

Review of the Northern Territory Board of Studies and the Teacher Registration Board

Document title	Review of the Northern Territory Board of Studies and the Teacher Registration Board
Contact details	Department of Education and Training

Acronyms	Full form
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HALT	Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies, an independent advisory body established under the <i>Education Act 2015 (NT)</i> .
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
Tas	Tasmania
TRB	Teacher Registration Board, an independent regulatory body established under the <i>Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004</i> .
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

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1. Executive summary

The Northern Territory (NT) is undergoing considerable reforms to improve regulatory efficiency, with an emphasis on integrity. For the NT, the challenge, and opportunity, is to design a contextualised, fit-for-purpose model that streamlines complexity, clarifies roles and independence, and focuses effort where it has the greatest impact on student learning.

The NT Government requested the Department of Education and Training undertake a review of the Teacher Registration Board Northern Territory (TRB) and the Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS) to consider the operation and governance of the Boards and potential efficiency in combining their functions. The outcomes of this review will complement amendments to the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004*, which were undertaken in 2025 as Tranche 1 reforms that clarified operational matters of the TRB and aligned the Act with matters of national significance. Further legislative amendments are recommended arising from this review, representing Tranche 2 reforms.

The review recommends reforms that will see the amalgamation of the NTBOS and TRB. The reforms aim to contemporise current practice, create efficiencies and drive regulatory outcomes through improving and streamlining the delivery of functions. Ultimately, these reforms aim to improve teaching quality, support child safety and enhance learner outcomes.

Central to these reforms is a new independent statutory board. The Board will consolidate the curriculum advisory functions of the NTBOS under the *Education Act 2015*, together with teacher regulatory functions under the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004*. The Board will be accountable to the Minister for Education and Training, with resources provided by the Department of Education and Training.

Reporting to the new Board will be a new Director responsible for managing the day-to-day functions of the Board; this position will be a Minister appointed public sector employee from the Department of Education and Training. The Director will have increased delegations to ensure regulating activities are implemented effectively, protecting Board time for strategic oversight.

Mechanisms will be in place to ensure accountability and independence. This includes a robust performance framework to underpin the Board's strategic work and guide implementation, articulating statutory objectives, measurable targets, and accountability mechanisms.

Governance will be strengthened through a published Board Charter, conflict-of-interest protocols, and structured processes for meetings, skills assessment, and performance reporting. Further recommendations aim to streamline regulatory processes and reduce red tape.

The Board's composition will reflect skills-based appointments, with at least seven core members appointed on merit by the Minister. The Board will be further strengthened by ex-officio members for cross-sectoral representation.

Collectively, these measures are intended to optimise the performance of the NTBOS and TRB functions through structural changes to governance and administration arrangements, without impacting customer-facing services such as teacher registrations and renewals. The review recommendations seek to establish a more effective and accountable board that strengthens education system performance, safeguards students, supports high-quality teaching, and contributes to improved outcomes for students across the NT.

1.1. Overview of recommendations

A: Establish a new amalgamated statutory Board

1. Establish through statute a new independent statutory board that replaces and amalgamates the Teacher Registration Board and the Northern Territory Board of Studies.
2. Transfer and contemporise the existing objectives, functions and powers of the boards within the newly established statutory board with the aim of strengthening:
 - (a) teaching quality, professional standards and child safety
 - (b) cross-sectoral student performance.
3. Retain the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education and Training to provide staff, facilities and other support services to the Teacher Registration Board and extend this to the new Board.

B: Strengthen the administrative arrangements of the new Board

4. Provide for a public sector employee employed within the Department of Education and Training to be appointed by the Minister as the new Board Director.
5. Ensure the controls to support the independence of the Board in the Tranche 1 reforms (completed in 2025) to the Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004 are preserved in these reforms.
6. Provide clear delineation between the regulatory oversight and advisory functions of the Board, and the operational responsibilities of the Director so that functions are delivered efficiently and effectively.
7. Allow for the establishment of committees to the Board through Ministerial approval.
8. Strengthen the role of the new Director and enable the Board, and the Director, to delegate functions and powers (including to committees) to improve Board effectiveness and efficiency.

C: Implement a performance framework for the new Board

9. Set in legislation for the Minister to develop a Statement of Expectations for the new Board.
10. Establish in legislation that the new Board has a performance framework which includes:
 - a. strategy approved by the Minister which articulates purpose, vision and values
 - b. measures aligned to statutory objectives and functions
 - c. published annual reporting.
11. Include the power for the Minister to commission a review into Board performance where required.

