



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING

**Reference: Teacher education**

THURSDAY, 2 JUNE 2005

CANBERRA

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**  
**Thursday, 2 June 2005**

**Members:** Mr Hartsuyker (*Chair*), Mr Sawford (*Deputy Chair*), Mr Bartlett, Ms Bird, Ms Corcoran, Mr Fawcett, Mr Michael Ferguson, Mr Henry, Ms Livermore, and Mrs Markus

**Members in attendance:** Mr Bartlett, Ms Bird, Ms Corcoran, Mr Fawcett, Mr Hartsuyker, Mr Henry, Ms Livermore, Mrs Markus and Mr Sawford

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

The scope, suitability, organisation, resourcing and delivery of teacher training courses in Australia's public and private universities. To examine the preparedness of graduates to meet the current and future demands of teaching in Australia's schools.

Specifically, the Inquiry should:

1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses.
2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
3. Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition.
4. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting and rewarding education faculty members.
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.
6. Examine the interaction and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines.
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; and
  - (viii) deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments.
8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers.
9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training.
10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.
11. Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administrations.

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.

**WITNESSES**

**BRIERLEY, Mr Edward John (Ted), President, Australian Secondary Principals Association ..... 1**

**SEE, Mr John, Canberra Representative, Australian Secondary Principals Association  
Executive, Australian Secondary Principals Association ..... 1**

**TEASDALE-SMITH, Ms Wendy, Vice President, Australian Secondary Principals Association..... 1**



**Committee met at 9.40 am**

**BRIERLEY, Mr Edward John (Ted), President, Australian Secondary Principals Association**

**SEE, Mr John, Canberra Representative, Australian Secondary Principals Association Executive, Australian Secondary Principals Association**

**TEASDALE-SMITH, Ms Wendy, Vice President, Australian Secondary Principals Association**

**CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)**—Welcome and thank you for your attendance here today. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I advise you that the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. Would you like to make any corrections or amendments to your submission?

**Mr Brierley**—No.

**CHAIR**—I understand that you wish to make a statement in relation to the submission. We would be delighted to hear your remarks.

**Mr Brierley**—Before we begin, we would like to give you three documents which might help everyone to follow us on the way through. They are a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that you are about to see, an ASPA submission into the review of teaching and teacher education, and an appendix which contains some comments from teachers as a result of our surveys. You might find the comments very interesting reading. They tend to give a sense of what it is like at the chalkface. They are given to you unedited and unaltered. That is how they came to us.

**CHAIR**—Is it the wish of the committee that the documents tabled by the Australian Secondary Principals Association be received by the committee as an exhibit and authorised for publication? There being no objection, it is so ordered. Please commence your address.

**Mr Brierley**—We intend to make a four-part presentation. I will give a brief introduction. We will then commence the PowerPoint presentation, with John looking at a series of surveys we have been doing. Wendy will then take over for the beginning teacher surveys. Finally, I will conclude. The history over the last four years, and certainly before that but rather less frequently, is that our affiliates—ASPA is composed of organisations—which are the state and territory government secondary school principal professional associations, have been coming us to saying that concerns have been expressed to them by their beginning teachers about the training they have received, particularly in the areas of student management and motivation. While anecdotal comments are good, it got to the stage where we decided we would try to get some hard data on the issues, so we went into the field of online surveys. Through a company called Zoomerang—quite a few companies do this sort of thing—we have been doing surveys for a number of years on the supply of teachers to schools and the opinions of beginning teachers about their training and their induction into schools. We are not just surveying beginning teachers on what they felt

about their preservice training, we are also surveying what they feel about their support in and induction into the government secondary schools of the nation.

When this inquiry came up, the data we had about beginning teachers was two years old, being from August 2003. We thought we would quickly do the same survey again to see whether the numbers had changed. We did a second survey for a week, in which 450 teachers got involved, and we found that the numbers were following the same trends. So we are confident that the data that you are about to see, copies of which you have, does reflect the feelings of a substantial number of beginning teachers. The teacher supply survey is interesting because it indicates in which subjects and areas there is a teacher shortage. That is relevant because one of the recommendations we will be making later on will be about how we are going to overcome teacher shortages. It has to do with what subjects or training places are made available in teacher training institutions in order to overcome those shortages. We will make those comments later. First, let us look at the evidence.

*A PowerPoint presentation was then given—*

**Mr See**—The first slide introduces who we are. The next slide shows two of the survey types we have been running. There are details of approximately how many responses we get per year for the teacher supply and demand survey. As Ted said, that indicates to us where the shortages are; that is one of our ways of doing it. The other survey is of teachers in their first, second and third years out. We received over 1,000 responses over two surveys. We did it in 2003 and again this year because we get that overlap—those who were in their first year when we did it in 2003 are now in their third year of teaching. The next slide shows where the responses came from as a percentage of the total responses. For example, it shows that around five per cent of the responses came from the ACT. It also shows New South Wales, the Northern Territory and so on. It indicates the number of schools in those states and territories. As you can see, there are various trends as you go from one year through to the next. This will give you an idea of where the information is coming from.

**Mr HENRY**—There is somewhat of a variation in where the responses came from over different surveys. Is there any particular reason why there are more responses in some years than in others?

**Mr See**—There is some variation there. There have been some changes in personnel. For example, there was a changeover in Queensland from 2004 to 2005 in terms of the person who was promoting the survey's distribution, so the number of people from Queensland who filled in the survey this year was smaller, and that has a flow-on effect on the proportional distributions for the other states and territories. They are not raw numbers; they are percentages. If one is larger one year, it means that the others go down. I would not be too concerned about the trends there, but the numbers are very high. There were 386 responses in 2003, 494 in 2004 and 427 this year.

