensure workload categories for research and teaching are not dependent on being successful at winning external income.*

Funding for research in education was raised in many responses, highlighting the need for supporting research of diverse kinds:

- *Advocate for an Education-specific grant scheme*
- *Lobby for reinstatement of OLT or similar program to fund educational research.*
- *Change to national research priorities to ensure there is something in there about education and human capacity building.*

Some suggested AARE itself could provide funding for projects – not understanding the role of membership fees and conference income to keep the Association going. It may be possible that AARE or its SIGs could act as broker for mentoring, for collaborative and even unfunded projects shared across different universities.

## **6. The urgency of acting on these issues: Discussion and recommendations**

The previous major section on Findings depicts significant issues for the field of education research and the higher education sector in Australia. While there remain a number of universities who support a 40:40:20 balance across teaching, research and service/administration/leadership/engagement, and there is commitment from experienced and senior academics to mentor more junior scholars, overwork in the sector and lack of funding for education research more broadly still pose dangers to the future of research – and the quality of teaching – in the sector. If these trends continue – and all indications during the COVID-19 Pandemic initial phases suggest that they are currently compounding – then there is an urgent need for political action in relation to the future of education research and the social and planetary purposes for universities. Professional associations such as AARE need to be able to take leadership positions in this political work, since many members need a non-home institution position from which to speak. The relative autonomy from government and from universities means that AARE provides an important space for university academics to exercise academic freedom, for sharing, commissioning research and policy analysis, and advocating for higher education and its research capacity. While most members of AARE are from university Schools and Faculties of Education, education research also includes research on Higher Education, from a range of locations. Both need active and urgent advocacy in the current context.

In the recent past, corporate and government agencies have engineered managerial restructuring of university academic workforces towards many more teaching-only staff (mostly junior) and few who are research-only/mainly. This trend in many universities has exacerbated the overwork associated with performativity measures, widely experienced in the sector, across of positions, including sessional staff. The trend towards reduction of the ‘teaching-and-research’ academic in favour of a division between teaching-only and

research-only has made the practice of a 'career' in the domain of education in higher education highly problematic. The trend is particularly a problem for the future of education research, since the future of educational research for all education sectors, and of teacher education, will not be served well by strategies aimed at destroying the future-oriented hopes of early-career academics who hope to develop and contribute in research as well as teaching.

Nor can the field of education thrive in universities which exploit staff, leaving required and necessary work invisible or undercounted and removing conditions for academic freedom when serving the society and improving the practices of their own institution. The teaching-and-research academic is needed to support high quality teaching, to collaborate with others on serving the community, and to contribute to building knowledge and knowledge-for-action. This doesn't mean there should be not be teaching-only academics. However, it does mean that: (a) a significant and growing portion of the workforce should be teaching-and-research; and (b) teaching-only workloads should include a strong scholarship component, with supported paths towards adding a research component if/as desired.

It has become very clear in the current pandemic that university students are interested in futures more widely than their own individual entrepreneurial/vocational options. Students need university education for knowledge-abilities that capacitate inter-active social grasp and action on problems that matter, in and across community life-worlds. Zipin and Brennan (2019) have argued that students need knowledge-*abilities*: abilities within and across communities to understand and pro-act with others, across diversities, on problems that matter: capacities to work with and upon knowledge; indeed, to create knowledge and pragmatic plans of action to address emergent problems for emergent futures. For students to come through universities embodying such capacities, they need to work with academics who are strong in *pedagogic-and-researchful* capacities – a further rationale for the teaching-and-research academic who embodies strengths in both knowledge work – as scholar-researchers – and pedagogic capacity to scaffold the learning wisely and soundly. In other words, they need teaching-*and*-research academics.

Issues of workload justice, and making visible the invisible or uncounted work, affect all of higher education. Workloads have been disrupted and expended as part of the Pandemic response, while relying on existing Enterprise Agreements and workload models which are often unfair and confusing. The loss of International Student income, and difficulties in continuing certain kinds of research under Pandemic conditions, have in a number of cases resulted in further challenges to the kind of university needed for the current and future Australian society and global relations.

A sustainable workforce in the field of education, and in higher education more broadly, is a necessity. Central to a sustainable workforce is the upcoming generation of students and academic staff. Their options and conditions become a matter of inter-generational justice,

in which all generations have a stake in redressing. For all, a robust research culture needs to be sustained and further developed. In this section, we present a number of recommendations for AARE Executive and Membership action, since – as one survey respondent noted – every individual and every institution needs to act.