D: Strengthen governance and assurance

12. Require that the new Board develops and publishes a Charter which includes appropriate governance mechanisms that ensure integrity and efficiency, including in the areas of:
 - conflict of interest and confidentiality processes
 - effective decision-making and access to expertise and advice
 - processes for supporting effective and efficient board meetings
 - risk mitigation.

E: Change the focus of board appointments, membership and composition to a skills-based model

13. Provide for appointments to the new Board to be via the Minister.
14. Provide for board members to have staggered 4-year appointment terms, and a maximum of 2 consecutive terms except where there are exceptional circumstances.
15. Establish the requirement for the new Board to be skills-based in statute and require a minimum of 7 core appointees, including the Chair.
16. Include advisory membership for the new Board and agree on a model for cross-sectoral representation.

2. Background

The NT Government committed to improving the education system, strengthening the teacher workforce and reducing red tape. Further, the NT is undergoing considerable reforms to improve regulatory efficiency, with an emphasis on integrity. In response to direct feedback from stakeholders, the Minister for Education and Training requested a review be conducted into the NTBOS and TRB to address effectiveness and operational efficiency concerns.

In October 2025, the Minister for Education and Training introduced the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly as the first tranche of two reforms and the first step in taking action on regulatory integrity and to address operational inefficiencies. The Bill was passed by the Assembly in November 2025. Key features in these first tranche reforms included:

- clarifying the Minister's power to set policy, performance and accountability expectations; and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the agency responsible for teacher registration and regulation to manage the performance of the Director of the Board
- streamlining registration processes, reducing administrative burden and creating greater flexibility for employers to seek an authority to employ an unregistered person to teach specialist subjects
- mandating professional registration for qualified teachers teaching in the early childhood education and care sector
- strengthening child safety by improving information sharing arrangements
- aligning teacher registration practices to the National Framework for Teacher Registration in Australia.

This review builds on these first tranche reforms, with the second tranche of reforms focusing on both the NTBOS and TRB together and opportunities to realise further efficiencies and greater effectiveness.

3. Review terms of reference

3.1. Objectives

The objectives of the review are to make recommendations which:

- respond to local needs
- streamline and achieve improved operations
- ensure cost-effectiveness
- support the education system and student outcomes.

3.2. Scope

The scope of the review included consideration of the operations and governance of NTBOS and TRB. Other statutory boards were not in scope for consideration.

3.3. Approach

The review was conducted by the Department of Education and Training and included:

- analysis of literature and evidence, including relevant legislation, policy documents, reports, and better practice governance guidance and administration approaches
- comparative analysis of similar public service and education advisory and regulatory boards across Australian jurisdictions
- targeted stakeholder consultation.

3.4. Stakeholder consultation

Feedback sought through targeted consultation with stakeholders has been used to inform the review outcome.

Consultation workshops were held with members of:

- Teacher Registration Board
- Northern Territory Board of Studies
- Non-Government Ministerial Advisory Council,
- School Education Advisory Group.

Within the workshops, participants were:

- invited to share views on issues, risks and opportunities
- engaged in guided activities to co-shape criteria and features of potential future models.

Appreciation is extended to stakeholders for their valuable participation in this process.