The next slide gives you an idea of how schools, when staff are away, cover their staffing needs. Internal relief is one of the main areas and external relief is another. The reason why you want internal relief is that it is instantly available. If somebody rings me up today and says, 'I'm sick and cannot make it'—and that will often happen at 8.30 am, and school starts at 8.30 am—the only way you can cover those classes is to have somebody who is either on a lighter load or



available and says, 'Look, I'll take those classes.' That is how you fill that gap. External relief is where you engage people from outside. That has an impact. As you will see later, when we try to get relief teachers in particular areas that is also a difficulty. Dispersal to other classes is another method, where we say: 'Can you take some? You can also take some. We'll move that around.'

Then there is minimal supervision. You might send the students out to the oval to kick a football around, unless it is minus five; in that case, you might tell them to go to the library. Librarians do not like that, because all of a sudden they have an influx of kids whom they are supposed to supervise, so you try not to do that. With senior secondary particularly, you may get away with cancelling classes, which is not something that you should do because it means that the service you are providing to those students is a lesser one. So it is something that you do in desperation.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—I would like to ask a question on that, and I hope I am not taking us off on a tangent. Anecdotally, it seems that many first-year-out graduate teachers who perhaps have not picked up full-time work end up on the relief roster.

**Mr See**—That is true.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—Do you have a view about whether that is of any value to those first-year graduates or whether there are any problems with it? Is that a bad introduction to teaching?

**Mr See**—It is a challenging introduction; that is probably the best way to put it. It is hard on them. But you would also say that, if they manage to survive that, they will be able to survive most things. Unfortunately, it is just one of those things. One of the other problems is that the quality of teacher varies. People who are in that sort of area can sometimes be those who are not good enough or highly enough ranked to be employed. But, also, in some areas where there is a teacher surplus, there are some excellent teachers. It tends to depend upon the subject area as to the quality of the person on the relief list.

The next slide shows where it is difficult or impossible to find relief staff. You can see the ones that stand out most are languages. If a class in Chinese has lost its teacher and needs to be covered, very few Chinese teachers are available. Technology is another area. This is a theme that runs all the way through and shows up in other parts of the survey that we talked about. There is a huge shortage of people in metalwork, woodwork, home economics and those sorts of areas.

**Ms BIRD**—I notice that 'low difficulty' applies to English. That is not a guarantee that English teachers are covering those classes, though, is it? It relates to subjects whereby somebody could more broadly claim to be able to deliver the subject—

**Mr See**—That is exactly right, and that is a thread that we picked up later on in the survey. You can see that the main ones are languages, technology and computing. Mathematics and science come next. Then you have the other areas: English and SOSE, which is studies of society and the environment. It is much easier to find people to cover classes in history and social science. You are quite right in terms of not necessarily being expert in English. Teachers of SOSE, for example, could cover English classes at a pinch. So, if you have short-term people,

you can cover short-term vacancies, as long as the teacher is—what did somebody say?—upright and breathing, or something like that.

On the next slide, subject expertise is shown. We investigated this idea. The teachers who are employed in our systems are trained teachers but they may be lacking in subject expertise. We define 'subject expertise' as being a teacher who has no training in teaching the subject area. That is, a maths teacher might come in and be asked to take a science class but has not been trained in how to teach science, although they may have science in their background, or have not passed that subject at the second-year level. It may be that they did some science in first-year university but not in second-year university.

Using that as a guide, we move on to the next slide, in which we refer to the arts people. If they are teaching outside their subject area or area of subject expertise, which areas did they come from? This one needs some careful analysis because there are a percentage of schools with more than 20 per cent of their classes being taught by teachers lacking subject expertise. There are quite low percentages there. When you think about putting that across Australia, that is a significant number of young people who are not gaining teaching by teachers with that particular subject expertise. In the areas of mathematics and computing, it is a concern. In fact, you could almost say there are a number of areas in which you have that concern. Languages are another area. If you look at computing and languages, they are consistent with the slides you have seen previously.

**Mr HENRY**—Do you have hard figures on that in terms of the number of students?

**Mr See**—We could work those out. We can estimate those.

**Mr HENRY**—That could be useful.

**Mr See**—We did some crunching there. I am a bit hesitant about saying exactly how many we would think, but we estimate that it could be up to 19,000 students across Australia. The thing which was also interesting was that we did a similar presentation to DEST last week. We had principals from the government and non-government sector, primary and secondary, there. The non-government people came up and spoke to us and said, 'We have similar problems.' They want to be involved the next time we run this survey, so we can get across the whole government and non-government systems. It is important because the universities provide teachers to both systems.

**Mrs MARKUS**—Have you measured the difference between states or areas? Is this fairly consistent across the board, or are there variances?

**Mr See**—There are variances but only minor ones. The biggest differences tend to come between whether or not the school is in an urban area, a regional area or a remote area. The urban areas are the metropolitan areas. The rural areas are places like Dubbo: the larger outlying centres. Then there are the remote towns, which would include Wilcannia and Brewarrina. I am sorry about using New South Wales examples, but that is where I am from. You get greater differences when it comes down to regional areas within the states rather than differences on a state by state basis.

**Mrs MARKUS**—I gather that the more rural and remote percentages would be higher.

**Mr See**—Yes, significantly higher.

**Mr Brierley**—But there are patches in metropolitan areas too in which it is difficult to staff schools.

**Mr See**—That is in the area where, at best, the school may have only 20 per cent or 25 per cent of their classes covered by somebody who lacks subject expertise up to 100 per cent. In some of those remote schools it is almost at that level.

I will move on to the next slide. One of the things that we did find, though, was that some schools were in fact deliberately employing people without that subject expertise, or at least with a broad range of subject expertise, because of middle school practices. Basically, they are trying to minimise the amount of change that happens in the secondary area. You can probably remember in your own time you would go from English to mathematics to science, and you would have a different teacher each time.