### **Recommendation 1:**

This recommendation takes up a broad call for politicised action and specifies a number of priority issues needing attention:

**That AARE advocate for education research with key governance bodies, seeking collaboration with other professional associations, recognising the difficulties of the sector as a whole while insisting that research is central to teaching quality, to a quality university sector, and to the capacities of citizens educated through universities to deal with social, environmental, health, economic and political problems.**

**Particular issues requiring public naming, contestation and advocacy include:**

- a. Restriction of HDR, ECR and MCR research trajectories through funding and institutional practices of workloads, governance, competitive and unrealistic performance measures;**
- b. Growing numbers of casual, teaching-only and research-only staff as the default setting for appointments or transfers of existing staff, diminishing the Teaching & Research academic fraction, with consequences for succession-planning, career trajectories and the future of Australian research and teaching quality in education and other fields;**
- c. Inappropriate measures, based on the sciences, used for judgement of research quality in education, and other humanities and social science fields, rather than international peer review**
- d. Inadequate workload allocations and invisible work that restrict capacity to undertake research and collaboration across institutions and internationally**

**Through the trends above, Universities in Australia continue to narrow their purposes and the foci of their contribution, with too strong an emphasis on vocational skill formation rather than capacitating citizenry to work within uncertain futures and new knowledge creation.**

Workloads, workforce and career opportunities are key issues for retaining and building a future for research and researchers in education. With fortunate timing, the Coaldrake report (2019) clarified that universities in Australia should continue to be defined by

research *and* teaching (p. 35). The report cites, amongst other reasons, the importance of “quality pedagogical practices and teaching based on current research”; “ensuring students are educated with ... latest knowledge”; “the connection between research, quality teaching and positive student outcomes (commonly known as the teaching-research nexus)” (p. 31). Coaldrake summarises this by saying “there remains a strong view that a university should be a place of both teaching and research, nourishing a rich scholarly environment for students and for the benefit of the broader community” (p. 31). Given that most reasons for retaining both teaching and research in one academic position are supported by the teaching-research nexus, it seems more than a minor oversight that the move to increase teaching-only positions in many universities, also prevents them from doing research.

The Coaldrake report also recommends that universities “conduct world standard research in at least three, or at least 30 per cent of the broad (2-digit) fields of education where courses are delivered, whichever is greater” (p. 34). By 2030 “all current universities should be required to undertake world standard research in at least three, or at least 50 per cent, of the broad (2-digit) fields of education where courses are delivered, whichever is greater” (p. 34). This “may require some Australian universities to increase their research performance and output, or to specialise in their areas of strength” (p. 35). It is essential that this call is read *not* as a separation of teaching and research but as a return to a majority of academics embodying both teaching and research. It is also an invitation or prompt for education research to strengthen its public profile, to change the measures of what counts as quality, and to work in inter/multi and trans-disciplinary ways on key problematics for social and planetary futures.

Such work on strengthening a public profile for education research will require making university management and governments understand the realities of workloads and negotiate workloads that will support quality research through ensuring career pathways that do not rely on exploitative conditions and inappropriate measures of ‘what counts’ as quality. This will also require a media strategy which an expanded Working Party could assist, supporting wider public recognition of the *EduResearch Matters* Blog, and members’ work. Suggestions in the Findings section of this report give further options.

## Recommendation 2

**That AARE work with Australian Deans of Education and others with responsibility for education academic work to document and assess medium and longer-term implications for education research capacity. A past model for this engagement is available in the Strategic Alliance project between AARE, ACDE and ATEA that investigated strengthening a research-rich teaching profession in Australia.**

Given the voluntary nature of AARE, and the overwork rampant in the universities, organisations and professional associations have to work together if they are to be

politically effective in shifting institutional practice, public discourse and policy. The History Association's study of the impact of casualisation in their discipline area (Fathi & Megarrity 2019) is only the latest of many studies around workload and career trajectories, as cited in this study. The Learned Academies have been conducting a special ARC project on the 'Future Humanities Workforce' <https://www.humanities.org.au/advice/projects/future-workforce/>. Its Literature review (Glisic, 2019) may provide guidance for doing analyses of research capability and needs in our area, along with summaries of its consultations, building on earlier mappings such as Turner and Brass (2014).

