

**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO
TEACHER EDUCATION**

Submission Format

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 - I teach literacy and numeracy
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 - III effectively manage classrooms
 - IV successfully use information technology
 - V deal with bullying and disruptive students
 - VI deal with children with special needs

VII achieve accreditation

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Australian Government, through DECS, and with the non-government schooling sectors works collaboratively with the teacher training institutions and the Teacher's Registration Board to ensure provision of quality education services to students in South Australia.

This submission makes reference to specific teacher education issues that have substantial and strategic importance for South Australia and pertain to South Australia's ability to address teacher workforce supply, retention, capacity and improvement across all schooling sectors. This submission is a whole of Government submission and has been prepared by contributors from three government agencies ie the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), the Department of Further Education Employment Science Technology (DFEEST) and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (DAAR). This submission also been informed by the views of the non-government education sectors and the relevant South Australian Education Associations.

Significant economic, cultural and social changes, linked to globalisation and new communications technologies are having an impact on the work of teachers and schools. South Australia recently enacted new legislation concerning teachers, *the Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2005* and completed two significant inquiries in the education and care field – the inquiry into Early Childhood Services and an inquiry into the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). The Commonwealth Inquiry is therefore timely and South Australia is pleased to be able to provide information from the South Australian perspective.

The main themes emerging from South Australia are:

The criteria for the attraction and selection of high quality teachers need to be broadened. In South Australia there is not, at this time, a general shortage of teachers but there are specific shortages in some learning areas (languages), in some secondary areas (maths, science, technology and home economics) and in some rural and isolated locations.

There will be a growing supply problem due to the aging population in South Australia where already we have the oldest teaching workforce in Australia. (See table 1, pg 9). This, coupled with the numbers of teachers leaving the profession, impacts markedly on the continuing supply of teachers within South Australia. It is expected that the critical supply time for secondary teachers will peak during the period 2007 – 2014. Junior primary/primary teachers will only experience a relatively small supply problem in some hard to staff metropolitan areas along with some remote and regional areas during this same period due to our current oversupply in these teaching areas.

Given longer term workforce supply issues, South Australia recommends that new models and pathways be developed that facilitate entry into the profession from a wider range of cohorts and consideration be given to targeting HECS fees to areas of shortage.

The importance of university teacher educators having current school/pre-school knowledge and experiences. South Australia recommends that joint arrangements be developed to ensure that university teachers are of high quality, measured against the National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards¹ and that flexible employment options be developed to allow tertiary faculty and high quality teachers to move between universities and schools.

¹ Ministerial Council for Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) 2003 'National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards' November

The scope of the inquiry appears very narrow. In South Australia DECS is responsible for the education and care of children and students from birth to age 18 on sites ranging from childcare centres to a wide range of schooling models. The Inquiry assumes a narrow model of school provision and a narrow definition of a teacher. Teacher education courses for potential teachers in South Australian education and care sites need to address pedagogy and curriculum for the birth to age 18 perspectives.

A concern about the breadth of course content in the preparation of teachers for a range of diverse contexts. Central to development of high quality teacher capability in South Australia is core course content that includes an understanding of community contexts, and student and cultural diversity. Our current understandings of brain development in the first six years of a child's life, which set trajectories for development throughout life, highlights the need to include emotional, physical, social as well as academic components when preparing teachers. Our teachers work with a diverse student population in South Australia, in particular indigenous students and those most at risk due to trauma, poverty or disability. South Australia recommends that course content be reviewed and developed to include current understandings of culture, context, community, brain development and differentiated curriculum to meet diverse learning needs through a variety of critical inquiry approaches.

A concern that secondary teaching courses are not addressing supply and current understandings about adolescent learning needs. South Australia recommends that the Inquiry examine targeting for areas of teacher shortage, the feasibility of establishing competency in more than one specialist area, core pedagogical content to address the specific learning needs of adolescents and to developing a focus on multidisciplinary approaches.

The practical experience in the preparation of pre-service teachers requires review. South Australia recommends that a review of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers includes the optimal mix of theoretical and practical experiences, an examination of funding models, the costs to both the pre-service teacher, the host teacher, the school and the supervising teacher and resourcing models.

A concern that ongoing accredited professional learning programs for teachers are not strategic, coordinated or resourced. South Australia places considerable importance on the need to deepen strategic capacity by continually updating the skills of all teaching and non-teaching staff. The current generation of children understands differently the way the world works and with the rapid changes in society and technology, teachers need to be career-long learners. South Australia recommends an examination of post graduate teacher learning so that programs are developed to address national and state strategic priorities and also that a range of accredited programs be developed for beginning teachers and mentor/host teachers.

The full list of recommendations from South Australia is included as Attachment 1.

2. The Broad Context for Teacher Education

The implications from the changing nature of society, economically, culturally and socially, in local and global contexts, require a significant rethink about the world of teaching, schools/pre-schools, care and education. Schools are caught up in these profound changes. Some issues include:

2.1 Changes in Society

- The impact of rapid change in communication and information technologies - students are often more knowledgeable and skilled than teachers
- The wide discrepancy in the way change is experienced by students and teachers in the home, neighbourhood and community and the wider society.

2.2 The role of the teacher and teaching

- The way we view knowledge and capability is changing, understandings are fluid and flexible
- A need to continue to gain common understandings and agreements about teacher standards
- Uncertainty about performance requirements and tenure in a changing world, among staff and leadership with many staff clinging to old technologies, structures and pedagogies
- The implications that arise from an aging workforce.

