



**Teach For  
Australia**

[teachforaustralia.org](https://teachforaustralia.org)



# TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS AND CHANGING SYSTEMS

A report on the impact of Teach For Australia Alumni | March 2026



# CONTENTS

Note from our CEO	3
Introduction	4
The Alumni Impact Report	4
Methodology	5
Key findings	5
The Leadership Development Program	6
Impact in the classroom	8
Impact through school leadership	12
Impact through systems change	17
Conclusion	22

# NOTE FROM OUR CEO



It is a pleasure to share this Alumni Impact research, which explores our community’s long-term impact on education in Australia.

Building leadership capability has always been at the heart of Teach For Australia’s work. We search for and recruit leadership potential into the education system; build participants’ leadership capabilities throughout the program; and foster an Alumni network that helps sustain motivation for change over time.

As an Alumna of Teach For Australia’s first cohort (2010), I’ve watched my peers from that initial group of 44 carve out their own distinct pathways to create change. The largest subset continue to hone their craft as teachers, often helping to improve teaching practice across their schools. Others have stepped from the classroom into roles in school leadership, academia, government, as Members of Parliament, and as teacher-educators and coaches supporting the next generation of teachers. Crucially, they all take with them the indelible first-hand experiences of working at the coalface of educational disadvantage.

This phenomenon has now been replicated over 16 cohorts. Teach For Australia’s Leadership Development Program Alumni community has grown into a 1200+ strong network, teaching and leading across every state and territory in Australia. I am delighted for this opportunity to dive deeper into the individual achievements and collective impact of this community and look forward to supporting its growth over the decades ahead.

**Edwina Dohle**  
Cohort 2010 Alumna  
CEO, Teach For Australia

# INTRODUCTION

Pioneering non-profit Teach For Australia is committed to unleashing the talent and potential within every young Australian through the transformative power of high-quality education.

With a mission to create a community of leaders dedicated to educational equity for children, Teach For Australia recruits and develops exceptional people with the potential to lead, and supports them to become highly effective teachers. These passionate educators are placed exclusively in schools that need them most, especially in regional, remote and marginalised communities.

In Australia today, a young person's postcode continues to have a significant impact on their educational opportunities. By Year 9, students from disadvantaged backgrounds can be, on average, four years behind their more advantaged peers in maths and reading.

Teachers and leaders within our schools are the linchpins to rewriting this story. Evidence shows that teachers have the greatest in-school impact on student outcomes,<sup>1</sup> and many people testify to the life-changing impact of a single, great teacher. However, the teaching profession often fights uphill for the professional respect and recognition it deserves. Teaching shortages persist, increasingly concentrated in regional and rural locations and schools serving priority student cohorts.

With the continued support of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and philanthropic partners since 2009, Teach For Australia has built a strong network of educators and leaders working across our education systems to address these challenges. Since its beginning as Australia's first employment-based teaching pathway, it has grown into a vital component of Australia's initial teacher education (ITE) landscape, working with schools across five states and territories and leading changes across the wider ITE sector.

## The Alumni Impact Report

After 16 years, Teach For Australia's flagship Leadership Development Program has produced a 1,200-strong Alumni community. This report celebrates the success and impact of those within this community, and explores the role Teach For Australia has played in attracting, developing and cultivating the purpose and leadership potential of these passionate educators.

Through personal stories, reflections and aspirations, it captures a slice of the transformation and success happening in schools around Australia.

## Methodology

Teach For Australia developed this Alumni Impact Project to examine the impact of Alumni across the education sector. It explores the career pathways Alumni have pursued since completing the Leadership Development Program, their motivations and the role that their Teach For Australia program experiences had in shaping their future.

In addition to quantitative analysis of Teach For Australia's data collated over the years, qualitative research was conducted primarily through interviews with Alumni to generate case studies.

**Together, the data gives shape to the overarching story of the impact of Teach For Australia Alumni on the education system.**

## Key findings

**This report finds that Teach For Australia's Alumni community is strengthening Australia's education system through sustained impact in classrooms, in school leadership and across the wider education sector.**

A high proportion of Alumni stay in teaching, with program completion, with program completion and long-term retention consistently outperforming traditional ITE pathways. Many progress rapidly into school leadership roles, with a significant share assuming leading teacher and principal class positions within their first five years after graduating.

Alongside those driving change within schools, a smaller but important cohort of Alumni are now contributing to system level reform as policy leaders, researchers, and founders of education-focused nonprofit organisations.

Together, these pathways demonstrate the breadth and depth of Teach For Australia's long-term impact: developing committed, effective teachers; building a strong leadership pipeline for our schools; and contributing to nation-wide efforts to drive system-level changes in education; and enabling Alumni to drive change at every level of Australia's education system.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2022), [Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review](#)

# THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Teach For Australia's Leadership Development Program is Australia's first and most successful employment-based postgraduate teaching pathway. This high-quality and innovative program attracts high-calibre candidates into teaching, offering a two-year program combining a Master of Teaching with real-world teaching experience from the beginning. It currently operates in partnership with the Commonwealth, Northern Territory, South Australian, Tasmanian, Victorian and Western Australian governments.

## Multiple independent evaluations have found Teach For Australia's program to be successful.

The Commonwealth Government's most recent independent review found that Teach For Australia's program is attracting high-quality candidates who would not otherwise have entered teaching and rapidly developing them into highly effective educators, who are "having positive impacts on students both academically and socio-emotionally".<sup>2</sup>

## The program advantage

The Leadership Development Program sets Associates up for success by:

- **Recruiting exceptional, equity-driven candidates** through proactive recruitment and a rigorous multi-stage selection process testing for motivation, leadership potential, perseverance, communication and relationship-building skills.
- **Delivering leading-edge training** and teacher preparation, anchored in principles of cognitive science, with further content on establishing positive classroom cultures, effective instructional planning, inclusive education, trauma-informed practices, systems-thinking and strategies for partnering effectively with the community, including parents and carers.
- **Providing intensive wraparound supports** to rapidly build teachers' skills, confidence and success in the classroom, including a School Instructional Coach, Teach For Australia Teaching and Leadership Coach and Academic Mentor.
- **Building a strong, connected community** amongst each year's cohort of Associates based on a shared commitment to Teach For Australia's mission, providing a further source of support and guidance from peers and developing into a thriving lifelong Alumni network.