What they are trying to do is to break down that sense of dislocation that happens at the end of each period—especially if you have 40-minute lessons—and the large number of people they see. So they say, ‘Let’s have one teacher teaching the bulk of their subjects to them,’ so it looks more like a primary school environment and that eases the transition into high school. We asked people, ‘Do you do that with broad subject expertise or lack of subject expertise?’ In the responses, 41 per cent of the schools said they do and 59 per cent said they do not. That was consistent for 2004 and 2005. The first time we asked that question was in 2004.

**Ms BIRD**—It would be interesting to have satisfaction surveys for beginning teachers in the different models too.

**Mr Brierley**—We do not have that, but we could put it in.

**Ms BIRD**—Perhaps in the future, yes.

**Mr See**—I will move on to the next slide. This shows you a comment in that regard made by a principal: ‘I would prefer to select a teacher who can teach children over a subject specialist who has not been able to demonstrate the appropriate teaching methodologies or develop the appropriate relationships.’ In other words, they are going for people who are empathetic and can connect with kids rather than somebody who perhaps has a high-flying PhD in this area but cannot for the life of them connect with the kids.

**Mr Brierley**—The reason we try to get qualified people in front of classes is the greater subject depth, which goes directly to developing activities which engage students, but the teacher needs to have the interpersonal skills to do that. So we need two things: passion and subject knowledge.

**Mr See**—The next slide sets out a comment made by another of our principals: ‘As many subject areas have been watered down—for example, mathematics and history—as there is a lack of expertise and a love of teaching the subject, this often means that students do not elect to

continue with studies in those areas.’ Mathematics is probably less affected than history, because history is perceived to be more of a peripheral or elective type subject. However, most kids know they have to do maths so they grit their teeth and bear it. But with history, if they can speak with their feet by going to a different subject area where there is a teacher with a passion and a real love for that area, they will go there. Students follow the teacher.

**Ms BIRD**—With maths in years 11 and 12 there is a huge drop-out rate—which perhaps reflects the problem if people do teach for a long time in that area—and there is no ability to express with your feet your view of the quality of the teaching.

**Mr Brierley**—But it does come through later on, so hold your fire.

**Mr SAWFORD**—There is a problem in mathematics. Twenty-five years ago, we had 100,000 students doing pure mathematics and logic at universities. The figures these days show there are fewer than 16,000. I do not know what the figure is this year, but last year it was fewer than 16,000.

**Mr Brierley**—And it is getting worse.

**Mr SAWFORD**—That is a national disgrace, in my view, and it must cause great pressures.

**Mr Brierley**—We would agree with all that; hence this is leading to better targeting of places in teacher training institutions.

**Mr SAWFORD**—We can come back to that question later.

**Mr Brierley**—Yes.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Certainly the review that was done into the teaching of maths, science and technology looked at those issues on qualified teachers teaching the curriculum. It linked that to engendering passion in young people in their subject area. So it is certainly linked; there is no question about that.

**Mr See**—Related to our discussions about variations across the country is the next comment: ‘Often in country areas you have no choice; you make do with what you are given; it is improvisation.’ A friend of mine was here in Canberra and teaching hospitality. They went to a remote school and ended up teaching Japanese. She had been to Japan once, so that is how she got it. She did it extremely well, but that was part of the issue.

The next slide is: ‘What do you do if you do not have?’ If in my school I cannot find a technology teacher, I will say that I have to cut that subject area. You can see that the languages, technology and computing areas have been affected badly by curriculum culling—that is what we are calling it. The reason we have put the actual number of schools involved there is that we believe it is cumulative. Once you have cut a subject area, you rarely reintroduce it—unless you suddenly get a gun teacher in that area. You then say, ‘We’ll give this another go; we’ll fly this and see how it goes.’ Particularly in the technology areas, I would say that, with the decrease in the number of subjects, it may well be that there are not an awful lot of subjects to be lost. There

is a concern about the number of teachers coming through who can teach woodwork, metalwork and automotive skills. There are not as many of those as there should be.

**Mr Brierley**—The languages issue has been boiling along for 10 years. We have been harping on this for about that long, and it is getting worse. Rome is burning and people are fiddling. We are at the stage now where people are making conscious decisions about languages and we need to do something drastic quickly.

**Mr BARTLETT**—Is that across all languages or more the Asian languages?

**Mr Brierley**—No, that is across all languages.

**Mr BARTLETT**—So it is the traditional French, German et cetera.

**Mr Brierley**—Yes. It is made even worse by the ageing of the teaching profession. Those in the group teaching European languages are now retiring, and there is not the preponderance of European languages within the younger group as was the case 30 years ago.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I have a question about computing. Except for the blip in 2004, is it a general trend that the loss of subjects in the computing area should be occurring less and less?

**Mr See**—I think what is happening there is that, as the students are coming through, they are more and more skilled in the computing area. In the past a lot of those computing subjects would be things like using Word, Excel, databases and those sorts of things, whereas now the kids are learning those things much earlier and, as they get into the secondary area, they are no longer as much of a buzz to do. There was also a pop there a couple of years ago.

**Mr Brierley**—Also, the teaching of it is changing from ‘a subject’ to it being used throughout. So I am not too worried about computing.

**Mr See**—The next slide has a few comments about curriculum culling: ‘Some desperations. Two years of studying and still no second technical studies teacher. We are frequently using primary school trained or primary trained teachers. LOTE’—this was one of the earlier ones—‘has not been offered for several years now.’ There used to be languages other than English and now they have been renamed ‘languages’ to indicate those sorts of areas. That is where some of those people are going.