4. Context

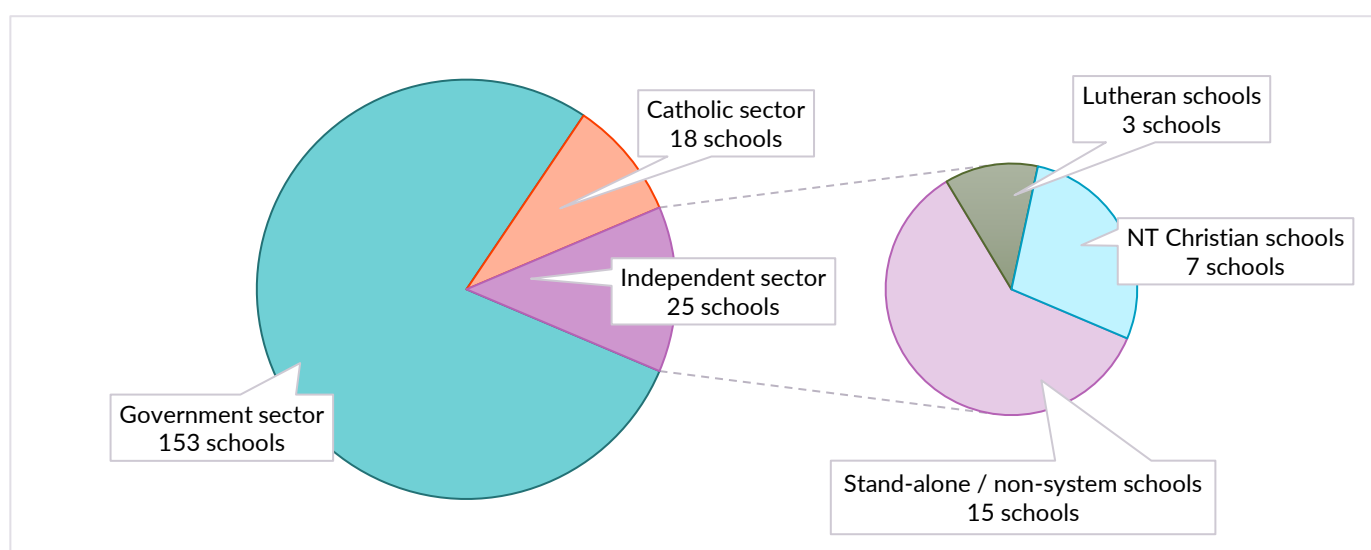
4.1. NT education context

The NT education system is administered under the *Education Act 2015* and the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004*. The *Education Act 2015* establishes the NTBOS. The *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004* establishes the TRB and governs teacher registration, conduct and professional development.

There are 196 schools in the NT across three sectors which are defined in the *Australian Education Act 2013*:

- Government sector (153 schools)
- Catholic sector (18 schools)
- Independent sector (25 schools, including 3 Lutheran and 7 NT Christian schools).

Figure 1: Overview of the Northern Territory's education system



Throughout this report, Catholic and Independent schools are collectively referred to as the 'non-government education sector'. The term 'cross-sectoral' refers to all education sectors, including government and non-government sectors.

The following table lists all 3 statutory boards which exist in NT education laws. There are no statutory authorities in the NT education system. Statutory boards and statutory authorities are explained in Chapter 5.1.

Table 1: Statutory bodies in the NT education system

Name of body	Type of body	Category and descriptor
Teacher Registration Board	Statutory regulatory board	Oversees compliance with laws and regulates the teaching profession in the NT
Non-Government School Ministerial Advisory Council	Statutory advisory board	Provides expert advice and recommendations to government, typically through the appointing Minister.
NT Board of Studies	Statutory advisory board	

4.2. National education context

National reforms to streamline functions across national education agencies are underway. In October 2025, Education Ministers reached in-principle agreement to bring together and build upon the existing functions of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Education Research Organisation and Education Services Australia into a single Teaching and Learning Commission.

The Commission would enable greater co-ordination between curriculum, teaching, assessment, research, and reporting – with the aim being that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The NT will be actively participating in the design and scoping of the new Commission and has considered the national reform directions within the context of these reforms.

Australia has an established history of consolidating education functions within a single statutory body, including curriculum, assessment, certification, standards and, in some cases, regulatory functions. For example, the New South Wales Education Standards Authority combines curriculum, assessment, school registration and teacher accreditation functions, while statutory bodies in Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia perform integrated curriculum, assessment, standards and certification roles. Tasmania has also moved toward a more integrated model; from 1 July 2025, the Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Board, the Teachers Registration Board and the Non-government Schools Registration Board have the same Chair and six board members, to achieve enhanced consistency in decision-making, more streamlined governance and administrative processes, and enhanced collaboration.

While each model differs in scope and legislative design, they show that aligning related education standards and regulatory functions supports modern regulatory practice, strategic leadership and coordination – and is a tested and established direction in education contexts across Australia.

4.3. NT Government and governance policy context

A key NT Government strategy for rebuilding the economy and improving workforce readiness is underpinned by a commitment to deliver a regulatory reform program to improve certainty and reduce timeframes.

Work towards this commitment was progressed with the 2025 Review into the Structural Models for Statutory Integrity Offices¹, in which the amalgamation of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, the Ombudsman/ Information Commissioner and the Health and Community Services Complaints Commission into a single integrity office was recommended, and subsequently legislated through the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Act 2025². Acknowledged within the review, was that *“the NT context-size, population, and diverse service needs-warranted a bespoke structural arrangement designed to be fit-for-purpose for the NT context”*.