<sup>2</sup> High Achieving Teachers Program evaluation (Dandolo Partners, 2022)

## Contribution to the teaching workforce:

# 165

new TFA teachers start the program each year on average, reaching 26,000+ Australian students while participating.

# 100%

of participants are placed in schools serving communities experiencing disadvantage, including over half in regional, rural and remote schools.

# 40%

have taught STEM subjects and 30% have taught English.

# 88%

complete TFA's program – compared to only 68% of people who start traditional postgraduate ITE.

People who start TFA's program are

# 1.7x

more likely to be practising teachers three years after graduation than people who commence traditional ITE.

# 73%

teach for 5 additional years after completing the program, in addition to the two years in the program (7 years in total).





# IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM

*With high completion and long-term retention rates, Teach For Australia’s model is building a stronger, more resilient teaching workforce and elevating teaching excellence nationwide.*

## At a glance

- Teach For Australia Alumni stay in teaching long-term, strengthening the workforce nationwide.
- Program completion and retention rates exceed traditional ITE pathways.
- 88% complete the program; 73% remain teaching at least five years after program completion.
- Continual improvement over 16 years has increased classroom readiness and retention.
- Alumni teacher effectiveness is nationally recognised, with 50+ major teaching awards in the past five years.

The majority of Teach For Australia Alumni continue teaching long-term in the classroom, working to drive change directly at the coalface and making a lasting contribution to the teaching workforce across every state and territory in Australia.

Teach For Australia outperforms traditional ITE providers across measures of program completion, progression from completion into graduate teaching roles, and likelihood to continue teaching longer-term. Almost 90% of those who begin Teach For Australia’s Leadership Development Program successfully complete the program and become fully qualified teachers.<sup>3</sup> 92% of those who complete the program continue to teach for an additional year, and 73% continue to teach for at least five additional years after completing the Leadership Development Program.

Over 16 years, Teach For Australia has continually refined and strengthened its preparation approach, applying insights from supporting early career teachers in complex contexts directly back to its learning design for each successive cohort of participants. This has contributed to adjustments to its selection criteria, to training curriculum and priorities, and the structured model of coaching for effective teaching and leadership development.

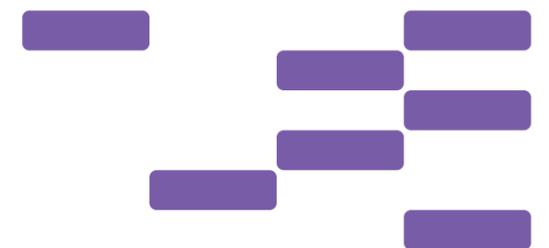
**The continual improvement means Associates are ever-more classroom-ready and equipped with a deep understanding of the principles of effective teaching from the beginning – and more likely to experience greater successes and sense of professional efficacy in their early years in the teaching profession.**

Teach For Australia has seen a steady increase in its teacher retention outcomes. There has been a 22 percentage point increase in the number of Alumni who graduate and continue teaching for an additional three years – from 57% in Cohorts 2013–2014 to 79% for Cohorts 2020–2021.

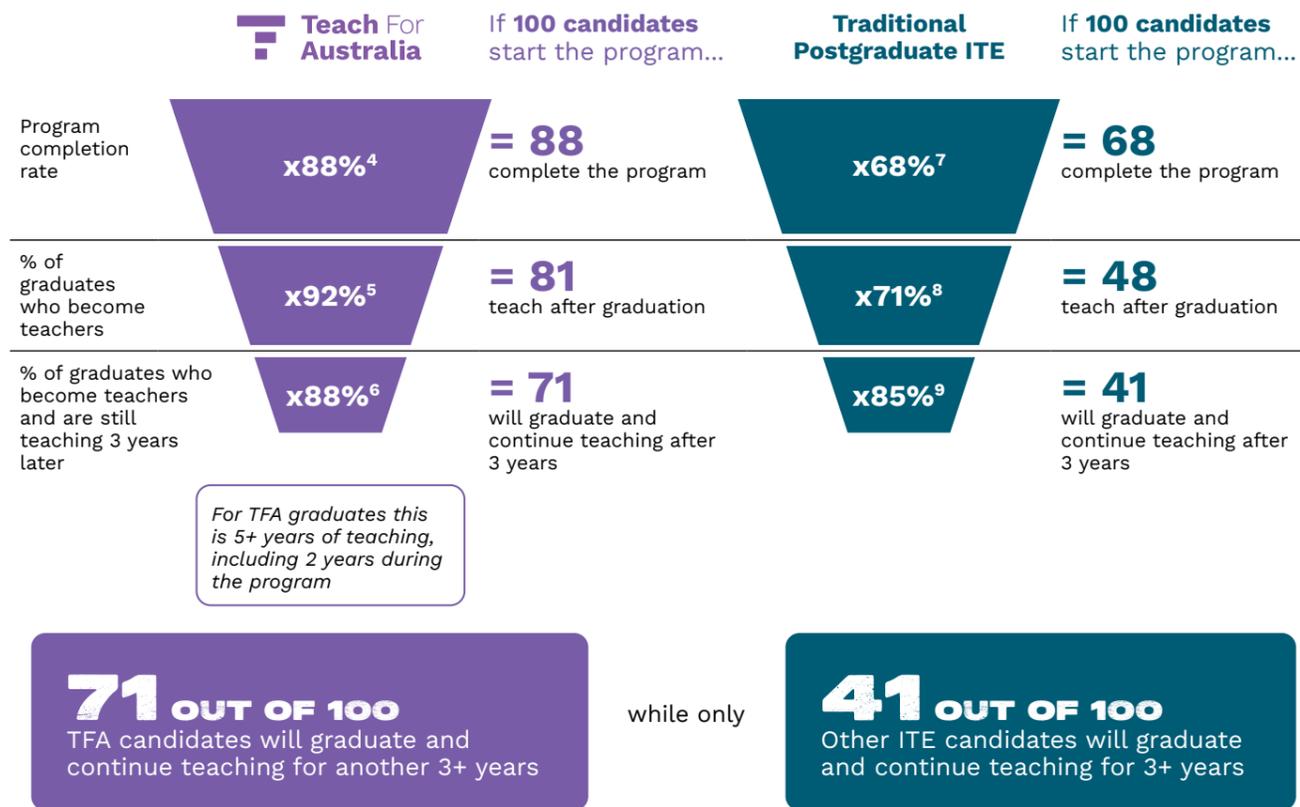
When Teach For Australia Alumni reflect on the role the Leadership Development Program had on their careers and their lives, many describe it as a ‘circuit-breaker’ or the ‘catalyst’ that allowed them to redirect their professional paths. The majority of Teach For Australia Alumni interviewed commented they would not have considered or been able to pursue teaching without Teach For Australia’s employment-based pathway.

