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Setting high standards for science teaching

The Australian teaching profession moved a step closer to recognising outstanding teaching this week with the launch of draft National Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science.

The Australian Science Teachers Association, in partnership with Teaching Australia, worked with science teachers across the country to develop the standards. They describe in detail the knowledge and skills of highly accomplished teachers of science, wherever they teach.

The standards were launched at a recent forum of the Teaching Australia Network which brings together 34 national professional associations of teachers, principals and teacher educators. The Chair of Teaching Australia, Gregor Ramsey, himself a former science teacher said, "These standards draw on teachers' professional knowledge and practice to describe the level of skill involved in highly accomplished science teaching."

"They set a benchmark to which teachers can aspire. They are clear about what is involved in outstanding professional practice and can be used to guide professional learning and recognition of excellence. These specialised standards will go hand in hand with the successful implementation of the national curriculum."

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Science Teachers Association, Peter Russo, said this milestone demonstrates the commitment of the profession to describing and achieving quality teaching and learning. These standards build on the earlier work of the Association in developing the *ASTA National Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science*.

The next step is to test and validate the standards with major stakeholders.

Teaching Australia is currently working with other professional associations to develop national standards for highly accomplished early childhood and primary teachers and for principals. Other fields are to follow.

Copies of the draft standards are available from www.teachingaustralia.edu.au

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