Consistent with the NT Government strategy, this Review has considered a fit-for-purpose model to deliver the functions of the NTBOS and TRB, in which the benefits of streamlined structural governance arrangements can be achieved.

¹ [Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Act 2025 | Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet](#)

² <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/Integrity-and-Ethics-Commissioner-Act-2025>

Further inputs to this review were the following NT resources:

- Treasurer's Directions³
- Auditor-General's review findings⁴
- NT Government Boards Handbook⁵.

4.4. Literature review

Looking outside the NT, there is extensive published research and analysis undertaken by governments and organisations across Australia and internationally. A literature review of this research and reports on effective and efficient education regulation, and learnings from similar education reviews in Australian jurisdictions have guided the recommendations proposed in this review; sources have been referenced at Appendix 1.

In summary, the research found that effective boards can adapt or expand their scope if they have:

- clear mandates enshrined in legislation, strategy and policy
- effective administrative arrangements
- capability and capacity to deliver efficiently and effectively, including diverse and capable membership, and processes to monitor and address performance
- transparent and accountable governance and assurance practices.

³ <https://treasury.nt.gov.au/dtf/financial-management-group/treasurers-directions>

⁴ <https://ago.nt.gov.au/publications.php>

⁵ <https://cmc.nt.gov.au/supporting-government/boards-and-committees>

5. Review findings and recommendations

The report organises findings and recommendations across 5 categories:

- 5.1 Legal structure
- 5.2 Administrative arrangements
- 5.3 Performance framework
- 5.4 Governance and assurance
- 5.5 Board appointments, membership and composition.

5.1. Legal structure

Regulators and advisory bodies are entities which may be legally structured as a statutory board or a statutory authority. While their legal arrangements and resourcing models are distinct, each operate independently, deriving their powers, functions, and responsibilities from an enabling legislation.

A statutory board is described with the following characteristics:

- a board of directors with powers and authority bestowed through law that are necessary to make decisions as a collective group
- resourced by a host government department which is responsible for overseeing financial and operational accountability, and individual regulatory decisions cannot be influenced.

A statutory authority is described with the following characteristics:

- a stand-alone public-sector entity established by legislation with defined legal powers, led by a CEO, commissioner, or board responsible for decision-making
- operationally independent from the education department, with its own governance arrangements, and resourced as a separate agency.

Both are utilised across Australian states and territories for education regulation and advisory functions. Statutory authorities are typically found in high populous jurisdictions in which revenue generated through regulating fees is sufficient to sustain operations. Some jurisdictions combine multiple functions into one entity, while others distribute functions across separate entities, demonstrated in the following table.

Table 2: List of interstate education system statutory bodies and their legal structure

State	Regulator	Legal structure
ACT	ACT Teacher Quality Institute	Statutory authority
ACT	Registration Standards Advisory Board	Statutory board — hosted by ACT Education Directorate
ACT	ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies	Statutory board — hosted by ACT Education Directorate
NSW	NSW Education Standards Authority	Statutory authority
Qld	Queensland College of Teachers	Statutory authority
Qld	Non-State Schools Accreditation Board	Statutory board — hosted by Qld Department of Education
Qld	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	Statutory authority
SA	Teachers Registration Board of South Australia	Statutory authority
SA	Education Standards Board	Statutory authority
SA	SACE Board of South Australia	Statutory authority
Tas	Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania	Statutory board — hosted by Tas Department for Education, Children and Young People
Tas	Non-Government Schools Registration Board	Statutory board — hosted by Tas Department for Education, Children and Young People
Tas	Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Board	Statutory board — hosted by Tas Department for Education, Children and Young People
Vic	Victorian Institute of Teaching	Statutory authority
Vic	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority	Statutory authority
Vic	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority	Statutory authority
WA	Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia	Statutory board — hosted by WA Department of Education
WA	School Curriculum and Standards Authority	Statutory authority

Operational resourcing influences the sustainability of a regulatory model. The operating expenses of a statutory authority are considerably higher than a statutory board.

A statutory board leverages the corporate infrastructure of an existing department. This model reduces establishment and operating costs by sharing corporate assurance frameworks, accommodation and systems, enabling the board to focus on its core statutory purpose. Funding is primarily directed to delivering regulatory functions and board governance rather than agency-wide overheads.