**90% of Alumni believe they would not be where they are in their careers if they had not undertaken the Leadership Development Program.**

In addition to the unique ITE model, Teach For Australia’s mission attracts participants who are motivated to make a difference by staying in teaching long-term with a focus on highest-need areas. Many Alumni interviewed pointed to this mission and moral purpose as being critical to sustaining motivation in the face of challenges.



<sup>3</sup> This is significantly higher than the completion rate of traditional ITE programs, which average 55% across postgraduate and undergraduate pathways.



Teach For Australia Alumni working in schools report a strong commitment to driving improvements to teaching practice and student learning. Many early and mid-career Alumni have been recognised, including in national teaching awards. In the last five years alone, more than 50 Alumni have won prestigious teaching and leadership awards, including:

- **Dan Yore**, 2021 Teaching Fellow Award, Schoolsplus Teaching Awards
- **Dev Tiwari**, 2021 Growing in Leadership [Early Career Award], Australian Council of Educational Leaders (ACEL) Tasmania Awards; 2024 Early Career Teacher Award, Schoolsplus Teaching Awards
- **Alexandra Burgess-Norris**, 2022 Growing in Leadership [Early Career Award], ACEL Tasmania Awards
- **Alice Hu**, 2023 Outstanding Early Career Secondary Teacher, Victorian Education Excellence Awards
- **Hazel Buchhorn**, 2023 Teacher Leadership Award, ACEL Tasmania Awards
- **Madison Smith**, 2023 Early Career Teacher Award, Schoolsplus Teaching Awards
- **George Allen**, 2024 Early Career Teacher Award, Schoolsplus Teaching Awards
- **Louise Hobbs**, 2024 Early Career Teacher Award, Schoolsplus Teaching Awards

4 TFA Impact Report (2025)  
 5 TFA Alumni Survey (2025)  
 6 Percentage of 2021 cohort who started teaching in 2023 and are still teaching in 2025; TFA Alumni Survey (2023, 2025)  
 7 Postgraduate ITE - Secondary student completion rate (AITSL 2024: ATWD National Trends)  
 8 Percentage of recent ITE graduates from postgraduate programs (Secondary) who graduated in the last 12 months working full-time and part-time in schools (AITSL 2019: ITE data report)  
 9 85% of ITE graduates who were employed as teachers within 4 to 6 months of graduation were still employed as teachers 3 years later (2025-26 supplementary budget estimates, Standing Committees in Education and Employment)

# POWERING PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR A STRONGER, FAIRER SOCIETY



**AMY BLITVICH**  
TFA Cohort 2015

**Teaching experience:** 11 years

**Current role:** Head of English, Aveley Secondary College (outer Northern Perth), WA

**Prior roles:** Assistant Associate Principal - Upper School and Year Coordinator, Mount Lawley Senior High School, WA.

Although Amy Blitvich’s parents and grandmother were lifelong educators, her own early career trajectory pointed toward politics. At university, Amy was involved in youth politics and volunteered with the office of a Federal Senator before becoming a union organiser representing underpaid workers in the disability, childcare and aged care sectors.

It was while protesting cuts to school funding in her hometown of Perth that Amy began to think about the economic inequalities she constantly encountered in her union work, and how they were often rooted in poor education.

Resolving to become a teacher, she faced the dilemma of needing an income while she retrained. “I didn’t want to go and move back in with my parents, so I had to keep earning a wage so I could keep paying rent,” she recalls. “And that was when I heard about Teach For Australia, which was a way that I could be earning a wage while doing my Master of Teaching and getting hands-on experience in the classroom.”

After being accepted into Teach For Australia, Amy got her start at Balcatta Senior High School in Perth – a familiar place to her, because her father was head of the science faculty and she had childhood memories of visiting him there. “I took a selfie with him on the first day, at his desk, where my childhood artworks were on the wall,” says Blitvich.

Amy found her true calling in the classroom. Within five years of becoming a teacher, she was appointed an Assistant Associate Principal at Mount Lawley Senior School, and she is now Head of English at Aveley Secondary College, a large school of 1600 students in Perth’s northeastern suburbs.