When we asked what they thought about the quality of their first-year-out teachers, there was some good news. By and large, across the three years that we have been doing it, the quality of excellent to good first-year-out teachers is pretty high. In English it is well above 80 per cent. In mathematics it is 70 per cent but going lower as you go into February 2005. Sciences are between 70 per cent and 80 per cent, so that is not too bad. At the same time, if 20 per cent of your teachers in science are satisfactory or unsatisfactory, that has a fairly significant flow-on effect in your science faculty areas.

**Mr HENRY**—What sorts of questions were asked to evaluate quality?

**Mr See**—We said straight, ‘Could you rate the quality of your first-year-out teachers as excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory?’

**Ms BIRD**—When they rate someone as excellent, they are saying they are an excellent teacher. So those who are satisfactory may become excellent, they may just need more experience and development. That is actually a very good picture overall, isn’t it?

**Mr See**—Yes. It is a good news story. We were quite surprised at that—pleasantly surprised too.

**Ms BIRD**—It is not because they are a warm body that they are rating them as excellent.

**Mr See**—Exactly.

**Mr HENRY**—The point I was getting at concerned their subject knowledge as well as their teaching capability.

**Mr See**—It would have covered all of those things. To be fair, it may well have been different for different people. If somebody were, say, making a judgment when rating me, it might be because of my warm empathic nature and friendliness and things like that. But, with Ted, they would probably think about his subject expertise and passion for the subject area. It may be different for different people. We did not tease that out.

**Mr Brierley**—In addition, there is a point about mathematics being the lowest—and it relates to what we talked about before. Student engagement is very important, and principals tend to rate teachers on how well they relate to their class and how successful they believe they are in engaging their students. That is one indication of the fact that we need to do something about mathematics education in teacher training.

**Mr FAWCETT**—Sharon’s point is valid. At many schools that I have gone to, particularly in regard to female phys ed teachers, if there is a warm living body there the school is happy. Could you add value to that data by asking not only what the incoming person is like but also whether they had someone in that role beforehand. I have been to some schools and seen some beyond-middle-aged women trying to take kids for PE. If you had a young person coming qualified to that school, they would be overjoyed to have someone there. Whether the position was filled previously may add some context to the answer.

**CHAIR**—The students seem to assess the quality of their training at a lower level than the schools assess the quality of training of the teachers they receive.

**Mr Brierley**—I think the principals look to the generic skills of the person and believe that the subject skills or content knowledge can be added on the way through. But, if you do not have the goods right from the start, then you will have trouble. I think what they are saying is what is known all over the world about Australian teachers: they are resourceful, innovative and willing to give things a go. I tend to do things differently from the way John does them, but we can certainly check this out in future surveys. They are saying that the young people who are going into their schools are good young people who will be good teachers and who are doing okay at the moment and will improve.

**Mr See**—In fact, later on, in the beginning teacher survey that Wendy will talk about, we find that young teachers are saying that they learn a lot more about teaching their subject area and even about the content in their subject area on the job, far more than they do at university.

**CHAIR**—That is probably the same in every profession.

**Mr See**—Yes. Learning the job on the job is one of the best ways. At the end of the survey, we asked people whether there were any comments they might like to make. This was one that we received quite often.

**Ms BIRD**—What is so special about ‘vertical’?

**Mr Brierley**—They cannot reach the chalkboard.

**Mr See**—That can be an issue.

**Mr SAWFORD**—It is called contextual humour.

**Mr See**—That is the desperation that people were having or being met with. That really reached out to us at that time, which is why we have kept plugging this particular survey and have kept pushing this into as many forums as we can.

**Ms CORCORAN**—Do you see any conflict between that slide and the one we have just seen?

**Mr See**—You would have to say that, compared with some of the comments by teachers on the previous slide, this person may well be in a remote school or, as Ted said, in one of the metropolitan schools that are hard to staff.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—This particular part of the survey is about teacher supply and demand. Principals are thinking teacher shortage, whereas later we ask them to teach. That comment would not necessarily relate specifically to that last question. It was at the end, like any other type of additional comment.

**Ms CORCORAN**—I understand that. It just seems to conflict. I do not know how typical that comment would be.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—That relates to replacement teaching, though.

**Ms CORCORAN**—Is that about replacement teaching?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes.

**Mr See**—No. There was a theme that ran through there. Perhaps 70 per cent of your first-year-out teachers are excellent but, when you think about trying to get somebody on a short-term contract or on a contract for a term or something like that, it is extraordinarily difficult. For example, at the beginning of this year, we ran out of English teachers, which was a surprise. You may have noticed on one of the earlier slides how the trend in English seemed to be going up,

with a larger number of people without English expertise covering classes. The number of English teachers we had available to take classes suddenly dried up. That is when that frustration starts to build and you say, 'We desperately need to do something.' There is a significant level of frustration with finding these teachers. In the first influx, when you first get your staff in, things are okay until people get sick, take unexpected long service leave, retire and so on.

What we are talking about there relates to the quality of first-year-out teachers, which was very good. But then you have to ask: with the full range of teachers, what does your whole group look like? As Ted said, the staff in our schools are pretty good and very resourceful. They will take areas outside of their subject expertise to look after the kids in their class.

**Ms CORCORAN**—There isn't an element of this person finally finding a first-year who is prepared to come to his or her school, saying, 'Thank God for that; I'm going to praise them up.'

**Mr Brierley**—When you get the opportunity to talk to principals in country areas, you should ask them how easy it is to get staff. I think you will be told that it is increasingly difficult.

**Ms BIRD**—From your survey of principals, we have commented that some things are similar across all professions at present. The other similarity is that people seem to have a higher expectation of new people coming into a profession—that they will be fully competent as they come in. Has there been a change in principals' expectations? With a new teacher, the mentoring model used to have a much greater interventionist component.