2.3 The student and the school/pre-school

- The wide discrepancy between the way that the current generation of children understands the way the world works and the world views of the majority of teachers
- A still limited but growing understanding of the brain, learning and development across the range from the early years to adulthood
- The growing awareness of the importance of emotions in learning
- The need to continue to agree on benchmark requirements for student achievement
- The need for a relevant and challenging curriculum based on sound pedagogy for optimal inclusion, engagement, retention and attendance of all students
- An increasing awareness of transition points moving from one level to another and the implications for student wellbeing and engagement.

3. The South Australian Context

3.1 The context

South Australia is a place with diverse strengths and challenges. The following significant demographic statistics² give a picture of the economic, educational and social environment. These contextual components have implications for teacher education in South Australia and lead to increased complexity and challenge for schools and teachers.

3.2 South Australian Population

- By 2025 the number of elderly dependents (aged 65 and over) will outnumber the number of children (aged 0-14) in SA for the first time in history
- Of 1,467,261 persons in SA at 2001 census, 68% resided within 12 km of the coast (up 3.2% since 1991). There has been a 6.4% increase in people living within 2 km of the coast (sea change).

3.3 Teaching Profile

- There are over 35,000 registered teachers in South Australian.
- DECS employs 24,490 staff with 16,500 employed as teachers in the city and country districts
- The Non-Government education sector employs approximately 5500 teachers.
- DECS data indicates that the proportion of teachers aged 45 or over increased from 55% in 2001 to 60% in 2004 and is continuing to increase.

3.4 Child/Student Profile

- The public education system provides directly for the education of approximately 70% of the young people in South Australia, with the balance of students participating in education in the non-government independent and Catholic sectors.
- DECS preschools and schools cater for the education and care needs of 187,192 children and students
- There are currently 311,200 children and students aged between 3 and 18 in SA making up 20% of the population. This group is expected to reduce to 19% of the population by 2010 and 15.5% by 2020
- The number of students who identified as Aboriginal increased from less than 5,000 in 1994 to more than 7,000 in 2003
- Data from the Report on Government Services (2004) indicates that 4.6% of students in SA have a disability (this includes all school students). This has risen over the last 5 years from 3
- 7.6% of student in DECS schools are identified as students with disabilities ie approx 13,000 students.

² Transcript of address by Steve Marshall, chief Executive, Department of Education and Children's Services, January 2005

3.5 Specific Considerations Pertaining to South Australia

Early Childhood

In South Australia there are schools that incorporate preschool and child-care components, where teachers trained by Australia's public and private universities are teaching. South Australia is concerned with the limited scope of the Inquiry in this regard considering the vast research that recognises the importance of learning in the first few years of life.

Disabilities

Approximately 7.6% of students in DECS schools are identified, using a broad criteria, as students with disabilities (DECS 2004 Mid Year Census Statistics Update). In other States only 3% to 4% are identified as students with disabilities. In addition, it is estimated that there 10-16% of the school population are experiencing learning difficulties. Within this group there is a smaller sub-set of approximately 2-4% who would be identified as having a learning disability such as dyslexia. The inclusion of a wider range of students due to DECS Students with Disabilities Policy³, in South Australia results in greater complexities in the mainstream classroom, impacts on the nature of the learning environment and requires teacher expertise in managing a wide range of diverse student needs.

Socio-economic

South Australia has one of the most impoverished populations compared with other States. We have the most aged population which will mean that we will face a greater skills shortage sooner than other States. We also have one of the highest youth unemployment rates and a greater part-time workforce. These factors need to be considered when developing teacher education courses. An understanding of community contexts, workforce implications, together with student and cultural diversity are central to the development of teacher capability in South Australia.

Aboriginal Education

Of particular note to this enquiry from the South Australian perspective are the statements in the National Education Policy that we will *promote the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, cultures and languages to all students*. Additionally the DECS Aboriginal Strategy 2005 – 2010 places a focus on supporting indigenous students and their communities. The DECS Priorities for Aboriginal Education 2005 that we will measure success and accountability in Aboriginal languages among other areas. DECS has actively developed and promoted programs to support our indigenous students, recognising they can be at risk through poverty, isolation, health and racism. In South Australia relative to the remainder of the population the number of indigenous students in the lower age cohort is increasing.

3.6 South Australia's Strategic Directions

In South Australia, education is seen as the key to state growth. The State Strategic Plan, 'Moving Forward Together' March 2004, identifies and acknowledges the fundamental role that teachers play in care, welfare and education, and reinforces a commitment to supporting, valuing and developing teachers.

The government, non-government education sectors and teacher training institutions in South Australia have a commitment to deepening strategic capacity through quality teachers and teaching, by attracting and retaining talented teachers and by continually updating the skills of all teaching and non-teaching staff.

³ DECS 1991 *Students with Disabilities Policy*

4. The South Australian Perspective

There are a number of issues that have arisen from the consultation process that need to be highlighted. The recommendations from this Commonwealth Inquiry into Teacher Education need to reflect the specific perspectives and diverse constructs of the education communities in each state.

4.1 The Scope of the Inquiry

- 4.1.1 Overall the scope of the inquiry appears narrow in its view of the concept of school and teacher. There is an assumption that there is only one model of school provision and one definition of a teacher. Although definitions are not explicit there appears to be a very narrow view being expressed. There is an assumption that teachers are only employed in primary and secondary schools.
- 4.1.2 The importance of the brain development in the first six years of a child's life which set trajectories for development throughout life, highlights the need to include within the terms of reference those seeking qualifications to work with children of all ages.