A statutory authority operates similarly to a standalone agency and is subject to higher fixed and ongoing costs. The entity may be supported by another central department for certain corporate services (finance, human resources, information and communications technology, governance, procurement); however, executive leadership structures, policy and assurance frameworks, accommodation, and systems are independently established and maintained. This creates substantial baseline expenditure before any regulatory work occurs. Statutory authorities typically require separate legislative, ministerial and budget processes, increasing administrative overhead and reducing flexibility to scale services up or down.

The NTBOS and TRB are established as separate statutory boards. Table 3 demonstrates a net expenditure of less than \$1.6 million to deliver their functions across a 12-month period.

Table 3: Revenue and expenditure for the NTBOS and TRB across a 12-month period (Source: Annual Reports and financial reporting)

Entity	Revenue generated	Expenditure	Surplus (deficit)
NTBOS			
Board expenses		\$9,281	
Achievement awards		\$32,238	
Staff		\$167,403	
Total	(-)	\$208,922	(\$208,922)
TRB			
HALT national certification	\$38,950		
Registration fees	\$644,500		
Staff		\$1,696,982	
Operational expenditure		\$318,498	
Grants and subsidies		\$38,950	
Relief teachers < 15 days		\$5,039	
Total	\$683,450	\$2,059,469	(\$1,376,019)
Total	\$683,450	\$2,268,391	(\$1,584,941)

Recommendations to establish a new amalgamated statutory Board

Strong alignment was identified in the strategic focus of the NTBOS and TRB. Both share a common goal of improving the NT education system and improving student outcomes, providing a solid foundation for collaboration and reform.

However, the alignment comes with significant overlaps in functions, effort and governance across the bodies. In some cases, members sat on both the NTBOS and TRB, giving rise to potential conflicts of interest with obligations across the two governance structures. Such members were required to navigate competing priorities across two boards, raising concerns about impartiality in decision-making. Separate reporting, governance and compliance processes for bodies working towards the same goals has also resulted in duplication, inefficient use of expert time and unnecessary expenditure of public resources.

Stakeholders consistently emphasised that independence is critical for objective regulation and wanted the independence of the TRB to be maintained. Both a statutory authority and a statutory board can be designed with robust legal arrangements that protect the independence of regulatory decision-making. Independence rests on how those arrangements are implemented in practice, so that there can be clear separation from departmental interests.

Cost-effectiveness is a key consideration in the design of a recommended model. Unlike larger jurisdictions, revenue generated from teacher registration fees in the NT is insufficient to sustain operations of the TRB, and increasing teacher registration fees was not favoured by stakeholders. Further, as demonstrated across other states and territories, combined functions relating to teacher regulation and education system performance is a common model that provides a joined-up approach and reduces duplication.

Therefore, the following recommendations have been made for a model which is cost-effective and supports independence.

A: Establish a new amalgamated statutory Board

1. Establish through statute a new independent statutory Board that replaces and amalgamates the Northern Territory Board of Studies and the Teacher Registration Board.
2. Transfer and contemporise the existing objectives, functions and powers of the boards within the newly established statutory Board with the aim of strengthening:
 - a. teaching quality, professional standards and child safety
 - b. cross-sectoral student performance.
3. Retain the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education and Training to provide staff, facilities and other support services to the Teacher Registration Board and extend this to the new Board.

5.2. Administrative arrangements

An enabling Act commonly provides for a statutory office holder to ensure there is an established, continuous legal authority through which a board's functions can be exercised in practice. Given that boards are oversight bodies that meet periodically, it is critical the law enables for ongoing regulatory actions to be undertaken by a delegate of the board. Importantly for the NT context, the statutory office holder role can be structured as a non-standalone appointment, including by permitting concurrent holding of another statutory office, provided conflicts are managed and governance arrangements are clear.

The *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004* limits the ability for the TRB to delegate its regulatory functions and powers to office holders, overburdening the Board's meeting time with individual regulatory decision-making. Staff implementing the NT teacher registration scheme are required to navigate an additional layer of procedural red tape to prepare routine matters for Board decision. Committees have been established by the TRB to free up Board time; however, given the TRB cannot delegate its regulatory functions, these committees are restricted to the provision of advice.

