

The Northern Territory Principals' Association (NTPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Education Standards and Registration Board Bill 2026.

NTPA supports governance arrangements that strengthen the education system and ensure high standards for the teaching profession. However, we wish to raise several concerns regarding the consultation process and aspects of the proposed governance model.

1. Consultation Timeframe

NTPA is concerned that the consultation process has not enabled our Association to undertake meaningful consultation with our members. As a consequence, the Committee may not receive the breadth of practical operational feedback that legislation of this significance deserves.

2. Representation of Current Educators and School Leaders

NTPA acknowledges the value of including skills-based appointments on the proposed Board. However, we are concerned that the Bill does not sufficiently ensure representation from practising educators, particularly current school leaders.

Current practising school leaders bring contemporary knowledge of the operational, professional and regulatory realities facing schools. Their experience is critical to ensure that Board decisions remain informed by current educational practice and the practical implications for schools, teachers and students. NTPA supports the inclusion of skills-based appointments. However, professional expertise gained through current practice is itself a critical skill that should not be overlooked.

3. Size and Composition of the Board

A Board of seven members, with a quorum of four, increases the likelihood that decisions may be made without the benefit of contemporary school leadership expertise. Given the significant statutory functions of the Board, NTPA believes the proposed size is too small to adequately reflect the breadth of expertise required across the Northern Territory education sector.

4. Appointment Process

The Board performs an independent regulatory function. Public confidence depends not only on the integrity of Board members, but also on an appointment process that is transparent, merit-based and demonstrably independent.

5. Professional Expertise in Investigations and Inquiries

Matters involving professional teaching practice and school leadership should include practising educators within inquiry or disciplinary processes. Decisions affecting professional practice are strengthened when informed by current educational expertise.

NTPA recommends that the Committee consider amendments to:

- Require at least one practising principal to be appointed to the Board
- Require at least one practising registered teacher to be appointed to the Board
- Strengthen the transparency of Board appointments through a publicly documented merit selection process
- Ensure inquiry panels include current educational expertise where professional practice is under consideration
- Provide adequate consultation timeframes for future legislative reforms affecting the education profession.

NTPA appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission and looks forward to ongoing engagement as the Bill progresses.