



Northern Territory Government

Department of Employment, Education and Training

People & Learning Division

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The Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP
Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
evt.rep@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Hartsuyker

RE: Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training submission to the national enquiry into the quality and adequacy of teacher training courses in Australia.

Please find attached a brief submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training national enquiry into the quality and adequacy of teacher training courses in Australia.

Should more detail be required on any of the terms of reference please contact:
Claire Kilgariff at claire.kilgariff@nt.gov.au

I look forward with interest to the findings of your enquiry.

Yours sincerely

SUE MURPHY
GENERAL MANAGER

25 April 2005

SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING EDUCATION

Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training

Introduction

The Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) People & Learning (P&L) Division has addressed briefly those terms of reference which have direct impact on the scope of DEET business and experience. These include 2, 5, 7, 8,9 & 10. Those that are the domain of relevant tertiary providers are not addressed. This submission represents the views of DEET and is not a cross sectoral response.

Terms of reference

2. Examine the extent to which teacher-training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The Northern Territory (NT) has an extremely diverse cultural mix. 31.1% of the NT population speak a language other than English at home. Indigenous people make up 29.3% of the population and Indigenous youth make up 36% of the NT youth population under the age of 15 years. In many remote communities Indigenous students may make up to 97-100% of the enrolled population. Although there are less Indigenous students attending rural and urban schools Indigenous students still may comprise from 20-60% of the school population.

The NT is currently unable to recruit the required numbers of graduates with diverse cultural backgrounds to provide a teaching workforce representative of the local community. It is also very difficult to recruit Indigenous teachers as both CDU and Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) currently produce a up to a maximum of 10 Indigenous teaching graduates a year out of the possible annual recruitment requirement of approximately 400 teachers.

The reasons for these small numbers of graduates are complex but relate to:

- Lack of available suitable Indigenous candidates at the required standard to complete a university degree.
- Lack of suitable and culturally appropriate study modes for remote Indigenous students.
- The length of time it takes for Indigenous teacher aspirants to complete a tertiary degree (students who have low literacy may complete a number of VET courses before attempting a tertiary qualification)
- Lack of suitable support programs for Indigenous students

3. Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and the reason for that attrition

NT DEET is currently conducting a research project into Indigenous teacher recruitment and retention. The research so far indicates that reasons for the current attrition rates of Indigenous pre-service teachers from the two NT tertiary institutions (CDU and BIITE) are not conclusive and DEET is in the process of establishing accurate data. Generally and the current situation is that these two institutions attract a different client group with CDU meeting the needs of urban Indigenous people and BIITE supporting rural, remote Indigenous people. Whilst these groups share many similarities they do have specific needs.

Factors that impact on attrition are:

- Adequate pastoral and academic support for students new to the culture and rigours of study. Not all students come to teacher education with adequate academic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Management of study and family responsibilities.
- Limited study modes for students particularly remote. Remote students are often mature age, work and study part time with family and have to leave their community to attend study blocks.
- Adequate financial support. Many Indigenous people are approached while studying with job offers that are more attractive or they have sacrificed a larger salary to undertake teacher training.
- Adequate counselling for younger students.
- The length of time it can take to complete a degree.

5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.

NT DEET and CDU have collaborated to develop pre-service units, which are informed by research and data on the current policy and context of the NT school environment. Examples include:

CAS100	Introduction to Aboriginal and Islander Studies
EDB210	Creating Positive Relationships
EDB211	Indigenous Education
EDB303	Language Pedagogy and Difference
EDB306	EAL for Inclusion
EDB406	Inclusive Education

7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:

I. Teach literacy and numeracy

In the Northern Territory it has long been recognised that all teachers are responsible for the development of literacy and numeracy capabilities in students, regardless of the subject they teach. This is soon to be recognised in the NT Certificate of Education (Year 12 completion certificate) with the implementation of a new Literacy strategy requiring literacy to be assessed in all NTCE subjects. It is imperative that new graduates are prepared for this role including an understanding that literacy and numeracy involve the application of skills within the context of all areas of learning. Each year, each NT school is required to review and refine their school Literacy and Numeracy plan identifying focus areas within a broad strategic frame. Teacher Professional Development is one of the key components of this plan and the expectation that new graduates enter the workforce with the capacity to teach literacy and numeracy is critical to this if individual schools and the system are to move forward in these areas. Of particular interest in the Northern Territory at the moment are effective middle years numeracy approaches and ESL-rich practices for remote Indigenous learners in particular. All NT schools and classrooms have ESL learners. It is necessary that ESL subjects become compulsory in all pre-service teacher training courses to meet the needs of these learners.