Amy highlights Teach For Australia’s mission as aligned to her own values. **“Teaching**

**is an incredibly enriching profession.** You can actually change the world in a really meaningful way, if only for one or two kids. And I truly believe that has a ripple effect on our community. It’s why I feel drawn to working in schools in lower socioeconomic areas, because that’s where we need really great teachers and really consistent people. And that’s why I really liked the mission of Teach For Australia, which is about bridging the educational disadvantage gap.”

She also attributes Teach For Australia’s training to her own leadership path: “The Teach For Australia program is all about seeing teaching as leadership at all levels. Teach For Australia broadened my understanding of what a leader was, and helped me feel empowered to lead in my classroom, in my learning area, in my school, in my community, in different ways. **It set me up in a way that other teacher training programs don’t**, because I don’t hear a lot of discussion around teaching as leadership in more traditional university pathways.”

Now, as Head of English, Amy is leading the learning area to ensure all students get the right support. “We run an ambitious literacy program where we do a lot of reading intervention, because we believe that if kids don’t have the skills to decode words they won’t have the fluency or the comprehension required to access written material. I can’t take all the credit for it – I’ve got a big team, including a literacy coordinator who is a Teach For Australia Alumna as well. She runs a direct instruction reading intervention program in Year 7 and 8, where we try to very quickly bridge the gaps that the kids are coming to us with, so that by the time they get into Year 8, Year 9, Year 10, they are much more able to access at-level material.”



# IMPACT THROUGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Teach For Australia has built a strong school leader pipeline, with a large proportion of Alumni in leadership roles driving improved outcomes across their schools.

## At a glance

- Teach For Australia Alumni progress into school leadership at significantly faster rates than the broader teaching workforce.
- 1 in 3 Alumni hold a leadership role within three years of graduating, rising to over two thirds within five years.
- Nearly 30% become leading teachers or join the principal class within five years.
- In 2025, 44 Alumni were serving as Principals or Assistant/Deputy Principals across every state and territory.
- School leaders actively recruit Teach For Australia Alumni, recognising their positive impact on school culture and teaching practice.
- Teach For Australia’s leadership-focused recruitment, evidence based training, and diverse professional backgrounds help build a strong pipeline of future school leaders.

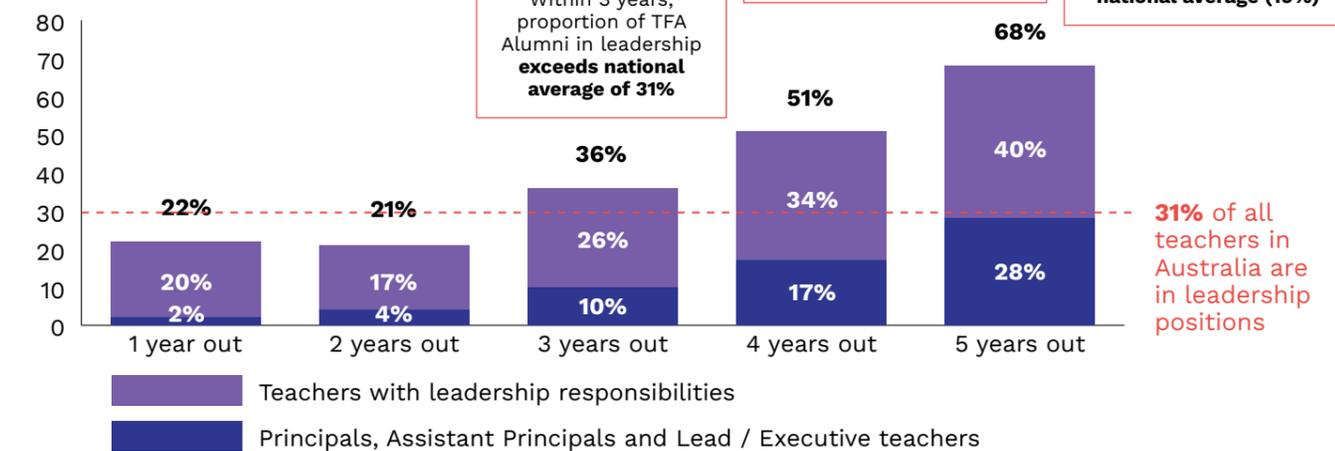
Teach For Australia’s annual survey of its Alumni community provides unique insight into their professional trajectories. Strikingly, it captures a compelling picture of a community of teachers progressing rapidly into positions of responsibility, including to principal-class (Principal or Assistant Principal) roles.<sup>10</sup>

**Within three years of graduating from Teach For Australia’s Leadership Development Program, more than 1 in 3 Teach For Australia Alumni working in schools hold a school leadership position – a higher proportion than that of all teachers working across the education system.**

This share doubles to more than 2 in 3 in leadership roles five years post-program, including close to 30% assuming leading teacher or principal class leadership positions by this time.

### TFA Alumni leadership progression over time<sup>11</sup>

Proportion of TFA Alumni in schools with leadership positions after completing the LDP (% of each cohort)



In 2025, 44 Teach For Australia Alumni held Principal or Assistant/Deputy Principal positions, across every Australian state and territory. Alumni such as Darcy Robinson (Cohort 2019), Assistant Principal at East Kimberley College, WA, are leading inclusive learning initiatives for students in remote areas, while others like Jennifer Ames (Cohort 2011), Assistant Principal at Glenroy College in Melbourne’s North, are driving school improvement for young people in urban low socioeconomic areas.

Experienced Principals, including at Katherine High School (NT) and Cranbourne West Secondary College (Vic), proactively target Teach For Australia Alumni when recruiting for their school leadership teams, because they have seen first-hand how Teach For Australia teachers contribute to positive school culture and strong teaching practice.