4.2 Teacher Supply and Quality

- 4.2.1 The inquiry skirts around the issue of teacher (graduate) quality (depth and breadth of training and expertise/experience) and the university sector's responsibility to address this. The attrition rates during training and the first few years of teaching may have more to do with the ability of universities to fund for example, appropriate courses, practicums, mentors, than to address areas of shortage including the effect on numbers of students through the quotas.
- 4.2.2 A Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Committee Meeting (Webster 2004⁴) noted that 28% of year 8 mathematics teachers in Australian schools had no qualifications in mathematics and 30% of year 11 and 12 mathematics teachers had no qualifications in senior mathematics. As well it was noted that 20% of year 12 science teachers had no qualifications in the subject being taught. Unqualified instruction in these areas is likely to impact on future supply as high school graduates are less likely to continue studies in these areas if their learning has been sub-standards at the secondary level.

4.3 Learning Theory

- 4.3.1 New understandings about the brain and learning theory that require new approaches to pedagogy have not been reflected in the terms of reference
- 4.3.2 The South Australian perspective has also highlighted the lack of reference in the terms of reference to the construction of knowledge, 'essential learnings', critical inquiry and differentiated and personalised learning programs
- 4.3.3 Commitment to life-long learning is insufficient. Transformations need to occur in our thinking about learning in new settings, 'schools without walls' and in the how, when and where knowledge is constructed. Learners will need to be flexible, autonomous but collaborative, self-directed, good communicators and know and be able to articulate their intelligences.⁵

⁴ Webster, B., Wooden, M., Marks, G 2004 'The Labour Market for Australian Teachers' Making Schools Better Conference August

⁵ Australian Deans of Education 2004, *New Teaching New Learning: A Vision for Australian Education*, Report October

Comments on the Terms of Reference have been organised into discussion, issues and recommendations.

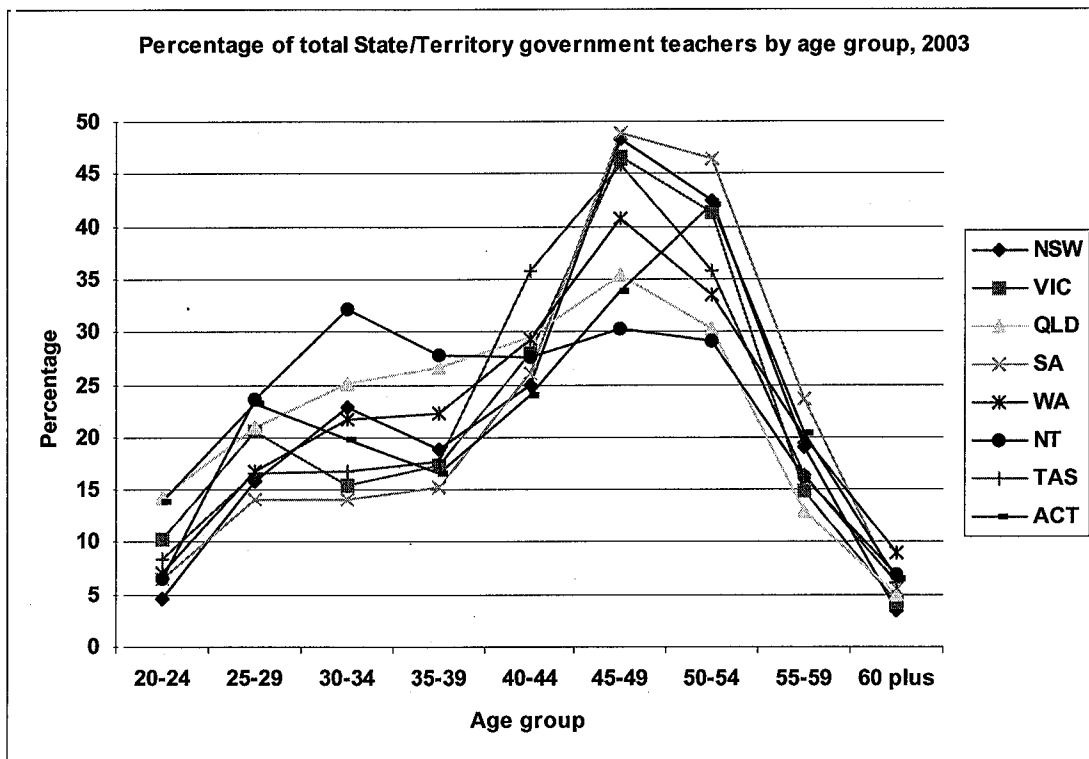
5.1 Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students of teacher training courses

Discussion

Despite shortages in particular fields and location, overall in South Australia there are sufficient numbers of people qualified to teach at the present and there is a growing interest in teaching as a career.

There will be a growing supply problem due to the aging population in South Australia where already we have the oldest teaching workforce in Australia. (See table 1). This, coupled with the fact, that 40% of the new teaching workforce appointed to permanent positions within DECS are leaving within the first five years, impacts markedly on the continuing supply of teachers within South Australia. It is expected that our critical supply time for secondary teachers will peak during the period 2007 – 2014. Junior primary/primary teachers will only experience a relatively small supply problem in some hard to staff metropolitan areas along with some remote and regional areas during this same period due to our current oversupply in these teaching areas.

Table 1



Source: Draft Demand and Supply of Primary and Secondary School Teachers in Australia – MCEETYA report relating to 2003 and SATAC Data

What is critical at this time is the ability to target and select teachers to match curriculum and geographic needs of schools, preschools and childcare centres. However the aging population will also impact, in the future, on teacher education requirements by greatly increasing the demand by specialisation and location.