**Mr Brierley**—If anything, it is the opposite. I think principals realise—schools certainly are saying it—that the environment in which they operate now is more difficult than it used to be; the social problems are more difficult in that they seem to be more extreme. That means it is more difficult for teachers. To their credit, departments have asked schools to become better at induction programs and at support, and schools have done that. But, as you will learn shortly, that is patchy around the nation. So it is a more difficult environment. I know that principals understand how difficult it is. We do not expect them to be an expert on day one, but there are issues of duty of care; we do expect them to be able to maintain order and a safe environment. That is one of the issues about training.

**Ms BIRD**—Particularly if their introduction is through casual, irregular teaching when you are trying to induct them.

**Mr Brierley**—Yes, which makes it very difficult because they have not got the support mechanisms around them.

**CHAIR**—Members, I might ask you to hold your questions for now so that ASPA can get through the submission.

**Mr Brierley**—We will now change over. While we are changing over, I will introduce you to Wendy Teasdale-Smith, who is the 2004 national award winner of Principal of the Year.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Thank you. As a result of our teacher shortage survey, the quality of beginning teachers and associated issues came out from many of our affiliates. We decided to ask teachers in the first three years of their teaching experience to log on and become involved in



one of our online surveys. So the respondents here are beginning teachers versus principals. As you can see, it is a very similar kind of model to the teacher quality and supply survey: 20 questions, multiple choice and rating scales. We had 604 responses in 2003. We had the survey open for several weeks. But we did a very quick and dirty survey so that we could give you current data. This survey was open for just a week, during which we had 459 respondents, which we think is pretty damn good. It says something about beginning teachers thinking this survey is really important as well, otherwise they would not bother to spend the time to go to the computer room and log on and do the survey.

The next slide gives a bit of an overview to give you a sense of where the people were in terms of their experience. It also needs to be remembered that we tend to have a bit of an image in our mind about beginning teachers being young. A number of beginning teachers now are mid-age or not so young. This slide shows the years that the respondents came through. We had slightly more, in August, people in their first year, with slightly less between their second and third and slightly more in their second and third years, but there is a reasonable similarity in numbers, as you can see.

The next slide relates to one of the questions we asked them—whether they were currently teaching any subjects for which they lacked subject expertise. We worry about the term ‘unqualified’ because it is just too large. So we define it and use the same definition as we did for the teacher supply survey. As you can see, according to that data, slightly less percentage-wise are doing so in 2005 than they were in 2003. However, when you think about it, that is a reasonably large number of teachers who are in their first three years and just trying to come to terms with the business of teaching without also having to teach outside of their subject area.

The other thing is the business about contract teachers. If I say to a contract teacher, ‘Will you teach X, Y or Z?’—assuming that it is not a language they cannot speak—they usually say yes, whereas my more experienced teachers will say no. So there is a whole power thing there. I had experience of that last term. I had a brand-new first-year-out teacher teaching year 12 legal studies to two classes, with 30-odd in each class, because a teacher of mine with 20 years experience refused to do so; he said that he was not qualified.

The next slide shows the types of subject areas that these beginning teachers are saying that they are teaching. As you can see, it is quite low in languages for obvious reasons: you do not just throw anyone in to teach Japanese.

**Mr Brierley**—These are areas in which they are not qualified to teach.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—These are the areas they are teaching in without subject expertise. Obviously, language is fairly low. Not surprisingly to me, English, SOSE and maths are fairly high. I know from South Australia that the most frequently taught subject without subject expertise is SOSE. So there is a bit of an assumption that anyone can teach SOSE, particularly if you are in a language-rich type subject. It is something that makes SOSE teachers who are trained quite annoyed. But you do tend to say, ‘Take the society and the environment class as well,’ and they will usually do so.

**Ms BIRD**—Do you split it between years 7 to 10—pardon my state bias—and years 11 and 12?

**Mr Brierley**—No, but I think we will have to.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes, to make a difference. We suspect—this is gut feeling versus any data we may have—that they would be teaching more in the junior years. But, like I said, my current experience is with that first-year-out teacher who went straight into year 12 legal studies classes. So it is not unheard of. You can see that is quite a concern. Mathematics has been raised on many occasions. I think it is also important for us to say that mathematics and science get a lot of PR around the issues when it comes to teaching—unqualified teachers and students not choosing those subjects—but they are not necessarily the only subject areas. I think it is important to note that, as you can see, we often have issues with English and society and the environment also. Maths and science are not the only subjects that have these difficulties.

Just before we move on, Ted and I had a debate the other day. I said, ‘A maths teacher really should be able to take year 8 science, for example. They are maths trained and should be able to manage year 8 science.’ But Ted, being the science man he is, made the important point that, when they do that, they then do not do any practical classes with the students because they do not feel confident, so lessons become more boring and students are less likely to continue.

**Mr Brierley**—It is the best way to kill off science.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—So it is those sorts of things. When you are not in your area of subject expertise—I have taught many subjects for which I am not qualified—you struggle and you are never really very good at it; you would probably be five out of 10 at teaching outside of your subject field. When you are in your subject field, you know what you are doing and you are much more likely to engage students.