Various aspects of Teach For Australia’s program and approach likely contribute to building this strong leadership pipeline. From the outset, Teach For Australia’s recruitment approach focuses on the leadership skills and potential that support both effective classroom teaching and longer-term systems change. The strong, evidence-based program helps equip Teach For Australia teachers with the skills and knowledge to turn this passion and motivation into effectiveness in the classroom. TFA’s program also encourages a deep understanding of the systemic dimensions of educational disadvantage, and the role each teacher – and school leader – can play to work towards shifting the dial on educational inequity. And finally, the prior academic specialisations and professional experiences Teach For Australia teachers bring with them help to build out the diverse toolkit needed for transformational school leadership.

<sup>10</sup> High Achieving Teachers Program evaluation (Dandolo Partners, pg. 54, 2025)

<sup>11</sup> Alumni Survey 2023

## REIMAGINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO ENGAGE ALL STUDENTS



### HOLLY STEWART

TFA Cohort 2010

**Teaching experience:** 16 years

**Current role:** Principal, Hobart City High School, Tasmania

**Prior roles:** Principal & Assistant Principal, Sorrell School, Tasmania; Lead Teacher, Teaching and Learning, Parkville College (youth detention facility), Melbourne.

Holly Stewart enjoys a challenge. As a young law graduate, Teach For Australia persuaded her to relocate from Brisbane to rural Victoria to be part of the first Teach For Australia cohort in 2010. Holly found herself instantly immersed in the systemic challenges faced by secondary school students living in rural communities. Three years later, driven to create positive change for young people, she accepted a lead teaching role as part of the founding team at Parkville College, a new Victorian secondary school whose entire student body was incarcerated in youth detention.

“I thought that was an incredible opportunity,” says Holly. “There were high levels of students with disability, high levels of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, high levels of Indigenous students. The outcome of the system not working well enough is that they’ve ended up in a horrible situation. So, if education can help, I wanted to be part of that.”

Parkville College was located inside the Parkville youth detention centre and classes were held seven days a week, with security on hand. Asked if she ever felt intimidated, Holly replies: “One of my foundational beliefs is in unconditional, positive regard. **There was no young person that I have ever worked with that I didn’t genuinely really like, and that still holds true to this day.**”

One of Holly’s strongest memories of that time was seeing the impact of literacy on students who at first appeared indifferent to learning. “I remember students being incredibly excited after having read the first book or the first novel that they’d ever read in their entire life. The power of

having started and finished a novel was incredibly transformative.”

After Parkville, Holly relocated to Tasmania with her family and took on an Assistant Principal role, then became Principal at a large, semi-rural K-12 school. Having seen the impact she could have as a school leader, her appetite for change led her to another ambitious role – Principal of Hobart City High School, a newly-created co-ed high school formed from the merging of two single-sex schools.

Holly credits Teach For Australia with giving her the capabilities and confidence to take on that role. “I was thinking about my leadership trajectory since Teach For Australia: putting my hand up in the first cohort, then moving to start Parkville College and trying something new there and then feeling drawn to the opportunity at Hobart City High”.

Through the leadership of Holly and her team – which includes several other Teach For Australia Alumni in teaching and leadership positions, including Deputy Principal – Hobart City High has seen phenomenal improvement in its student wellbeing and engagement data, demonstrating the impact of the team’s focus on student belonging at the new school.

“First and foremost, we’re here to educate, and we really want our students to achieve their full potential academically, but we also want to educate the whole person. A huge focus since our school merged has been on making sure that students feel like they belong here, that they’re safe and valued here. That’s something we’ve included in our school improvement plan. We measure that every term, alongside our state-wide student wellbeing and engagement survey.”

“And we have seen our data improve phenomenally since the first year of our merger, which has shown us that the work that we’re doing has been powerful.”

Holly is unequivocal about the role of Teach For Australia in shaping her passion for innovation. “Teach For Australia provides an authorising environment to try to look at and

do things differently and that’s been a theme of my career. It [Teach For Australia] provides you with a network of people that are driven by similar values. So being able to connect with others that really want to improve the state of public education in Australia is invaluable.”

## DRIVING BREAKTHROUGH GAINS IN NAPLAN AND STUDENT ATTENDANCE



### LACHLAN YEATES

TFA Cohort 2011

**Teaching experience:** 15 years

**Current role:** Principal, Narre Warren South P-12 College (Outer South-East Melbourne, Victoria)

**Prior roles:** Principal, Cranbourne Primary School; Assistant Principal, Officer Secondary College; Head of Teaching & Learning

An economics graduate and former policy analyst, Lachlan had originally planned a career in investment banking until he came across Teach For Australia at a Canberra job fair. He was immediately drawn to Teach For Australia’s strong emphasis on teaching as leadership, and its model of immediate employment combined with a postgraduate teaching qualification.

From the moment he began teaching, Lachlan sensed he had found his calling to create real change in young people’s lives. At his Teach For Australia placement school, Warracknabeal Secondary College in rural Victoria, he quickly became head of the mathematics program. Using his analyst training, he helped set up and assess an explicit teaching approach that dramatically improved NAPLAN results: two years later, 0% of Year 7-9 students were achieving low growth in numeracy.

Lachlan then became Head of Teaching & Learning at Horsham College. There, he made changes to teaching practices that contributed to the school becoming the highest performer in its rural Victorian area and The Age media outlet recognising it as a “school that excels”.

Lachlan points to the collective impact of Teach For Australia teachers at Horsham College as being instrumental to the school’s successes: **“Half of the leadership team were Teach For Australia teachers. There was a representative of every single Teach For Australia cohort in the school, all the way from first year Associates up to Alumni who were from the very first iteration of the program.”**

After seven years of teaching in rural Victoria, Lachlan moved to take up an Assistant Principal role at Officer Secondary College in Melbourne’s outer South East growth corridor. From there, he progressed to an even bigger challenge, as Principal of Cranbourne Primary. In his time as Principal, Lachlan implemented evidence-informed teaching practices and a school-wide structured literacy approach that saw reading levels double within one year and lifted NAPLAN results to well above similar schools.