II. Teach vocational education courses

The demand for vocational education courses is consistently increasing within the Northern Territory and there are inadequate numbers of teachers formally trained and/or prepared to advise students on the range of offerings appropriate to their learning needs and deliver strong programs relating to vocational education. Providing incentives for teachers to specialise in this area would increase the numbers of appropriately trained teachers and improve the quality of the careers advice and delivery in the area of vocational education.

III. Effectively manage classrooms

There is currently an acute shortage of teachers trained in Specialist expertise in the areas of Behaviour Management, Vision and Hearing and DEET faces significant challenges when filling these types of positions. Behaviour Management and dealing with disruptive students continues to be a priority for teacher training and teacher professional learning. NT requires graduates with strong skills and resilience in this area. The most frequently asked for support area from new teachers at DEET Teacher Orientation is that of classroom behaviour management. This applies to graduates from all over Australia.

IV. Use information technology

University graduates, regardless of the institution attended, have a diverse range of skills, abilities and understandings in ICT. Whilst some students engage in ICT and explore all opportunities, others avoid this area, and focus on their own area of interest. Without national minimum standards there would be a clear

expectation of graduates. University lecturers also need to clearly emphasise, and model, the importance of ICT in all Key Learning Areas.

In 2001, ICT Integration to transform teaching and learning became a DEET priority. Significant resources have been allocated to up skilling teachers through professional learning initiatives conducted by People & Learning Division, IT Services and Curriculum Services Branch of DEET.

Under NT Government and CDU Partnership Agreement (Schedule 2.3), DEET sponsors teachers to study ICT Integration in teaching and learning, leading to a Graduate Certificate in Education (ICT Integration). An introductory unit being delivered by CDU as part of this award, E Ticket (HIT191), will become a compulsory unit of study for all undergraduate teachers from 2006.

V. Deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families

See above (III)

VI. Deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities

DEET currently finds it very difficult to recruit enough teachers with qualifications to support students with specific disabilities including-Vision, Hearing, Autism and Guidance

VII. Achieve accreditation

All graduates who complete a four-year teaching degree and comply with other NT Teacher Registration Board requirements are able to achieve registration in the NT as a teacher.

DEET also requires new recruits to successfully complete DEET teacher probation. This is a twelve-month assessment process which runs parallel to Teacher Induction, also a twelve months process of professional support.

Probation may be extended for up to a further twelve months if a teacher is experiencing performance difficulties.

VIII. Deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments.

New graduates bring to their teaching life within DEET a great variety of experiences and personal attributes, which enable them to meet this term of reference.

However CDU in the NT has recognised the importance of these interpersonal skills and requires all pre-service students to complete a compulsory unit EDB210 Creating Positive Relationships.

8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff into the preparation of trainee teachers..

DEET has a commitment to develop and ensure quality and supply of teachers who understand the NT context . Collaborative partnerships between CDU and DEET have been set up to develop and systematise the role of schools and teachers in the preparation of trainee teachers. These include:

- a teacher mentoring professional learning project where by teachers undergo targeted professional learning to help them mentor pre service teachers.
- placing and supporting pre service teachers to do remote placements.

DEET is developing further practicum relationships with other universities around Australia to enable other pres-service teachers to gain experience within the NT. Although DEET recognises the importance of teachers and schools in the preparation of trainee teachers there is still much to do in aligning the cultures, work practices and objectives of schools and tertiary providers to develop truly effective partnerships.

9. Examine the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training.

NT DEET has an emphasis on developing the pedagogies, curriculum and assessment practices for improved student engagement and outcomes in the middle years DEET does not find the current split between primary and secondary pre service training either appropriate or conducive to the needs of teachers in the middle years and their NT school education client group.

Of the 156 schools in the NT just 11 are secondary schools in urban centres. Of these 2 have a student year level range from 7-10, 2 focus on senior secondary and the remainder are comprehensive 8-12. In the rural and remote schools teachers may be expected to teach a wide range of age groups across the primary secondary divide. Many graduates will be required to teach in multi-level and multi-age classes with a significant number of students who have not reached literacy and /or numeracy benchmarks. Most graduates do not possess the necessary skills and knowledge to allow them to operate across the primary and secondary areas to provide their students with the range of teaching and learning opportunities appropriate to their learning, social and emotional needs.