**Ms BIRD**—One hopes!

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes, one hopes. We wanted to check with new teachers, these people in their first three years, how they found teaching. We asked a couple of questions in 2005 that we did not ask in 2003 for a variety of reasons. This was one of them. We wanted to say, ‘How is it? How is it going? What are you thinking of it? How are you finding it?’ As you can see from this slide, the majority of respondents are saying ‘as expected’ and they are leaning to the left of the graph, which is also a positive thing. It is a bit better than they thought it might be, and for a few it is much better than expected. Of course, they might have had really low expectations; they might have thought it was going to be awful. However, let us think of it in a positive light. It is leaning to the left, but the ‘worse than expected’ rating is from just over 10 per cent of the respondents. If they are saying that in their first few years, are they likely to stay in teaching and how engaged will they be? They are the questions. We found that quite an interesting—

**Mr SAWFORD**—But it is a bell graph, nevertheless.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It is a bell graph; that is right. The next slide shows comments about teaching. We have just picked out a few comments, obviously, to highlight the gist of the feeling that came through. We have included a cross-section of those in the papers we have given you. We know you are busy, but we would like you to make the effort to read the comments because they are things people have typed in and they will give you a real sense of how they are feeling. When you read some of the comments, your heart hurts a bit because you know the person is

really struggling; or you will read something really positive and think, ‘Wow, that person is really turned on to teaching.’ It gives a qualitative feeling to the data and moves it away from just graphs. You will get a sense of the person in the classroom and how they are going. This is one comment I find really interesting: ‘It is an enjoyable job which is never boring. I find it rewarding, fast paced and ever changing and very scary if I don’t keep up with all aspects of the job.’ I feel like that as a principal, so I think that sense of being a bit overwhelmed is quite common in the first few years. You can relate to that, can you?

**Mr SAWFORD**—A bit of creative tension.

**Ms BIRD**—One would think that is a perfect job description for the current generation, who do not want to be bored and who want to be fast paced.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—That is true. It has something for everybody—that is the advertising campaign!

**Mr SAWFORD**—You are talking to a group of people who do this all the time.

**Mr HENRY**—Having just scanned the comments, though, that would seem to be one of the more positive ones.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It is. That is right. You get a real sense of people’s issues when you look at the comments.

**Mr Brierley**—By the way, that represents only about a third of the comments. We have removed other similar comments.

**CHAIR**—But that is a good cross-section.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes. It gives you a feeling for the sort of weighting you can give the types of comments. Another comment shows how people are feeling: ‘The highs are higher than I thought they’d be, but the lows are much lower, and I have really struggled with some of the realities of bureaucracy and student ability combined with the multiple demands of a teaching day.’ One thing that came through very strongly was that they were not expecting the amount of ‘administrivia’ that is associated with teaching. You have to fill out student behaviour management forms, this form, that form and reports. They were not prepared for the amount of paperwork and associated ‘administrivia’ that goes with the reality of the job. Also—and we will go to this later—it came through very strongly that there were issues around not being ready to look after students; student behaviour management was a real feature for people in their first three years.

The next slide is very interesting. We did not ask this question of teachers in 2003, because it did not occur to us. A number of people in their first three years said—and this is one of those unexpected outcomes that can come from research—that they were in a leadership position for which they felt ill-prepared. We asked them, ‘Are you in a leadership position?’ These people are in their first year, as you can see. We range to 25-odd teachers who are in their second and third years. Obviously it is not always a negative thing, but it does concern me in the sense that in their first three years they are supposed to be learning the craft of teaching; I really do believe

that is when you learn it. If in those first few years you are not concentrating on that, you can get sidetracked. This probably comes from a personal perspective: I think it is tied up with being on contract in your first few years. The teacher to whom I referred who took legal studies classes has to be stopped from doing other things, because he wants to impress and wants to get a good report. I say, 'Just teach these classes well. That's what I want you to do. I don't want you to take mock trials. I don't want you to take debating and so forth.' It is about focusing on teaching.

As I mentioned earlier, we also talked about people who are no longer young, people for whom this is a second career—this is a mid-life crisis career or whatever, a change of life career. You could say, 'They may have come in with a whole amount of management experience, so why shouldn't they take on a leadership position?' As I have said, it is not always bad. However, again I would say that they are supposed to be concentrating on teaching and learning.

We also asked them, 'What kind of job?' As you can see, they have answered 'year coordinator'. That means they are in charge of other people's student behaviour management problems. 'Teacher in charge of a faculty or department'—this comment concerned us because they are supervising other teachers. They are making judgments about other teachers' teaching practices and supporting them to teach better. Some people in their first year are already doing that, let alone people in their second and third years. That is quite a concern. Some comments were like this one: 'I'm looking after my faculty and I am not up to it.' Even people in their first three years can be managing the poor performance of other teachers. That means they may be involved in the process of sacking other teachers, which I think is pretty overwhelming when they are trying to get on top of their own teaching.

We then asked about 'other'. You can see that 'other' is high. We were smart enough ahead of time to ask, 'What does "other" mean?' That is a cross-section of the types of responsibilities people put under 'other'. As you can see, there is sports coordinator and there is sole faculty member. That can happen in a number of schools. It may be in language or in drama. You are the only teacher in that faculty with any background in it, so you do all the ordering; you do the whole thing. Then there is IT admin staffing officer. 'Coordinator' referred to education coordinator, student inclusion. They are leadership positions for which they are taking responsibility.

Moving to the next slide, we then asked them to rate universities in a variety of areas. These graphs are what people have said in terms of excellent to very good. It is a top range, whereas in the pamphlets or packages we have given you we have the cross-section. So you can look at the graphs, from 'lousy', although that is not the word we used—

**Mr See**—'Unsatisfactory'.

**Mr Brierley**—'Could do better'!

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Could do better—'unsatisfactory' right through to 'excellent'. We asked, 'Are they very good or above?' As you can see, you have there 'achieving accreditation', 'successful use of IT', 'teaching vocational education'—we thought you would be interested in that.

**Mr Brierley**—Pages 8 and 9.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—We have linked these to your terms of inquiry. As we all know, people give vocational education teaching a fairly low rating. Then there is teaching of numeracy and literacy. The next graph deals with the same sorts of issues regarding universities. It moves on to stakeholders and dealing with students with special needs and/or disabilities, right through to effective classroom management and teaching effectively.