He also introduced explicit teaching of behaviour and routines that turned around a culture of low achievement, and built trust with the local community. As a result, school attendance rates improved by 87% and violent incidents fell by 95%.

Lachlan credits his Teach For Australia experience and the network he has built from the program as being critical to driving the changes: “Coming into the [Cranbourne Primary Principal] role, I was able to draw on my network of people that I’ve met through the Teach For Australia program, including researchers and people who led schools previously. And we were able to put in place a whole range of initiatives, starting off with a really strong phonics program in the younger year levels, then building in lots of other layers of the latest research around teaching, supporting students. In addition to having a really strong curriculum, really rigorous, explicit teaching, we were also able to build in really strong well-being and support programs, recognising the needs of our local community.”

“For me, Teach For Australia has been absolutely life changing,” says Lachlan. “It’s put my life on a very different trajectory and, I think, a much richer one than I ever would have picked.”

“I think teaching is just the most important thing that anyone else can do with their lives – our ability to have impact is incredible. Teach For Australia hones that moral purpose to a sharp edge. That’s the thing that gets me up every morning. How can we make sure that every student is set up so that they can choose whatever they want to be?”



## IMPACT THROUGH SYSTEMS CHANGE

*Motivated by their frontline experience, many Teach For Australia Alumni are stepping into system-level roles where they can drive broader change for students and communities nationwide.*

### At a glance

- A smaller but important group of Teach For Australia Alumni are driving **system-level change** in education.
- Some move into **policy, research, and reform roles** after years in schools, contributing to Australia’s education agenda.
- Others have founded non-profits supporting equity for students.
- Alumni continue to draw on the Teach For Australia Alumni network for collaboration, insight and shared purpose.

Complementing those driving change within schools, a smaller but vital segment of Teach For Australia's Alumni community has stepped beyond the school fence to tackle the wider challenges impacting students' access to educational opportunities. This segment of Alumni interviews captured a determination, after 5 or 10 years working in schools, to explore other ways to drive change across the broader education system. For many, their Teach For Australia program experience provided the foundation for thinking system-wide about education equity and nurtured their belief in their capability to make lasting change.

Today, Teach For Australia Alumni are contributing to system-wide education impact as education researchers and policy experts, including:



- **Amy Haywood** (Cohort 2013), Deputy Director of the Grattan Institute;
- **Ben Heenan** (Cohort 2017), Principal Policy Analyst at the Australian Education Research Organisation;
- **Dan Carr** (Cohort 2012), Principal Researcher at the Australian Education Research Organisation;
- **Gia-Yen Luong** (Cohort 2017, *pictured*), Oxford University PhD Rhodes Scholar leading research into effective support for early career teachers;
- **Trisha Jha** (Cohort 2017), Research Fellow in the Education program at the Centre for Independent Studies.

These Alumni actively contribute to the education policy agenda and to policy directions across all levels of education reform in Australia.

Others have founded and led non-profit organisations that support teachers and enhance public education, such as:



- **Benji Gersh** (Cohort 2011), founder and Lead Counsellor of Greater Space, Australia's only mental health support service dedicated for educators, staffed by educators who are also mental health professionals;
- **Bridget Staudé** (Cohort 2016, *pictured*), former CEO of Teach Learn Grow, which provides free one-on-one tutoring to children in rural and remote Australian communities;
- **Tim Warwick** (Cohort 2013), founder and CEO of the Education Equity Alliance, which connects and empowers students and teachers from low socioeconomic school communities across Victoria to be partners with the government and non-profit sectors in system-change.

While contributing towards education equity in different ways, Alumni report repeatedly coming back to the Teach For Australia network for advice, to connect with relevant expertise and allies across other parts of the sector, or to crowdsource innovative ideas from other parts of the system. Alumni often reflect on how these engagements across the network "refill their cup" and keep them connected to their deeper motivations for doing this work.

By recruiting diverse talent into the profession, Teach For Australia plays a crucial role in broadening the lenses through which the most pressing challenges in education are viewed, and so invites fresh perspectives on change, honed by real experience in the classroom. As the reach of the Alumni community continues to grow, so too does its potential for even greater impact across the teaching profession and wider education sector.

## STRATEGISING SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**BEN DUGGAN**  
TFA Cohort 2015

**Teaching experience:** 7 years

**Current role:** Acting Executive Branch Manager, Strategic Policy, ACT Education Directorate

**Prior roles:** Director, Teach NT workforce development initiatives, Department of Education Northern Territory; Senior Policy Advisor to Minister for Education, Northern Territory

When Ben Duggan was appointed as a director of the ACT Government's inquiry into literacy and numeracy three years ago, he brought more than just his experience as a senior education bureaucrat. Through his time teaching with Teach For Australia, Ben had witnessed educational disadvantage firsthand.

Ben had made the switch from political adviser to schoolteacher through Teach For Australia, attracted by its philosophy of placing graduates from non-teaching backgrounds into disadvantaged schools. Teach For Australia's promise of finding him immediate employment as a teacher while he studied his Master of Teaching helped make that jump financially possible.

"I think that makes it very attractive for a number of people who have finished their studies or they've been working, and they've been already making a contribution in some way, and they've decided that actually making a difference as a classroom teacher would be a good thing," Ben notes. "And rather than having to go and study [first] and then become a teacher, they can get straight into it."

Ben rose quickly to become head of humanities at his placement school and soon began thinking about leadership in the broader education system. This spurred him to take a role as a ministerial adviser and then education bureaucrat in the Northern Territory, before returning to Canberra to take up a position in the ACT Education Directorate, where he is now leading strategic improvements to the territory's entire public school system.