Issues

- In South Australia there is an oversupply of teachers in some areas and an undersupply in others. This is not being reflected in the intake or output at university level. Anecdotally we hear that pre-service students are not accepted into courses in areas of need because they have not scored the necessary tertiary entrance score. We are not convinced that this is the only indicator that should be considered when selecting for a career in teaching.
- A lack of literacy and numeracy skills, poor interpersonal skills and aptitude impinge on the profession and therefore student achievement. A range of selection mechanisms could improve the selection process.
- There are no accountability mechanisms to ensure HECS funded places are allocated on the basis of future workforce need. There is a need to correlate employing requirements and places in the field.
- With the surge in uptake of VET in Schools programs by secondary students, it is becoming increasingly important for some qualified teachers to have had experience in various industry areas in which they may be teaching vocational units of competency or qualifications. As part of the selection process for potential teachers, the requirements for industry vocational competency for at least some teachers within the schooling sector, should be considered and a selection of students with industry and workplace experience encouraged. The Australian Quality Training Framework sets the standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO) which deliver vocational training. Standard 7.4ii states that the RTO must ensure that training is delivered by a person who is able to demonstrate vocational competence at least to the level of those being delivered. This standard should also be applicable to secondary teachers delivering vocational training in schools.

Recommendations

- 5.1.1 Develop national guidelines for selection processes for undergraduate and graduate education students to broaden the ways in which potential teachers are selected for university admission. These could include interview, portfolio, evidence of prior learning, written statements, referee statements and address issues of interpersonal skills and dispositions. Selection should be based on a combination of academic ranking and aptitude.
- 5.1.2 Consider numeracy and literacy skills testing, scientific and creative skills, interpersonal skills and aptitude in the selection criteria.
- 5.1.3 Target areas of teacher shortage by allocating HECS places according to projected areas of workforce shortage.
- 5.1.4 Consider and respond to the specific needs of mature age and career change professionals when developing revised selection criteria and develop a range of pathways for entry.

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

Discussion

It is widely acknowledged that a long career in teaching is no longer the norm, with young graduates wanting a far greater level of mobility. The reality of having several careers over a lifetime must impact on the way that we attract high quality students. Flexibility, portability and broad knowledge-ability must be sought.

South Australia has developed a range of programs and scholarships to attract students, both at school and undergraduate level, to the great number of rural and remote teaching locations that are difficult to staff. Strategies to increase the range of options for selecting staff for hard to staff schools are continually developed and applied.

Issues

- The changing nature of the labour market and career mobility means that there are an increasing number of career change professionals. To attract these people into the teaching profession it is important that a range of flexible pathways, programs, modes of delivery and locations be developed which allow scope for acceleration and facilitate greater mobility into and out of the profession
- Potential country teacher education students can find access to university study in cities problematical due to location and costs
- There is an increasing realisation amongst the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry about the role that the secondary school system plays in shaping the future education and career directions of young people. A significant number of the State's information technology teachers that teach 'publicly examined subjects' (PES) ICT subjects are male and there is no sign that this is going to change in the near or mid term future. South Australia is currently faced with less than 20% of females choosing to pursue ICT at tertiary level. Of this small percentage it is not known how many are choosing to pursue careers as ICT Teachers. Given that ICT is a relatively new discipline, in the absence of a role model in the classroom, girls are less likely to find a female ICT role model elsewhere or receive support from parents to turn to ICT from more traditional career options. Whilst it is not the only cause, it is recognised that the makeup of the upper secondary ICT teacher cohort may be contributing to that gender imbalance.⁶

Recommendations

- 5.2.1 Research the extent that conditions, locations, salaries and media negativity mitigate against the attraction and recruitment of high quality teachers
- 5.2.2 Research, design, develop and promote, in conjunction with the universities and employing bodies, a range of flexible, innovative and accelerated pathways and programs, including distance models of delivery
 - to meet the diverse needs of potential pre-service teachers including career change entrants, those in rural and remote regions and underrepresented target groups
 - to allow scope for acceleration and facilitate greater mobility into the profession

⁶ South Australian Consortium of IT & T (SACITT) 2004 ICT Skills and Environment Analysis Report commissioned by and prepared by Indra Consulting ,October

- 5.2.3 Investigate ways to redress the gender imbalance in ICT teachers through positive intervention strategies and incentives offered to females to study to become technology teachers. Work with ICT industry and ICT enabled industries to enable them to play a greater role in promoting in schools the broad skills and career flexibility offered through ICT.

5.3 Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition.

Discussion

No information gathered

Issues

No issues raised

Recommendations

No recommendations

5.4 Examine and assess the criteria for selecting and rewarding education faculty members.

Discussion

It is acknowledged that the responsiveness and satisfaction levels of future teachers are heavily dependent on the quality of their initial teacher education. Major changes to the substance and quality of that education have occurred over the past decades with a much greater emphasis on the academic component of the education program. Few of the recent inquiries into teacher education have focused on the quality and role of the teacher educator.

Issues

Concern was expressed over the connectedness that some university teacher educators have with current understandings about student diversity and motivation, school management, structures and processes and that there was little motivation, process or encouragement for movement between universities and schools.

Recommendations

- 5.4.1 Explore, research and develop ways for highly accomplished teachers and school leaders to be placed in education faculties as teacher educators for specified durations, under joint arrangements between education authorities and universities.
- 5.4.2 Examine ways to ensure that teacher education courses are delivered by a mix of university personnel and experienced teachers to ensure a balance of theoretical and practical components by developing joint arrangements between education authorities and universities.
- 5.4.1 Examine ways that academic qualifications and employment requirements for education faculty align with the Accomplished Teacher or the Leadership Professional Teaching Standard.⁷

⁷ Op cit

5.5 Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses including the teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.