The *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004* requires up to three members of the TRB to form a panel to consider disciplinary matters, which increases the load placed on members who typically hold full-time employment. Disciplinary procedures are time-intensive, involving case management, consideration of evidence, preparation of decisions, reasons and recommendations to the Board, often over extended periods. This draws the Board into sustained quasi-judicial activity which can delay other statutory functions, reduce the availability of members for strategic oversight and performance monitoring, and, due to avoiding conflicts-of-interest, concentrate panel responsibilities on a small subset of the Board who may not have access to the requisite skills and experience to effectively conduct complex inquiries.

Committees with well-defined objectives can support effective board administration and should be able to be established through the Minister. However, this needs to occur alongside the other reforms relating to skill-based board composition that ensures a board's membership has the right mix of skills and expertise to effectively exercise its functions and strategic objectives (see Chapter 5.5 for further detail).

Recommendations for the administration of the new Board

The new Board will be supported by a Director (a statutory office holder) who is appointed by the Minister and is a public sector employee within the Department of Education and Training. They must be empowered to deliver the Board's day-to-day regulatory administration through legislated delegation provisions. The Director is not required to be a standalone appointment and may concurrently hold another statutory appointment should this be required.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of visible independence, including a Director role that is not perceived to be exposed to competing departmental interests. However, establishing a standalone model with dedicated corporate infrastructure would increase cost, complexity and administrative burden beyond what is proportionate for the scale of the functions. On balance, stakeholders acknowledged that departmental resourcing may be more sustainable in a small jurisdiction, provided the Board's independence could be protected in legislation, and supported by strong governance arrangements.

Consistent with this approach, Tranche 1 reforms of the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004* strengthened the regulatory integrity of the TRB and the Office of the TRB by clarifying:

- the Minister's power to set policy, performance and accountability expectations
- the role of the CEO of the agency responsible for teacher registration and regulation to manage the performance of the Director of the Board, except in relation to regulatory decisions.

Delegations will enable routine procedures and administrative decisions to be managed by the Director, staff and, where appropriate, committees of the Board, ensuring matters progress between meetings and the Board can focus on strategic oversight. The Board requires assurance that the Director will be accountable to the Board for regulatory performance and decision-making integrity, and to the host organisation for compliance with whole-of-government requirements (including the Public Sector Employee Management Act 1993, Financial Management Act 1995 and Procurement Act 1995), supporting balanced accountability, independence and reduced administrative burden.

Further, by increasing delegation powers, the Director role should also be strengthened to increase its administration of preliminary investigations and inquiries under the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004* by updating Part 6 to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency, while also ensuring accountability and transparency to the Board.

B: Strengthen the administrative arrangements of the new Board

4. Provide for a public sector employee employed within the Department of Education and Training to be appointed by the Minister as the new Board Director.
5. Ensure the controls to support the independence of the Board in the Tranche 1 reforms (completed in 2025) to the *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act* are preserved in these reforms.
6. Provide clear delineation between the regulatory oversight and advisory functions of the Board, and the operational responsibilities of the Director so that functions are delivered efficiently and effectively.
7. Allow for the establishment of committees to the Board through Ministerial approval.
8. Strengthen the role of the new Director and enable the Board, and the Director, to delegate functions and powers (including to committees) to improve Board effectiveness and efficiency.

5.3. Performance framework

A clear performance framework sets up a board to operate strategically without the need to manage day-to-day operations. This is articulated through a strategy that sets out clear purpose, vision and values, measurable outcomes, key performance indicators, and the priorities and actions that will deliver them, aligned explicitly to statutory objectives and functions. With an effective strategy in place, a board can focus on monitoring long-term direction, performance, and anticipate emerging risks.

The TRB and NTBOS operate with legislated functions but do not consistently adopt strategic frameworks to guide their work as demonstrated in Table 4. The TRB has a strategic plan that defines vision, values and objectives, but its purpose is not explicitly stated. The NTBOS does not publish purpose or objectives to demonstrate alignment between statutory mandate, operational activity, and strategic direction. While stakeholders could see alignment between the operations and strategy of the TRB, there was indication that the value of the NTBOS has become opaque over time, associated with the absence of a strategy or clear objectives.

Table 4: Adoption of performance framework elements by the NTBOS and TRB

Element of performance framework	NTBOS	TRB
Performance framework contains objects specified in Act	No. Unclear which Education Act objects relate to NTBOS	Yes
Performance framework contains principles	No	No
Minister can set policy expectations	Yes	Yes
Strategy and corporate plan	No	Yes
Measurable targets approved by Minister	No	No
Report to Minister	Yes	Yes
Report contains achievement against approved targets	No	No. Report contains activities, not target measures.