Teachers need a pre service training course that provides them with the knowledge and skills to remediate and develop students literacy and numeracy skills. They will need to be adept in at least two discipline areas as well as having the knowledge and skills to design and implement integrated programs of learning across a range of learning areas. They will have to plan collaboratively and team teach across a number of discipline areas. Increasingly they will need to organise and facilitate student access to a range of learning opportunities provided by either visiting specialists or outside providers. They will need to have a thorough grounding in behaviour management and in supporting student well-being. On the job learning, mentoring and post graduation professional learning accessed through DEET People & Learning Division, Curriculum Services Branch or other post graduate courses are usually the methods by which teachers learn teaching and learning practices for the middle years.

In general the issues relating to teacher knowledge affecting the implementation of middle years of schooling ideas and practices in the NT are:

- Lack of flexibility of graduates
- Breadth /depth of their expertise
- Lack of pedagogical knowledge

10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.

NT DEET has the expectation that all teachers will engage in professional learning to continuously upgrade and improve their practice in order to improve student outcomes. The DEET Workforce Development Strategy articulates this position with the follow seven principles:

- The Workforce Development Strategy will build and embed a culture of lifelong learning and reflective practice that contributes to positioning DEET as a learning organization.
- Professional learning is integral to building and maintaining a quality workforce to improve outcomes for students and clients.
- Workforce development will be aligned to, and address the needs of, the three elements of the workforce: the system, the workplace and the individual.
- Professional learning plans for individual employees, business units and schools are explicitly aligned to system priorities and needs.
- The Workforce Development Strategy is based on mutual obligation where:
 - all staff are expected to share and apply learning
 - leadership practice and philosophy support a learning culture
- Workplaces are supported to be learning communities of practice that share and value knowledge, skills, diversity and innovation.
- Transparency and equity underpin access to, and provision of, professional learning.

NT DEET teachers have access to a wide range of professional learning initiatives, which are structure at a number of levels. These include:

1. Systemic DEET initiatives delivered and facilitated by DEET service divisions.
2. Cluster based professional learning
3. School based professional learning
4. Professional learning accessed through teacher Professional Associations
5. Personally initiated and pursued professional learning.

6. The Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP)

In the period 2003-2004 the financial resources expended by DEET on formal initiatives in items 1-4 above was \$3,448,386.63.

The three main areas of expenditure were Professional Learning and Training, Leadership Development, and ICT programs and initiatives.

1. Systemic DEET initiatives delivered and facilitated by DEET service divisions.

These systemic initiatives are tied to the DEET corporate plan, which is developed in alignment with the government plan for the future and election commitments.

Systemic initiatives include:

- Literacy and numeracy
- Implementation of the NT Curriculum framework
- Leadership development
- Integration of ICT into teaching and learning
- Implementation of the Building better schools project

Following a review of secondary education in the Northern Territory led by Dr Gregor Ramsey, and extensive public consultation throughout 2004, the Territory Government is investing an extra \$42 million during the next four years to improve secondary education and build better schools.

Building Better Schools will focus on five key areas. These are:

- Students and Learning
- Supporting the Territory's Teachers
- Indigenous Education
- Distance Education
- Building Stronger School Communities

Systemic initiatives are generally based on fostering learning communities through mentoring coaching and fostering context specific workplaces based learning. As an example the Remote ICT Partnerships is a mentoring program enabling remote based teachers to work with experienced teachers to enhance teaching and learning practices. Using a pedagogical approach, teachers work together on purposeful integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the remote school context. Participating teachers have the opportunity to work together in each other's schools; this is a key component of the program, building longer term, sustainable professional relationships. The Green Room, a dedicated

Janison's online community has been established to facilitate ongoing communication between participating teachers.

2. Cluster based professional learning

All NT DEET schools are divided into a regional cluster areas which includes a variety of schools from remote, rural to urban. There are seven clusters throughout the N.T. Clusters function as both administrative and collegial units. General Managers are appointed to manage a number of clusters eg Palmerton and Rural and Arnhem clusters.