Once again, these graphs are excellent to very good. When you look at the graphs across the back, you will see that they lean to the right, and they are highly rating them in terms of being satisfactory or unsatisfactory. That is the other end obviously, so they are not rating them terribly highly along those kinds of areas. You can see that teaching effectively is rated pretty low in those graphs.

One of the quotes that we have included to get a feeling of the sorts of things that people were saying in their first three years was:

My degree was very poor preparation for my career. To learn these things I have relied on the kindness of workplace mentors.

One of the things that came through very strongly in this research was about things people learned from the teacher at the desk next to them. They rated their line manager or supervisor quite highly, but the person they car pooled with, the person they had lunch with or whatever also gave them a lot of advice, support and mentoring in terms of their teaching practice. We think that is a very important thing that is not acknowledged at the moment.

We also asked them to rate schools. We did not just ask whether universities were doing well, we also asked whether schools were doing well—we thought we were very brave and courageous. This graph shows the universities on the left-hand side—they are the university ratings for 2003 and 2005—and the schools are on the right-hand side. As you can clearly see, in terms of preparation for the content and teaching of the major areas, schools are rated much more highly by teachers in their first three years. These are also the excellent to very good figures, so it is those higher ratings versus the average ones. For preparation for teaching in the minor areas, the rating is pretty even-stevens, as you can see. However, there is a clear indication from beginning teachers of how they feel about the school's role in preparing them for teaching or the process of it.

The next slide shows a few more areas regarding preparation. Curriculum documents are on the left-hand side, then assessment strategies, then professionalism and then legislation and policies. When we put this survey together we struggled with the concept of professionalism. We kept wondering whether they would get it. We thought sometimes the question does not make sense when you do it in practice. It was about talking to teachers about what it means to be professional. We were also conscious of that in terms of country locations, because sometimes teachers—particularly young ones—can go to country locations and not realise that it is a fishbowl. Some of the conduct that they might get away with in anonymity in the city they will not get away with in the country, and that can greatly harm the way they operate. There were also some other kinds of concepts.

**Mr Brierley**—This came out of some anecdotal comments in our first survey that said, 'Nothing prepares you for the bush; university certainly did not.' I do not blame universities for

not preparing them for the bush; no-one really can. It was the concept of stretching it further to say: 'What does it mean to be a professional teacher? What does it mean to be a professional teacher in a fishbowl?' You have an obligation to learn with other teachers—that is, it is a team approach. There is your capacity to understand that you are there to identify the learning needs of kids, to devise a program to cater for those needs, to deliver and manage that program, and to evaluate what goes on. They are the sorts of things we are talking about regarding the professionalism of teachers and all of the links they have to make in order to do those sorts of things successfully. We put that in the question as a sort of descriptor about what it meant. This really gets to the business of what it is to be a teacher and what the obligations of a teacher are.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—The next graph is probably the strongest in terms of managing students—which is on the left-hand side. You can see that schools are being rated by the teachers in their first three years as being far more effective in terms of managing students and preparation for teaching. One of the strongest comments around feeling ill-prepared was the business about student behaviour management and what universities were not getting teachers prepared for, and people were feeling let down in terms of that. I think that is the hardest thing you do in your first few years.

**Mr FAWCETT**—Do you have any data? Obviously nobody collected surveys like this 50 years ago, but is there any indication within literature and the teaching profession regarding the attitudes 40 years or 60 years ago of new teachers to behavioural issues?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—There is nothing really. We suspect the issues are different, and that is about the changing of our society. Some of those issues, which we will speak of a bit later on too, are the reality of dysfunctional families and the other social issues that we all face. There is also an increasing breakdown in society. At one stage, when there was more community, the sports coach, the local priest and the person at the deli also helped bring up the child. Now, of course, schools are often the only village that the child has, and so a lot of those pressures of being a psychologist, psychiatrist, marriage guidance councillor or whatever also come back to schools. Also, we are crammed. For example, one of the latest things is teaching kids not to gamble. It is one of the many new things we deal with all the time. When anything goes wrong in society, schools need to do something about it. That is an issue for us.

**Mr Brierley**—There would be research articles on that issue. After being a teacher in schools for 35 years, I can say that what happened in schools 35 years ago, as you well know, was far different from what happens now. Nowadays a teacher cannot walk into a classroom and expect respect immediately. It depends a lot on school tone, and that is up to the principal and the staff working together to a strategy which they find effective to control the culture. But, if you are in a difficult or challenging school where that is not working, you cannot command respect purely by the fact that you are a teacher—you need to earn it. That is why these student management techniques are much more vital today in training than they used to be.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—The next slide shows a quotation from one of the respondents:

If it wasn't for [school based] prac, then most of my fellow students would have left the degree, as this was the only hands on part of the course that really did prepare us for the 'real world.'

We found that ‘real world’ comment funny because often we are told that school is not the real world that beginning teachers clearly see it as.

The next graph looks at, once again, 2003 and 2005, in terms of ‘excellent’ to ‘very good’ for induction and early employment experiences. The categories include ‘Induction/training—employment authority’, ‘Formal induction in schools’, ‘Informal induction in schools’, ‘Support by immediate supervisor’ and ‘Support from colleagues’. That last one is the point I raised earlier: teachers are saying that they get help from their faculty coordinator or whatever, but it is that person at the desk next door. That is something we point out and have placed very high up in our recommendations. The last category is once again to do with professionalism: ‘The prevailing work culture—workplace’. If you do not get an idea of the culture of a school early you can get yourself into difficulty.