Discussion

The kind of knowledge that constitutes a teacher's professional knowledge and its connection to the practice of day-to-day teaching is complex and evolving. Future teachers need to be highly skilled and flexible in meeting the changing needs of society and students. They need to be critically reflective inquirers and problem solvers, they need to understand, practice and manage positive interpersonal and relationships. They need to be able to conceptualise and articulate the theoretical and practical elements of the profession.

Primary and secondary teachers are not the only kinds of teachers. There are many early childhood courses which qualify teachers to teach children from birth to age eight in a range of institutions including childcare, preschool and schools in South Australia.

In South Australia education and care of children and students is considered from birth to 18 years of age. It is important for the inquiry to consider the extent to which our knowledge of human development and brain theory in the early years is impacting on our awareness of student achievement in future years. It is our belief, evidenced by numerous studies, that those working in care and education programs for children from birth need to be considered within the context of the inquiry into teacher education.

Issues

- Teachers need a basis for subject, level and specialist expertise appropriate to their area of teaching but they also need to know about pedagogy and how and why students learn in the environment of the school, home and community. Achieving the right balance in developing teacher education programs is important
- Explicit descriptions and definitions of a high quality teacher graduate without the development of the Graduate Level Professional Teaching Standard⁸ for teachers means that both students and employing bodies are unclear about what is required in the school setting to achieve success for staff and students
- Concern was expressed about the lack of connectedness between the universities and the employing bodies and the extent to which the universities understand and pay attention to the workplace in which teachers will need to operate, and change their pre-service training accordingly. Some areas of concern centre around understandings about:
 - differentiated curriculum – to meet the needs of different abilities in the one classroom as a result of inclusion policies and including the nature of giftedness
 - understanding the diverse cultural backgrounds of students
 - understanding brain theory, the thinking curriculum and emotional intelligence
 - using student voice in the development of programs, curriculum and classroom management
 - the need for fundamental practical skills in managing the learning environment

⁸ Op cit

- A factor contributing to the gender divide is the way in which the ICT curriculum is currently structured. The importance placed on technical competency rather than broader team based, communication, business and management competencies may be compounding the gender imbalance
- ICT teachers of both sexes need training to help in developing teaching practices and methodologies that can engage female students and students from all cultural and economic backgrounds, and which recognise the increasing demand of industry for business, communication and team skills in addition to technical skills.

Recommendations

- 5.5.1 Ensure that all teacher education programs include
- human development
 - social and emotional impacts upon learning and development
 - critical inquiry approaches to learning
 - authentic assessment and evaluation approaches
 - development of thinking curriculum
 - collaborative teaching and learning
 - effective use of learning technologies
 - effective planning to meet individual needs of children in all curriculum areas
 - meeting the needs of children with special needs
 - working with diverse cultural and linguist groups
 - utilisation of the community in programs or ‘schools without walls’
- 5.5.2 Develop and adopt National Professional Standards⁹ for Graduate Teachers as the guide for initial teacher education. These should be developed in collaboration with the National Institute for Quality Teachers and School Leadership (NIQTSL), the universities and the Teacher Registration Authorities in each state, to ensure high quality teacher graduates
- 5.5.3 Incorporate an examination of the preparation of early childhood, primary and secondary teaching graduates so they understand human development and the fact that brain development in early life sets trajectories for development throughout life
- 5.5.4 Examine the effect of gender issues on the content and pedagogy of teaching.

5.6 Examine the interaction and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines.

Discussion

An examination of the interaction and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines demonstrates the limited scope of the Inquiry and does not go far enough in capturing the possible interactions and relationships of teacher training courses, VET courses and private providers that could provide a pathway into teaching eg child care courses, business, industry, professions.

Issues

No issues forthcoming

Recommendations

- 5.6.1 Incorporate an examination of the VET sector courses, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and private provider courses to provide pathways into the teaching profession for a variety of workers particularly where appropriate first degree courses do not exist.

⁹ Opcit

5.7 Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:

- I. teach literacy and numeracy**
- II. teach vocational education courses**
- III. effectively manage classrooms**
- IV. successfully use information technology**
- V. deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families**
- VI. deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities**
- VII. achieve accreditation**
- VIII. deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments**

Discussion

The fundamental changes in society due to new technologies impact on the way that knowledge is structured, accessed and used and consequently on the traditional role of the teacher and the school. However, the organisation of the school and learning is only slowly changing. Research and new understandings about the brain, emotional intelligence and the importance of psychological and physical health and well being to learning, must inform the content of teacher education.

It is timely to completely review the nature, duration and appropriateness of the academic and practical aspects of teacher education in light of these rapid changes in technology and its impact on the nature of work, the family in society and the student cohort. However it is unrealistic to expect pre-service students to be fully proficient and this highlights the importance of ongoing professional learning in formal accredited contexts as well as at the worksite.

The Inquiry should make reference to current research, to developments and practices from other countries as well as to the practices of other professions in preparing and training people to enter their profession.

At both federal and state level, attention is focusing on improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. DECS Priorities for Aboriginal Education 2005 include measurements for achievement, attendance, engagement and well being.