NT DEET People & Learning Division distributes annual cluster professional learning funds. Clusters allocate and use these funds for employee professional learning according to their own context in alignment with the DEET workforce Development Strategy. In 2005 the total amount distributed was \$340,000 across the seven clusters.

Examples of cluster-based initiatives include:

- Localised networks for Special Education and in some places Behaviour Management facilitated by Student Services staff
- Cluster based People Management professional learning

3. School/workplace based professional learning

DEET has recently released a new performance Enhancement Framework that articulates the process by which individual teachers understand how they contribute to the DEET corporate objectives, and plan their professional learning and career aspirations to achieve these objectives.

The Performance Enhancement Framework enable managers and their staff to evaluate and enhance staff performance and promote continuous improvement as it is reflected in the way employees go about their core business.

The aims of this framework will be achieved by:

- making performance count
- good leadership and encouraging a culture of ongoing feedback
- recognition of achievement to promote continuous improvement.

The Framework is a uniform, simple-to-use tool designed to achieve DEET's objectives. Schools then develop a workplace professional learning plan for all staff to ensure professional learning is planned and aligned with the needs of individual teachers and the system.

4. Professional learning accessed through teacher Professional Associations

NT teachers also access professional learning through teacher professional association initiatives. NT DEET supports this through an annual grant of \$50,000 to the Northern Territory Joint Council Of Professional Associations.

5. Personally initiated and pursued Professional learning

Approved Student Status applies to Northern Territory Public Service employees seeking financial assistance or study leave to obtain or upgrade formal qualifications.

The Approved Student Status program is designed to encourage staff in the development of skills and knowledge relevant to the current priorities of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and in keeping with individual performance enhancement agreements. DEET recognises that formal studies are one way in which professional learning needs can be addressed.

Approved Student Status promotes DEET's principles of professional learning, aimed towards building a self-directed, collaborative and dynamic culture of learning, in which professional learning is relevant, contextualised, sustained and embedded in daily practice.

Tertiary Provision

Many DEET teachers currently access units at CDU in order to upgrade their qualifications from 3 years to 4 years as required by the newly instituted Teacher Registration Board and Act. Teachers resource their access to these courses through the Approved Student Status program, scholarship and bursary schemes or through their own investment.

In general CDU offers a limited number of postgraduate teaching courses as the major focus is on pre-service education.

NT DEET sees this as an area of opportunity and is collaborating with CDU to develop courses, which directly address the current needs of teaching staff. Examples include the Graduate Certificate in Education (ICT Integration) referred to above 7 (IV) and the Graduate Certificate in Accelerated Literacy. DEET is an active partner in the development of both these courses contributing both financial and human resources to their development and successful uptake.

An issue for DEET in working with CDU is ensuring the appropriate balance of academic theory and practical application in order to attract teachers to continual professional learning and address the needs of teachers who wish to change and develop their classroom teaching practice.

Many NT teachers also access postgraduate professional learning from a variety of universities from all over Australia.

Issues for NT teachers include:

- Difficulties of accessing cross-institutional arrangements
- The complicated process of recognising and accrediting (by tertiary institutions) professional learning provided by DET or teacher professional Associations

The necessity for CDU to try to attract students to their courses to maintain viability precludes students from easy access to other universities as much DEET support is tied to students accessing CDU courses.

Currently specialist courses in areas such as Vision and Hearing can only be accessed interstate. DEET critically needs more Post Graduate courses in working with students with specific disabilities including - Vision, Hearing, ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) along with student Well being and Behaviour Management.

Teachers within the NT would be better served if they had access to a pool of relevant post graduate units from all Australian universities, made accessible to them by enrolling in the University nearest or most accessible to them. In this way universities could develop specialised units but still have them viable by being accessible to teachers across Australia.

6. The Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP)

In the Northern Territory, the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP) is a federally funded, cross-sectoral program involving DEET, the Catholic Education Office of the NT (CEONT) and the Association of Independent Schools of the NT (AISNT).

The aim of the program is to provide funding to strengthen the skills and understanding of the teaching profession in the schools sector.

A significant focus of the funding in the Northern Territory is focussed on learning communities through initiatives including Building Learning Communities which are school based, context driven grants. The NT AGQTP also provides professional development related to Commonwealth initiatives such as the National Safe Schools Framework on bullying and harassment and the Gifted and Talented Professional Development Package.

Funding for the past two financial years was:

2003/2004	\$481,000
2004/2005	\$400,000