Recommendations to establish a performance framework

Clear purpose, objectives, and performance measures improve transparency, strengthen accountability, and enable statutory bodies to demonstrate their contribution to set outcomes. Outcomes-focused reporting, linked to statutory intent, allows stakeholders to see how the work of a board drives regulatory effectiveness and strategic outcomes in the long term. In the case of the NTBOS and TRB this includes curriculum and teaching quality for improved student outcomes.

Clear policy expectations set by the Minister will provide an essential line of sight between government priorities and the new Board's statutory work, clarifying areas of focus while preserving the Board's independence over regulating matters. A defined power for the Minister to review the Board's performance and governance, particularly where no other independent body is positioned to do so, strengthens system accountability and supports early identification of integrity issues.

These transparent approaches can support public confidence that the Board is operating effectively, fairly and in the interests of students and the broader education system.

C: Implement a performance framework for the new Board

9. Set in legislation for the Minister to develop a Statement of Expectations for the new Board.
10. Establish in legislation that the new Board has a performance framework which includes:
 - a. strategy approved by the Minister which articulates purpose, vision and values
 - b. measures aligned to statutory objectives and functions
 - c. published annual reporting.
11. Include the power for the Minister to commission a review into Board performance where required.

5.4. Governance and assurance

Strong governance and assurance processes are the mechanisms that give effect to proportionate regulation, which means applying more oversight where the risks are higher and less where they are lower. It ensures decisions are fair, consistent and based on evidence, so that regulatory effort is directed to the areas of greatest potential harm.

High-quality governance processes are the structured practices and controls that protect a board's capacity to make well-informed, timely and defensible decisions. They ensure meetings are consistently well-structured, information is timely, succinct and accurate, and risks are escalated, so that decisions are transparent, ethical, and defensible. A published Charter is used to articulate a board's focus on strategy, risk and performance, and clarifies its decisions and its role.

Board-level governance frameworks include risk appetite statements, enterprise risk registers, decision-making delegations, performance metrics, and clear board policies such as conflict-of-interest protocols and decision-making principles. These accountability mechanisms protect integrity and provide assurance that members consistently act with independence, objectivity and collective responsibility.

Assurance frameworks are the board-approved instruments that set the rules, thresholds and evidence requirements for routine matters. Once approved, management applies these frameworks in day-to-day operations under delegation, supported by policy, standard operating procedures, templates and quality

controls, so decisions are consistent and auditable without requiring a board to consider individual regulatory matters. A board should receive regular assurance reporting that demonstrates whether its assurance frameworks are working as intended, and should only step into high-risk, novel, precedent-setting or escalated regulatory matters.

Governance processes and assurance frameworks vary significantly between the NTBOS and TRB and are not always sufficient to support strategic focus or effective decision-making. Ethical governance practices are well understood and applied by members of the NTBOS and TRB, however inconsistent documentation or public visibility of these governance documents reduces confidence in the consistent application of regulatory processes and decision integrity.

The TRB's regulatory assurance practices could be strengthened to improve maturity, consistency and transparency. This would be supported by clearer board-level decision-making principles, stronger public reporting of decision rationales, and revised published policies for regulatory functions which are targeted to their audience and supported by comprehensive guidance. These measures will strengthen regulatory operations and stakeholder confidence in regulatory decisions.

Recommendations to strengthen governance and assurance

With strong governance and assurance frameworks, the new Board can confidently focus on significant risks and areas where the greatest impact can be achieved, thereby lifting the performance of the NT education system. The following recommendations will support proportionate regulation and effectiveness of the new Board by strengthening governance and assurance.

D: Strengthen governance and assurance

12. Require that the new Board develops and publishes a Charter which includes appropriate governance mechanisms that ensure integrity and efficiency, including in the areas of:
- conflict of interest and confidentiality processes
 - effective decision-making and access to expertise and advice
 - processes for supporting effective and efficient board meetings
 - risk mitigation.

5.5. Board appointments, membership and composition

Board composition requires the right mix of skills and expertise, and genuine independence, with members appointed on merit and who do not represent the interests of any one sector or group. An effective board composition provides balanced perspectives, includes the right mix of skills, and reflects the diversity of the community it serves. Succession planning, staggered terms, and streamlined appointment processes further support continuity and protect the board from capability gaps arising from turnover.