General Issues

- It was considered that the message given by use of words 'deal with' in points IV, VI, and VIII, is deficit and suggests an issue/problem lies with the child
- The importance of cross cultural understandings in pre-service education courses and to the importance of advanced studies, and continuing studies, for leaders and others already in the service is not addressed
- The extent to which graduates are prepared to construct curriculum in line with national/state curriculum guidelines that meets the diverse learning styles of all students should be addressed
- Teachers need to be assessment literate as well as knowing about assessment for learning - how you assess, what you assess, data analysis and diagnosis

- The profile of students is changing all the time but the profession doesn't readily adapt or recognise this. Teaching pedagogies - what works for group of learners, why and how it works needs to be reflected in the courses
- Significance and relevance must be at the heart of the curriculum for any student if we are to expect any form of engagement. There needs to be an understanding of learning styles, brain function and current research to give teachers the best chance of meeting the needs of their students
- Concern was expressed particularly about indigenous students and particular reference was made to the "*Report on the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Policy Review*"¹⁰, especially pages 29 - 32; and recommendations 51 and 53. SA recognises the importance of the partnership between the universities, DECS as the major employer, and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (DAARE) in the design of courses for teachers of indigenous students and their delivery with federal funding
- Given the federal and state focus on improving the learning outcomes of students with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and especially on the teaching of their languages, there is an urgent need for tertiary institutions to develop Aboriginal language courses not only for prospective teachers of these languages but also for teachers currently in the system who are already part of Aboriginal language teaching teams or who would like to learn more about these languages. Current courses available in our state are usually only of a 4 week duration denying a level of proficiency equal to Asian and European languages.

Issues as identified for term of reference 5.7

I. teach literacy and numeracy;

- Pre-service teachers have indicated that they are not always provided with explicit teaching, assessment and programming strategies in literacy and numeracy and are not shown a range of ways of cater for diverse learners
- Some student teachers and newly appointed teachers may know about literacy and numeracy but not about teaching it to others. However some teachers are not sufficiently literate or numerate themselves. All pre-service students need fundamental literacy and numeracy skills to function effectively and this area should not be overlooked in favour of the more practically focussed vocational training.

II. teach vocational education courses;

- The content of education programs for VET courses need to include:
 - An applied understanding of competence and competency based education and training and Training Packages
 - Knowledge about adolescents and adults, and learning and the skills required for teaching and training
 - Competency in the use of technology for the delivery of instruction and support of learning
 - The capacity to design and manage vocational education and training programs with skills in the assessment of student learning and the evaluation of programs in a range of contexts

¹⁰ NSW "*Report on the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Policy Review*"

- A predisposition to reflect upon and to accept professional responsibility for their own continuing education with an awareness of the value of lifelong education
- The ability to analyse and think critically and constructively about current developments in vocational education and training; and expertise in communication.
- Delivery methodology for VET courses requires modelling good teaching and learning practice to be flexible and responsive to learners' individual needs including the use of ICT as a tool for delivery. It also requires recognition that VET teachers operate in a wide range of contexts - VET in Schools; TAFE institutions; workplaces - industry and enterprises and the recognition of the 'practicum' in the real work environment and link workplace mentors to the student
- Delivery of vocational training requires teacher training courses to include information about the specific teaching methodology requirements of competency based training and assessment and the need to work in partnership with industry to deliver and assess vocational training using nationally endorsed Training Packages
- Examples of good practice in VET teacher development may be found at UniSA and Charles Sturt University.

III effectively manage classrooms;

- Often it is not until graduates have had an extended opportunity to have real experience that their understanding and capacity to deal with issues in class management is refined. The graduate teacher appears to be least prepared in the practical side of class management. In part, this reflects the reduced time given to practicums. A range of components need to be addressed including student behaviour management, programming for a range of methodologies and content, the value of an integrated approach to curriculum delivery at all levels of schooling especially secondary and middle years and management for inclusion of all students.
- At the core of a teacher's role are duty of care responsibilities, and legal and legislative requirements. Teacher education should prepare teachers for an understanding of their day-to-day class and yard responsibilities as well as those when taking students on excursions, swimming, camps etc.

IV. successfully use information technology;

- Current international literature indicates that ICT plays a significant role in student learning. Some teacher education students have not received sufficient training in the effective use of technology to enhance learning. Teachers need access to research, exemplars, innovations and best practice. It is becoming increasingly important for new graduates who come to country sites to be competent using ICT which will facilitate local delivery of in particular, senior secondary curriculum; ICT like smartboards, video conferencing and use of software like centra-symposium.

V. deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families:

- Pre-service students need to be given the opportunity to learn to manage a diversity of student behaviours due to trauma, disadvantage, disability and giftedness that occur in every class and learn strategies to work with parents.

VI deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities;

- Newly appointed teachers have a very limited understanding of learning difficulties/disabilities and are unclear about how to personalise programming and to differentiate curriculum.
- The whole agenda of learning inclusion - social justice, equity, the politics of disadvantage etc- needs to be recognised and addressed .

VII. achieve accreditation;

- Experience has shown the needs of schools are not met where first degrees do not provide the breadth of experience or depth of understanding required for general classrooms. Science is an example but more specifically the design and technology learning area, which does not have a first degree within the fields taught in school, is problematic. UniSA has addressed this issue by re-establishing a four year teaching degree in Design and Technology that addresses the courses taught in schools. However, a degree does not exist for Home Economics in South Australia
- Teachers need to be able to teach more than one specialized area in secondary schools. They need the breadth of a discipline for the lower secondary levels, this could mean general science (biology, chemistry, physics, geology and integrated and applied sciences) with specialties in two for the senior years
- IT literacy is a fundamental requirement for all teachers in the 21st Century and as such should be a requisite and accredited part of pre-service teacher programs

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

- The importance of developing and maintaining interpersonal skills and quality relationships are critical for successful teachers. It is well documented that enhanced student/child outcomes are achieved where teachers, parents and the community work together. South Australia places strong emphasis on joined up governance and on building successful partnerships to support students.