"To me, what is most exciting about that is that I grew up in Canberra, I went to an ACT

public school, I taught in one and I have so many friends who work or send their kids to local public schools in the ACT. And so **right now, I'm in a position where I can use all of the experiences that I've had through Teach For Australia and the other roles that I've had, and bring it together to try and make a difference for public school students in the ACT**, to make sure that teachers have access to the resources that they need, and to ensure that the conversation that we're having about improving our system is grounded in the best available evidence."

Ben credits Teach For Australia with nurturing and developing his leadership qualities, and also setting him up with a strong understanding of evidence-based approaches to teaching and curricula, which has proved invaluable in his current role.

"What's so special about Teach For Australia is it has a real focus on leadership. It considers teaching and being in the classroom as an act of servant leadership. While its focus is on leadership in education, the driving purpose behind Teach For Australia is to attract people who want to work in education, who have the right dispositions to lead across the system. They want people who will be great leaders, as a classroom teacher, as a middle leader, a principal, someone who work in a system, office, researchers, etc. So to me, the design of Teach For Australia is to attract those people who will think about leadership from the very beginning, and then while they go through the program, reflect on their own leadership journey, their leadership style, their values, how they want to operate as a leader."

Ben also emphasises the program's powerful network effect and points to the collective

momentum the program generates. “Teach For Australia brings together a cohort of people who are really highly aspirational, who want to make the country a better place, and who really care about the driving mission of not just what’s happening in their classroom, but what’s happening in all classrooms across the country. And there’s a real commitment from everyone who participates in the program to have rigorous and challenging conversations, to try and push each other to be better, but also to try and make the whole system of schools together better.”

It is a network that Ben himself lent on when coordinating the ACT’s literacy and numeracy inquiry. “While I was doing the inquiry, I got to spend so much time speaking with Teach For Australia Alumni who are working in organisations across the country and who are really still committed to implementing evidence-based practice

in their classroom, but have taken their experience in the classroom and applied it to research organisations, to not for profits, to government departments. Something that’s really exciting for me is seeing all of my friends across Teach For Australia, not just from my year, but from others who are making a difference through organisations like the Australian Education Research Organisation, the Grattan Institute, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, different departments and systems like the one I work for. And those people discuss things together, they network and they collaborate and try to make a difference together.”

“By being part of the Teach For Australia Alumni network, you’re sharing ideas, you’re being critical, and you’re analysing what students deserve, what’s going to be most effective and what’s most impactful”

## ADVOCATING FOR EDUCATION AS A MEANS FOR SELF-DETERMINATION



**DAN YORE**  
TFA Cohort 2013

**Teaching experience:** 8 years

**Current role:** Treaty Negotiations Manager, First Peoples Assembly, Victoria

**Prior roles:** Teacher, MacKillop Catholic College, NT; Teacher, Yirrkala School, North East Arnhem Land. 2020 NT Secondary Teacher Of The Year, 2021 Schools Plus Teaching Fellow, 2021 Tim Fischer John Monash Scholar

When the Victorian Government signed Australia’s first treaty with its First Nations people in November 2025, Dan Yore felt a special sense of pride. Dan – who trained as a doctor and then became a teacher through Teach For Australia’s Leadership Development Program – was a lead negotiator for First Nations communities when the terms of that historic agreement were thrashed out with the government.

At first glance, that role may seem light years away from Dan’s work as a high school teacher in the Northern Territory, but he sees it as a

continuation of the values and aspirations that Teach For Australia instilled. Although he no longer fronts a classroom, Dan still draws on the knowledge and skills Teach For Australia imparts to this day.

“In the treaty process, I’m still engaging with Teach For Australia Alumni,” he says. “One of the big things we got out of treaty was around education reform and curriculum reform, and I had to chat to a lot of Teach For Australia Alumni about that through the process.”

Dan originally studied medicine but realised even before he graduated that he was more

interested in the bigger socioeconomic problems that made so many people ill. He learned about Teach For Australia from his brother-in-law, a former business analyst who had switched to teaching through the program and enthused about it.

Dan started his teaching career at MacKillop Catholic College, a school 20km outside Darwin with a large population of Indigenous students and recent arrivals to the city. There, he discovered that Teach For Australia’s research-informed training, combined with the support it offers through its mentoring system, proved invaluable in helping him forge a strong bond with his students.

After four years at MacKillop, Dan took part in a workshop convened by Teach For Australia to connect its Alumni to other teaching opportunities in more remote parts of the Territory. Subsequently, he was offered a unique opportunity to teach at Yirrkala, a remote Arnhem Land community which was employing an innovative curriculum based on the Yolngu language system.

“It was the first time that an Aboriginal language was taught through their Year 12 languages program in the South Australian Certificate of Education in a remote community. And we were able to do that by presenting a case basically of kind of the bilingual program, the evidence and pedagogy that underpinned it, and then demonstrate the results that we’ve been getting for many, many years with these students in vocational programs to make a case for the bilingual program to be offered to them at a Year 12 Level. But it then required a lot of system brokerage, because I had to be able to find people within the community, along with our amazing principal, who could, do the kind of independent judging of the of the work products and things like that. So, still having to tick the boxes of the broader system, but to do it in a way that kind of made sense and worked on the ground”, says Dan.

As with other Teach For Australia Alumni, Dan harnessed the network to help power the school: **“Teach For Australia does this amazing job at auspicing a growing Alumni program that spans people who are still practising in the classroom and those that are working across the system. And I was able to leverage that amazing collective impact approach by not only attracting amazing Teach For Australia Alumni to teach at the school.”**

Dan’s work at Yirrkala led to him being named

NT Secondary Teacher Of The Year in 2020, although he modestly says that his main role was in helping the education bureaucracy understand and accept the brilliant innovations Yirrkala had developed in bilingual teaching. Four of his student cohort went on to become the first Year 12 students from a remote community to graduate with an ATAR.