Stakeholder feedback emphasised the importance of independent and merit-based appointments to ensure balanced expertise and avoid perceived or actual sector influence. NTBOS members highlighted the value of cross-sector collaboration within board membership, reflecting broader support for governance arrangements that bring together diverse sector perspectives. Feedback also indicated the need to articulate the skills, capabilities and perspectives required for effective governance. Across both boards and the non-government sector, there was strong support for cross-sector representation, with

skills-based appointments to support the Board's independence, credibility and capacity to make impartial decisions in support of all education sectors.

Arrangements for the NTBOS and TRB memberships are set out in their respective enabling legislation and differ substantially. TRB membership is based on nominated representation by prescribed organisations or bodies from across the NT education system. While the NTBOS has a blended model of nominated education sector representation and persons nominated by the Minister who are experts. For the TRB in particular, the reliance on a representative model has resulted in skills gaps across critical areas of strategy, performance, risk and regulation.

Succession planning was evidenced by both Boards but was applied inconsistently due to cumbersome appointment processes requiring Administrator approval. The prolonged nomination and approval processes have left the Boards vulnerable to capability gaps and continuity risks when vacancies arise. Extended board vacancies has left key stakeholder cohorts, such as parents and subject matter experts, under-represented, reducing the diversity of perspectives available to inform NTBOS and TRB decisions.

Recommendations relating to board appointments, membership and composition

The following recommendations aim to support diverse board composition, including the right skills and experience, and the capacity for objective cross-sectoral input. They also consider the effective size of a board, noting the need to balance diversity of opinion and skills with efficient decision-making. They intend to streamline the member appointment process and improve the new Board's ability to identify skill gaps and plan for succession.

E: Change the focus of board appointments, membership and composition to a skills-based model

13. Provide for appointments to the new Board to be via the Minister.
14. Provide for board members to have staggered 4-year appointment terms, and a maximum of 2 consecutive terms except where there are exceptional circumstances.
15. Establish the requirement for the new Board to be skills-based in statute and require a minimum of 7 core appointees, including the Chair.
16. Include advisory membership for the new Board and agree on a model for cross-sectoral representation.

6. Next steps

The establishment of a new board presents a clear opportunity to improve education system coherence, lift the regulatory effectiveness of the teacher registration scheme and, ultimately, support better outcomes for students across the NT.

A more integrated and well-governed framework will enable clearer standards, stronger oversight and more consistent decision-making, creating conditions that support teaching quality, improvement of education standards, and student safety. Realising these benefits, however, depends not only on the design of the new model, but on how effective changes are implemented in practice.

Transition will require consideration of both legislative and operational arrangements to ensure continuity of functions and minimal disruption to customer-facing services such as teacher registration and renewal. Preparation ahead of legislative amendments should be considered to ensure the model is poised to operate when legislated.

Effective implementation will also depend on how board support is organised within the Department of Education and Training. Consideration of the organisational structure, co-locating supporting teams, and applying appropriate change management processes will help to stabilise operations and support consistent regulatory practice. Given the scale of change, there is value in designating dedicated leadership capacity to oversee implementation, with a focus on reducing red tape and duplication, coordinating change across functions and ensuring the new board model is embedded as intended.

Once established and effectively embedded, the new Board will play a central role in strengthening stewardship of the education system by providing clear, independent and evidence-informed advice and regulatory oversight. Over time, this will support more consistent education quality, better alignment between regulation and education system priorities, and stronger assurance of student safety across schools and the teaching profession.

Appendix 1 - Literature review sources

- Arm's-length and public bodies guidance, UK Government, 2023
- G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance, 2023
- Governance principles for boards of public sector entities in Australia, Governance Institute of Australia, 2023
- NSW Government's review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, 2016
- NT Department of Education's review of Part 7 of the NT Education Act, 2021
- NT Government review into the structural models for statutory integrity offices (McClintock-Hiley review), 2025
- OECD best practice principles for regulatory policy - the governance of regulators, 2014
- Public Bodies Governance Maturity Matrix, Good Governance Institute (GGI), 2025
- Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) policies and guides, Australian Government Department of Finance, 2025
- Regulator Performance, Australian Government Department of Finance, 2025
- Tasmanian Government's Review of Education Regulation, 2020
- Towards better practice guide for regulators, Victorian Government, 2022
- UK Corporate Governance Code, UK Government, 2024