Recommendations

- 5.7.1 Examine and develop ways to ensure that all teacher education programs promote as a core competency:
- an understanding of the diversity of emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs of students to improve student wellbeing, engagement and attendance
 - the nature and processes of learning including multiple teaching and learning strategies, brain theory, and constructivist approaches
 - to include elements of classroom management, countering harassment, drug education, student voice, resilience, optimistic thinking, gifted education, and physical activity.
- 5.7.2 Examine and redevelop ways to ensure teacher education programs promote an understanding of the diversity of students and their communities, focusing on cultural diversity especially indigenous students, and ensure the provision of supported practicum experiences for students in a range of settings including rural communities.

- 5.7.3 Examine and seek agreement on the feasibility of establishing competency in core and specialist content areas at secondary level and/or expect specialisation in more than one subject area.
- 5.7.4 Examine and develop ICT expertise as a core component of teacher education.
- 5.7.5 Develop and implement sustained training courses in Aboriginal languages.
- 5.7.6 Require that teacher education providers consult regularly with key stakeholders as a condition of course accreditation for the purpose of aligning content with site and industry needs.
- 5.7.7 Design higher education VET teacher education programs to build on VET certificates and diplomas offered under Training Packages and recognise the requirements for two way transfer of credit and develop relationships between the higher education and TAFE organisations to encourage joint delivery and collaborative mentoring and assessment arrangements.

5.8 Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers

Discussion

Teachers, principals, pre-school directors, administrators and policy makers in a number of inquiries, nationally and internationally, have indicated the importance of the school/pre-school experience component – the practicum - of initial teacher education. The demands of teaching are so complex that the practicum is the most effective way that pre-service teachers can fully appreciate the demands and dimensions of the profession. The practicum provides the opportunity to engage in the profession within a supported environment. As well as introducing pre-service teachers to their curriculum, management, accountability and administrative responsibilities, it is the most effective means of preparing teachers for complexities of human relationships in the school/pre-school setting.

It should be noted that the success of the practicum in South Australia is dependent on good communication between the training institutions and the school sectors and relies on the goodwill of schools/pre-schools and teacher practitioners. It maybe time for a new range of partnerships, with districts and clusters of selected schools working in collaboration with universities to design a new model for the practicum.

Issues

- Universities have difficulty in obtaining quality practicum placements for their trainee teachers but especially finding quality placements in some specialist secondary areas. Anecdotally, this may contribute to the “one third of qualified teachers who are employed elsewhere other than schools”¹¹
- The importance of students undertaking country practicums is recognised as these experiences appear to foster positive attitudes towards country service and may be the best way of addressing teacher shortages and quality in country areas.
- There are no agreed standards in regard to the design, management and assessment of the practicum experience. Consistency and clarity of purpose are expected outcomes of the practicum but the quality of the experience is varied. Students can be placed in inappropriate and unsuitable placements without adequate supervision.

¹¹ Skilbeck & Connell 2004 *Teachers for the Future – The Changing Nature of Society and Related Issues for the Teaching Workforce* p 22

- Support for host teachers is an issue. Teachers who host trainee teachers are generally dedicated teachers who devote much time, energy and passion but who still have a myriad of responsibilities within their sites. They are remunerated for hosting a trainee teacher but this is only imposing another role onto an already full time job. Currently there is poor support or incentive for teachers to host undergraduates.
- The role of the host teachers/mentors is also crucial to the success of the pre-service teacher and requires consideration in regard to selection (against an Accomplished Professional Teaching Standard). There is the need for training and support.
- Consideration could be given to second year students spending a full year in a school/pre-school placement. This will allow pre-service teachers to:
 - Decide whether they want to pursue a career in the profession. This is even more important on a personal level for students in view of the HECS tax
 - Develop an understanding of the practical aspects of class management, assessment, planning etc. This would be advantageous to their ongoing study for the profession.
 - Learn to work as team members
 - Gain a professional insight into the philosophies, pedagogy that underpins teaching practice.
- Within the government schooling sector the new South Australia District structures could play a role in practicum development in the selection of quality schools/pre-schools and staff and contextual training and development particularly in country or hard to staff areas.

Recommendations

- 5.8.1 Examine and make recommendations about the mix of university learning and the practical component at the school/pre-school site and the time allocation to each, including:
- different models for funding and structuring the practicum taking into account apprenticeship as well as internships models
 - the advantages of second year students spending a full year in a school/pre-school placement
 - the cost to pre-service teachers of undertaking practicum and the development of compensatory resources to reduce the a negative impact of the practicum on their capacity to survive financially
 - the provision of adequate funding for the supervision of rural and remote practicums including travel and accommodation.
- 5.8.2 Ensure all initial teacher education programs link strongly to schools, and in the government sector Districts, to equip students with a full range of practical skills required to commence teaching as a competent professional by developing guidelines and national standards about the length and structure of practicum and ensure an extended range of practicum experiences/internships for diversity of geographic, cultural and socio-economic location
- 5.8.3 Explore and define the role of the host teacher/mentor by:
- aligning the role of the host teacher/mentor with an Accomplished Teacher (against Professional Standards for Teaching)
 - establishing formal accreditation requirements for mentors to maximise the practicum experience for trainee teachers around current issues
 - developing a national strategy for funding release time for the teacher host/mentors
- 5.8.4 Examine the possibility of linking practicum placements with likely vacancies
- 5.8.5 Survey beginning teachers and schools to examine areas of need in the content of the practicum.

5.9 Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training

Discussion

This term of reference does not take into account early childhood teachers and demonstrates again the limited scope and exclusivity of the Inquiry. There is currently a lack of consistency across the tertiary sector about what constitutes early childhood, primary and secondary levels of teaching, with other variations also present eg. upper primary/secondary, early childhood/primary.