Diverse concepts of the possible futures for our field need to be developed as part of such work. Our work is of course not autonomous but deeply intertwined with issues of social and planetary futures, which universities should take responsibility to elucidate and help address. Macro-structural and infrastructural issues – of environment, capitalism, colonial racist legacies, for example – are linked to life-world spaces. Where, if not universities, are these links and complexities to be elucidated for wider publics to comprehend and gain capacity to act? The argument for a renewal of university purposes will rest in part on the capabilities of academics, as teachers, researchers and community partners, to reinvent new practices that are future-oriented. The Covid-19 pandemic has only underlined the need for a reimagined university – and a renewal of an academic workforce with research capacities and career trajectories that are not exploitative.

Universities will need to be convinced and supported to build long-term plans for growing education research and multi-disciplinary research that includes education to serve diverse communities. That calls for a wider, more democratic understanding of the university and its governance. The financial strictures underpinning current managerial cultures of university management will need strong educational leadership strategic work to grow research that meets current and emerging future needs.

### Recommendation 3

**That, in light of the consistent and rapid changes in education, accelerated by the Pandemic, AARE lobby for an education-specific research fund, commensurate with student numbers, and the importance of the field to Australian and global needs and purposes. This recognises that strong research cultures are important for education workforces across all levels.**

Education research covers multiple fields: higher education, technical and further education, professional development, school education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, early childhood education, public administration, popular and community education, to name only a few. While we do not agree with narrow vocationally-oriented purposes for education, we do see that contributing knowledge work with and for the largest workforce in Australia – those who work in these institutions mentioned – is a

key role for university educators and researchers. Public sector funding for education research, along with seeking private, philanthropic and individual bequests, is needed. Education research across sectors needs appropriate and independent funding that can complement ARC, NHMRC, NCVET and governmental agency commissioned funding sources.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**That AARE expand the Working Party on supporting and capacitating the future of education research as a regular standing committee of the executive.**

The current working party asked AARE Executive at the 2019 AGM to both call for expanded membership and to keep the issues raised in this report on its agenda at Executive meetings and at Annual General Meeting. Such expansion can support wider capacitation of research and action on the multiple, complex and urgent issues for our field, and for the sector. It would be useful to bring together a wider group of researchers of higher education, perhaps drawn from the Professional and Higher Education Special Interest Group, to monitor developments, pool research and develop projects to follow up this study. A more extensive working party would be able to support the Executive and SIGs to coordinate and even commission work such as documenting strategies among members for making invisible work visible, for liaising with the other professional organisations and the NTEU, sharing documentation across institutions and disciplines, and for seeking funding for further investigations. AARE's development and conduct of a media strategy remains an urgent political focus, which could benefit from a larger or rotating group of members working in this field. Any moves in this space must ensure a deep and rigorous focus on issues of the education workforce and implications to the discipline of challenges as a result of casualisation, over work and lack of appropriate opportunity.

These recommendations and previous AGM motions need the development of new forms of politics from the organisation for changing conditions for universities as an education sector, and the field of education within it. As an organisation which is relatively autonomous AARE is able to engage in this space in ways that individual academics can not.

In recognition of the over-riding support for this work within membership of the Association we recommend that this report, once received by Executive, be made widely available to members and other interested stakeholders. Members need to be advised of the actions to be taken by the AARE Executive in response to the work of the Working Party to date.

Covid-19 conditions have seen a rush by universities to restructure academic work, particularly in moves towards reduction of a significant number of academic positions. These moves respond to both the long-term under-funding of the sector, particularly in supporting higher education research, and the loss of income from international students,

used to cross-subsidise both teaching and research. These changes in universities will compound the problems identified in this report, for which the Survey data was collected in June 2019. They will exacerbate the working conditions for research on education and undermine research capacity for future education research, including through the loss of sessional staff, reduction in international students including higher degree students, and reduction in research pathways, especially for early- and mid-career researchers. This further restriction of research does not only affect universities. It short-changes the communities whom universities are supposed to serve – at the very time when they are needed to help those communities to renew and re-orient equitable social, political, economic and planetary futures.