Dan identifies three features of the Teach For Australia program that are keys to its success: its focus on addressing educational inequality, its rigorous evidence-based approach, and the impact and influence of its Alumni, who now work at many levels of the education system and beyond it. “The Alumni program spans people who are still practising in the classroom and those that are working across the system,” he notes. “And I think what that really does is it grounds the values-base of addressing educational inequality in a collective impact.”

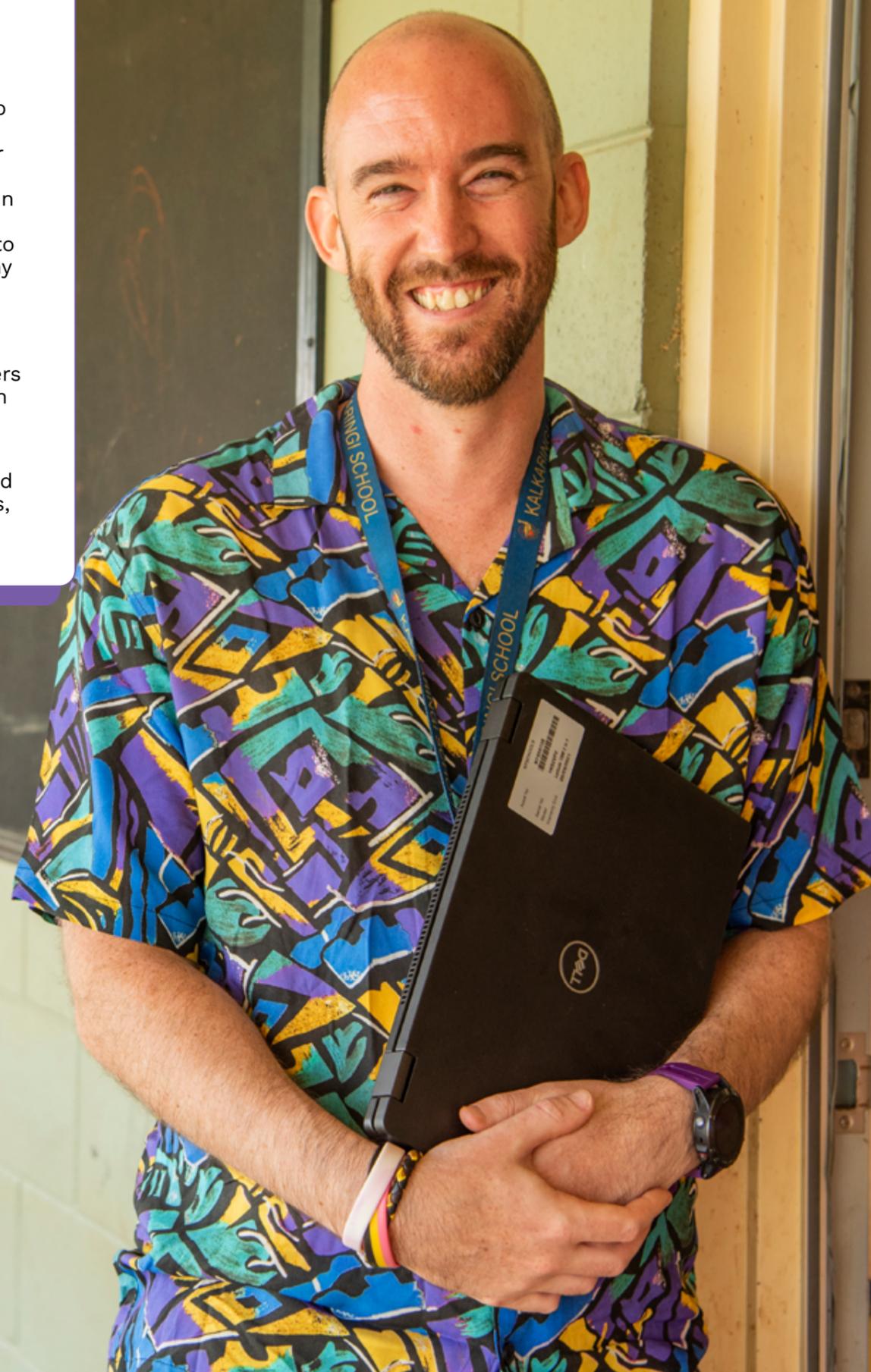


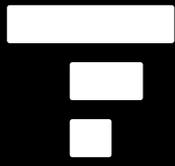
# CONCLUSION

This report recognises and celebrates the immense contributions of all Teach For Australia Alumni – including those profiled above. Teach For Australia's Leadership Development Program has had a significant impact on hundreds of schools and many hundreds of thousands of students across Australia, as well as on the wider education landscape. Its unique model has attracted significant talent into the teaching profession, providing long-term contributions within the classroom and in positions of school leadership. Teach For Australia's Alumni network unites those working in schools with a wider coalition of education changemakers - allowing it to work collectively across the sector to create greater impact than is possibly by any individual alone.

Looking to the future, Teach For Australia will continue innovating to improve the educational opportunities available to all young people in Australia. This includes expanding and creating new programs to boost the number of high-quality teachers and school leaders, such as its pilot Undergraduate Teaching Program, launched in 2025.

Teach For Australia offers immense thanks to its government and philanthropic partners. With their valued support, Teach For Australia will continue to attract and develop exceptional teachers and leaders who deliver direct impact in classrooms, throughout schools and across education systems.





# Teach For Australia

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Teach For Australia acknowledges and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. Theirs is the oldest living and continuous culture on earth. Their deep relationship with and enduring care of Country is a gift to our nation. This was and always will be their land. Teach For Australia pays respect to the Elders past and present, their custodianship, their courage and their resilience.



Teach For Australia



@teachforaustralia



Teach For Australia



TeachForAustralia



@teachforaustralia

Level 4, 454 Queen Street,  
Melbourne 3000 VIC