Issues

- There are currently significantly more primary than secondary trained teachers applying for work in the government sector. There is an oversupply of primary teachers in the metropolitan area and in some country areas in South Australia. Critical shortages are in secondary maths, science, design and technology, Home Economics, senior English and Physical Education especially in rural and remote areas. Many students use the media as an indicator of shortage areas, which can be misleading where reports overgeneralise or contain inaccuracies
- Many schools in South Australia are forced to cover vacancies in specific subject areas with teachers unqualified to teach in those areas due to workforce shortages. Quantitative data is difficult to obtain, however, teachers report that as primary trained teachers they are expected to teach secondary and teachers untrained in mathematics are required to teach this subject
- In South Australia, Flinders University has an Upper Primary/Lower Secondary Teaching course. Teachers from this course appear to have the balance of information and understanding of their role with the expectations they will face. However, there appears to be a mismatch between middle schooling teaching courses generally and the way schools are structured (eg is middle schooling 5-9 or 3-9 or 6-9?)
- The notion of developing and implementing an integrated curriculum remains a challenge, especially in the middle years. Some progress has been evident where the International Baccalaureate forms the basis of the curriculum.

Recommendations

- 5.9.1 Support universities, industry and employing bodies to work with each other with regard to clear workforce planning projection data to encourage and support students in making informed decisions about employment opportunities in specific areas
- 5.9.2 Research and make recommendations about transition points from preschool to school, the merits of multidisciplinary and multi-level approaches, the effectiveness of specific degrees at particular levels against a more generalist approach, which middle schooling programs are effective and which cohort of students should be included
- 5.9.3 Collect data about teachers working in areas outside their expertise and training to ensure alignment of teacher expertise with levels/subjects taught to support the retention of teachers in the system.

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

Discussion

The ongoing changing nature of society, the complexities of the pre-school/school setting and the limitations of pre-service teacher education means that formal and informal life long learning needs to be a feature of the profession.

The advantages of encouraging individual and group learning and the productivity gains made within organisations that invest in ongoing staff development are well documented. While DECS and the non-government schooling sectors invest in the ongoing training and development of staff in a variety of ways including the staff meeting, the issue may be about the quality and effectiveness of the learning, the accreditation of that learning, the relevance to the work of the teacher and whether staff learning leads to improved student learning outcomes.

Ongoing professional learning for teachers must be based on current research that informs effective practice with components that ensure sustainability and improvement. Outcomes may include the restructuring of physical and human aspects of teaching and learning environments.

Issues

- Concern was expressed about the extent of the support that teachers in the early years of teaching receive, their placement with mentors, their placement outside their skills area, the opportunity to articulate and communicate the intellectual underpinning of their craft, reflect and review their practice and then to continue to learn in a supportive professional learning community. One research project in Western Australia has confirmed that lack of support is a crucial impediment to beginning teachers being retained in the profession ¹²
- In an ever-changing environment, teachers must be kept up to date with developments in the business sector, ICT and the world of work. If they are to prepare young people to have the employability skills required to function successfully in the workplace, they must be aware of workplace requirements and trends. The real danger lies in the tendency for teachers to become 'cloistered' into the schooling environment and to remain unaware of the changes in the worlds of business and industry
- There is a lack of knowledge, coherence and application of the wide range of ongoing professional learning opportunities available. Partnerships which encourage pathways between universities, professional teacher associations and education systems could be developed and accessed from sites, online or on campus. A model for this type of learning could incorporate prior learning, graduate certificates, diplomas, masters degrees leading to doctorates. Since 2000 professional development for teachers of languages in South Australia has been delivered in such a model. The latest agreements/contracts also provide a career pathway for teachers of languages by locating most of the programs in schools.
- There needs to be a clear demonstration of articulation between institutions across the nation with universities/providers working cooperatively so that participants can study at any of them and be able to have such work articulated
- At the school/pre-school site ongoing accredited professional learning may not align with National and State priorities, with performance management requirements for improved capability or be based on best practice professional learning communities models
- The Professional Standards of Teachers aligned against the National Framework offer the opportunity to clearly define and describe quality teaching and post graduate and on site professional learning requirements.

¹² Sharplin E 2004 *Stopping the Flow: The quality of work life of rural and remote teachers*. Paper presented at the ACE/ACEL Conference 'Checking the Pulse' Perth WA October

- Country and rural teachers are disadvantaged by distance and the delivery of professional learning in a variety of modes (eg on-line; at sites other than the university/institution, delivery after school hours, during holiday periods, at weekends) requires investigation
- Newly appointed teachers in difficult and hard to staff schools need to be given time to understand cultural diversity and disadvantage, managing students with disabilities, the nature of harassment and bullying etc, through continued accredited learning
- The role of leaders in providing ongoing professional support to both new and more experienced teachers is not well defined or described
- Many teachers of ICT in schools have limited specialist ICT training and more needs to be done to support ongoing training especially in disciplines like ICT that are constantly changing.

Recommendations

- 5.10.1 Investigate, research and develop with the universities and employing authorities a structured professional learning program for beginning teachers to complement their pre-service education and to include mentoring, release time and accredited ongoing learning programs
- 5.10.2 Examine the nature, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning of teachers to determine best practice structures, processes and effectiveness and develop post-graduate courses to align with teacher career paths, teaching standards and systems initiatives
- 5.10.3 Examine ways to support ongoing training specifically to provide continuous specialised training in disciplines like ICT that are constantly changing
- 5.10.4 Research and make recommendations about opportunities through professional leave for ongoing learning and relevant work experience in industry/business including scholarships, release time and removal of taxation barriers
- 5.10.5 Examine ways to develop articulation between institutions across the nation so that participants can study at any and be able to have such work accredited.

5.11 Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administrations.

Discussion

No discussion

Issues

No issues

Recommendations

No recommendations