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## 8. Appendix 1: MOTION FOR AGM – AARE 2017

### University Governance, Restructures and Casualisation

AARE takes a stand against governance in universities that does not proceed from inclusive and participatory democratic decision-making, and that ignores the wisdom of broader bodies of academic and professional staff who do the core work of the university. We have seen the destructive effects of simplistic, managerial decision-making, particularly in relation to restructures that have occurred in multiple universities across the country. These decision-making procedures have affected many of our members. We are aware that there is a range of research that documents the deleterious effects of casualisation on academic work (e.g. Kimber 2003, Harvey 2013, NTEU 2012, Larkins 2011).

In many contexts recent workplace restructures have resulted in redundancy and early retirement programs, and a flow-on effect has been increased workloads for academic staff, and in some contexts increased casualization across the sector particularly in level B and C academic positions. We believe that this has profound implications for educational research and teacher education. We are concerned that one of the solutions being taken up in some university contexts is to reduce the number and range of people doing research, thereby threatening the teaching-research nexus and broad-based research cultures that are traditionally evident in teacher education.

As a research-oriented association, AARE is concerned about the educational research field, and the well-being of academics in this field. We believe that the future of educational research, and of teacher education, will not be served well by strategies aimed at destroying the future-oriented knowledge-work of early-career researchers who hope to develop and contribute in research as well as teaching. We also see this trend as likely to threaten the future of education as part of a viable university sector in Australia.

We, members who are in attendance at the 2017 AGM of AARE, support strategies that build broad participation in research and teaching for academics in the Australian tertiary sector. We support academic staff across all levels having access to time, support, and work conditions that enable them to reach their potentials across service and engagement, research, teaching, and leadership. We express our concern at the ongoing impact of policies that do not attend to these issues for the quality of educational research and teaching.

To that end, AARE membership asks:

- That the AARE Executive places this issue on its agenda and report back to the broader AARE membership on possible responses in relation to this important issue.

- That when restructures occur, AARE will, where possible, release public statements in support of members and contest executive-managerial decisions that adversely affect the present and future of rich and viable teaching and research.

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## 9. Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

### Mapping Research Opportunities in the Field of Education in Australia

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled Mapping Research Opportunities in the field of Education in Australia. In the first instance participants will be members of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and associated with a higher education institution in Australia as an employee, higher degree student, or in an adjunct/honorary position. This project is being conducted by a team of AARE members and led by Professor Marie Brennan from the College of Arts and Education at Victoria University.

#### Project explanation

Changes in university sector funding, restructuring and academic work reorganisation have altered institutional governance and working conditions for staff and students. Such shifts are not restricted to Australia but are experienced differently in different countries, policy contexts and types of university. This project aims to document such changes for the field of education research in higher education in Australia. We seek to understand individual academic's and higher degree student's personal experience of conditions for research and their understanding of and perspective on the strategies and effects (intended and unintended) in their university that support, and/or constrain, or otherwise steer research in the field of education. Since the vast majority of research in education is conducted in and through universities, and education as a broad field is of high political and policy significance, it is timely and necessary to gain a documented understanding of what is happening to education research and researchers.

**What will I be asked to do?** You will be asked to complete an online survey which is designed to document conditions that you and colleagues experience in relation to research possibilities; and to outline the institutional strategies to support, and/or constrain, or otherwise steer research in fields of education scholarship and practice. You can move back and forth through the survey (until you have pressed submit) and you can skip questions if you prefer not to answer particular items. We anticipate the survey could take up to half an hour.

**What will I gain from participating?** You will contribute to and gain understandings of how conditions for your own and others' educational research in your higher education institution are similar to or different from other higher education institutions in Australia. Once a report has been compiled, you will receive a copy. You will potentially benefit from the active influence of the AARE, in using the report, to advocate for research and researchers in the field of education. You will also, with

colleagues, gain capacity to identify and share individual and institutional strategies that support research in the field of education.

**How will the information I give be used?** After summarising and analysing the data, a report will be written for the AARE Executive and Membership. An *EduResearch Matters Blog* entry will make the findings and implications open to AARE members, policy makers and broader publics. Presentations will be made at the AARE Annual Conference, and journal articles will be published, to indicate the comparative position, internationally, of the field of Australian Education Research. It is anticipated that the AARE Executive will use the information to devise their own strategies to support researchers in education and to contribute to policy-making and policy-influencing bodies such as the Australian Research Council, state Education Departments, and the Australian Council of Deans of Education. The AARE Executive has also indicated that it could approach other relevant disciplinary associations with our instruments and results, for their possible adaptive use. What are the potential risks of participating in this project? There may be a low-level risk that some participants could become upset if they come to perceive their institution as not duly supportive of their research possibilities. However, if this is the case, you can discontinue participation in the survey. Participants are free to withdraw their participation at any point by closing the survey.

**How will this project be conducted?** You will be asked to use the email associated with your AARE membership to access the online survey. You can move back and forth through the survey until you have pressed submit. The researchers will summarise the survey answers, indicating contributions and views from diverse categories of researchers who respond, including HDR, Early Career, Mid Career, Experienced Researcher, and not currently participating in research. All information about persons and institutions will be de-identified, in being coded by category of research status and type of university, prior to being summarised. A Reference Group, which consists of a Working Party of the AARE membership, will contribute to analysis of the implications of the descriptive summary data after initial analysis by the Research Team. The Reference Group will contain at least one person from each category of: HDR student, Early Career academic, Mid-Career academic, and Senior Research-Active academic. Who is conducting the study? The project is being conducted under the auspices of Victoria University Melbourne, by Chief Investigator: Professor Marie Brennan, who can be contacted on Marie.Brennan@vu.edu.au Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Please note: You do not have to provide an answer to any question that you do not want to answer (For most questions you can skip the question. Where this is not possible because the question is used to branch particular groups to particular questions a 'rather not say' option has been added so that you can continue without providing an answer). Please push the SUBMIT button once you have

finished completing the survey. Completing and then submitting this survey is deemed to be you providing consent to participate in the project. If you feel any anxiety or discomfort, you may opt not to answer a particular question, talk to a colleague or friend or, if more serious, seek help through your university's Employee Assistance Program or your union.

### Demographic details

I am	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Torres Strait Islander
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

How would you describe your Cultural heritage
.....
Gender
.....

Are you a member of a union?	
<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	Rather not say

Do you have a disability?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rather not say
Please provide further information should you wish to do so.	
.....	

What age range do you fit within?	
<input type="radio"/>	<25
<input type="radio"/>	>25 to 35
<input type="radio"/>	>35 to 45
<input type="radio"/>	>45 to 55
<input type="radio"/>	>55 to 65
<input type="radio"/>	>65 to 75
<input type="radio"/>	>75 to 85

<input type="checkbox"/>	>85
--------------------------	-----

Most questions in this survey allow you to move on without answering a question. There are a few exceptions in the questions that follow. This is because some questions are used to send participants to certain questions and not others. In the questions that follow, where this is the case a 'rather not say' response has been provided so that you can move through the survey and still not provide an answer. Please do note that should you use that response in order to move past the question there may be later questions that are not relevant to your current situation.

Do you have a doctoral degree in education?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rather not say

What year did you complete this degree?

.....

What is your highest qualification?

.....

Are you currently studying at doctoral level?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Do you work or study at a university or tertiary institution?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not now but I have in the past. In this case in questions that follow please answer in relation to your last (and not current) time working at a university. For example when asked what you 'do' please answer about what you 'used to do'.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rather not say

What term best describes your current academic role? If you hold more than one role please indicate the role you consider to be your main role.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student - funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student - not funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Level A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Level B
<input type="checkbox"/>	Level C
<input type="checkbox"/>	Level D

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Level E
<input type="radio"/>	HEW level
<input type="radio"/>	Rather not say
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

What HEW level?

.....

**What term best describes your role classification?**

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Teaching focused
<input type="radio"/>	Teaching only
<input type="radio"/>	Research focused
<input type="radio"/>	Research only
<input type="radio"/>	Teaching and research focused
<input type="radio"/>	Retired / Adjunct / Volunteer
<input type="radio"/>	Student
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

**What is your current employment status?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time fixed term
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part time ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part time fixed term
<input type="checkbox"/>	Causal / Sessional / Hourly paid
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not employed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired
Please provide further details if you would like to do so.	
.....	

**How long have you worked in higher education?**

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	< 5 years
<input type="radio"/>	>5 years to 10 years
<input type="radio"/>	>10 years to 15 years
<input type="radio"/>	>15 years to 20 years
<input type="radio"/>	>20 years to 25 years
<input type="radio"/>	>25 years to 30 years

<input type="radio"/>	>30 years to 35 years
<input type="radio"/>	>35 years to 40 years
<input type="radio"/>	>40 years to 45 years
<input type="radio"/>	>45 years to 50 years
<input type="radio"/>	>50 years to 55 years
<input type="radio"/>	>55 years to 60 years
<input type="radio"/>	>60 years
<input type="radio"/>	I have not worked in higher education
<input type="radio"/>	Rather not say

The university I am affiliated with is a member of

<input type="radio"/>	Group of Eight (GO8)
<input type="radio"/>	Australian Technology Network (ATN)
<input type="radio"/>	Innovative Research Universities (IRU)
<input type="radio"/>	Regional Universities Network (RUN)
<input type="radio"/>	Not a member of any of these networks
<input type="radio"/>	I don't know

The university I am affiliated with is located in

<input type="radio"/>	A capital city
<input type="radio"/>	A provincial city or large town
<input type="radio"/>	A rural/regional area
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

Please indicate on the scale below your agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I have the opportunity for adequate consultation of my workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workload was finalised in a timely manner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workload is manageable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work more than my official load	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time allocated to the tasks I am responsible for is adequate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you work over your official load, please provide details of the number of hours you believe you work over your official load. Please also feel free to provide further details should you wish to do so.

.....

.....

.....

.....

What % of the hours you work would you estimate is actually spent on

Teaching

.....

Research

.....

Administration

.....

Service

.....

Partnerships or community engagement

.....

Supervision of HDR students

.....

Supervision of preservice teachers

.....

Other

.....

Total %

.....

Please indicate on the scale below your agreement with the following statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I am satisfied with the allocation I am given for research in my workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide further details if you would like to do so.

.....

.....

.....

.....

How many hours a week do you spend on Research?

.....

Work related to research that is not allocated in your workload?

.....

Work related to your disciplinary research community (for example reviewing, editorship, working with education stakeholders)?

.....

Total

.....

How do you manage your research workload across the year? (for example do you engage more time during non-teaching semester periods, or on weekends, or each week)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Has your time allocation for research changed as your career has progressed?

- Yes it has expanded
  - Yes it has reduced
  - No it has stayed much the same
- Other (Please specify)
- .....

Please indicate ways that you believe research could be better supported in workload.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

In what ways does your university utilise metric systems and/or benchmark scholarly productivity to make decisions on allocating research time to academics?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Have there been internal policy shifts at your university in response to changes in federal government research policy? (for example ERA, impact focus, cuts to funding, national research priorities)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Have you engaged in research development opportunities?	
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	I would like to in the future
<input type="radio"/>	Rather not say
Other (Please specify)	
.....	
What types of research development activities have you engaged in?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conference attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other events offered by your university
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other events offered by organisations outside your university
Other (Please specify)	
.....	
Who usually pays for you to attend these research development activities?	
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Your university
<input type="radio"/>	A research grant
<input type="radio"/>	Self funded
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

In what ways does your university support research?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research events
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic culture is that research is part of workload
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing feedback on grants or publications
<input type="checkbox"/>	Support for conference attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Study leave or professional development leave schemes
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

Do you believe that management at your university has a long-term plan for how to grow education research? Does this include a plan on how to grow the range of people engaged in research?	
.....	
.....	

Do you believe that the composition of academic staff in your faculty/organisational unit supports a strong research culture?

Yes

No

Provide further details if you would like to do so.

Please indicate on the scale below your perceptions of how much your university values the following tasks or outcomes.

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
Peer reviewed journals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Books or book chapters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-refereed publications for professional audiences (e.g. teacher journals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Research funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
HDR supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring and inter-generational interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Presenting at conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Service and administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Governance and leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher education compliance activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Service to the community/local organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Service to your profession (for example refereeing, editing, presenting workshops)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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Please indicate on the scale below how much you value the following tasks or outcomes.

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
Writing peer-reviewed articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Writing books or book chapters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Writing non-refereed publications for professional audiences (e.g. teacher journals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Research grant applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
HDR supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring and inter-generational interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Presenting at conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Service and administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Governance and leadership roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher education and compliance activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Service to community/local organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Service to your profession (for example refereeing, editing, presenting workshops)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Are there activities or outcomes that you would like to do more of but do not get the time or opportunity to do? Please provide some details.

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Do you think the essential work of faculties of education (research, teaching and service) are being fulfilled?

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Can you suggest actions by AARE to support education research and researchers?

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Do you have further comments or illustrative stories you would like to include? If so please use the space below.

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Remember by pressing submit you are giving your consent to participate in this study.