**Mr Brierley**—I think the second category indicates that schools have a long way to go in supporting teachers. It is very patchy. Some schools do it very well; other schools do not have programs.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—The next slide has the comment:

I have benefited greatly from the support and patience offered by the staff at my present school. This has made it a less daunting experience and made my first year of teaching a pleasure.

That relates to the business of how new teachers go. The next slide has comments about induction:

The universities taken no interest in us once they have taken our money, pumped us out into a field (sic) ... and prepares us so little for what really happens out here. (sic)

There are some very damning comments about universities: ‘They have such little care for us,’ and things like that. When you read some of those you realise there are some very angry people.

There were some unexpected outcomes in both the first and second survey. The issue of retention was raised strongly in both; we had not expected it in the first one. A concerning number are already talking about leaving the profession in their first three years. That issue of teacher retention is a major one in terms of teacher supply and demand. Another issue we have picked up on is people being ill prepared for leadership roles they are undertaking. Another issue was people being unprepared for teaching in rural and remote locations. I know, for example, that Flinders University has a program that looks at preparing teachers—

**Mr SAWFORD**—We are going to see that.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—I think it is very worth while. My understanding is that it is excellent. In terms of preparing teachers for life, they go out there, do it and show them what it is like. I think it is very good. Another issue was that they are overwhelmed by the bureaucracy and the reality of student behaviour management. Big things came out of this issue and we have got to do it better. If we can, it would make a big difference to teachers, I believe.

Our recommendation to you as a result of these surveys is that we want to improve the quality of teacher training by placing a greater emphasis on conducting teacher education in schools—for example, an internship model. Why are universities training teachers for the business of teaching when, really, that is what schools know about and do?

**Mr Brierley**—I think we need to look at this too in the context of changing times. This model worked 30 years ago when I was doing it—sort of.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—I do not know that it ever did.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I think I am with you; I do not think it ever worked.

**Mr Brierley**—No, I was being generous. It certainly does not work now. To a very great degree, a teacher's first month in a school determines what the rest of their time in that school will be like. In many cases, teachers have to change schools because of disastrous beginnings. We need a new partnership between schools and teacher training institutions; there is no doubt about that. Many comments in the appendix we have given you are about the currency of teacher trainers. Many of those comments are very critical. Teacher trainers are not seen as credible trainers. They are not seen as people who know about what is going on in schools today. Therefore, this new partnership, I think, would need to make use of staff who are practising teachers in schools, with high credibility and an interest in mentoring, coaching and training. So there has to be a new framework and a new relationship, including much more time for on-the-job training. It is quite true.

I do not really expect universities to train students in student management techniques with a blowtorch on the belly; it just cannot happen. The only way that will happen is in real schools with real kids, with a safety net mechanism underneath. As those of you who have been teachers would know, it is too late to think about a strategy when are you in a situation with a kid. You need to have thought about it beforehand. You need to have thought about what you are going to do when you get pushed into a corner. The trick is not to get pushed into the corner in the first place, as you know. Young teachers do not know that, unless they have those skills. As we first studied it 30 years ago, we could probably get away with it because of our authority. These days there is no such authority. These days they need the skills. These days we need a new way of training teachers.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Do you want to go through our other recommendations, Ted?

**Mr Brierley**—Okay. I thought you might give me this one. Secondly, in discussions with some deans—and I will not name them; you can ask them yourselves—it has become apparent that not all of the money that was intended to support teaching practicum has finished up in teacher training departments. In fact, much less than half of it has finished up in those departments. Schools are frustrated by teacher training institutions, by them not being able to send out lecturers to assess or to send student teachers out to the bush. The argument is, 'We haven't got the money to send the lecturers out there to supervise them.' This we can take care of a bit with the new relationship with universities—by having teachers in schools accredited by universities to do that job. But also, surely the money that has been nominated by the Australian government to support teaching practice should be supporting teacher practice.



**Mr SAWFORD**—Are you saying it has gone into general revenue?

**Mr Brierley**—Yes.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—That is our understanding.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Would you like to make a guess of how much that would be in some places?

**Mr Brierley**—I have been told that less than half has made it to the teacher faculty and in some cases a third. I know that universities are independent, fiercely so. But there is that issue along with the issue of the federal government and the state and territory governments being able to spend money in teacher training institutions on nominated positions. If we are short of physical science teachers and mathematicians in schools, why are we not creating more training places for those people in teacher training institutions? Why do we give them a block grant? It finishes up in SOSE or whatever or primary teaching—and I am not having a go at my primary teachers; they need teachers too. But the greater need, as far as we are concerned at the moment, is in mathematics, physical sciences, languages, technology and English teachers and so on. If we are short of teachers, why do we have a laissez-faire approach?

**Ms CORCORAN**—So you are saying that the money goes to universities and not individual schools?

**Mr Brierley**—Yes, it is the universities.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—And we suspect they choose the cheaper areas to train. For example, in South Australia, we do not train home economics teachers now because it is too expensive. It is much easier and cheaper to train primary teachers or whatever than it is to put all the infrastructure around training home economics teachers, for example.

**Mr Brierley**—Some people argue, ‘Well, if we flooded the teacher training market with more positions then the entrance score would go down.’ I am not too fussed about that, although I might be voicing heresies. I believe that the best way to get good teachers is by an interview type approach for entry. I believe that their passion is a prerequisite. Passion combined with appropriate subject knowledge and better training in those subjects will make up for your high-flier PhD candidate who has communication problems. The way we select should be cognisant of that. We need to revamp how the money is provided and what it is spent on.

**Mr SAWFORD**—In this sort of inquiry it is important to find a beginning point—for us as well as for you. What is the beginning point for you? You said ‘interview’. Would you go back further than that? Interview whom and at what level?

**Mr Brierley**—Are you talking about teacher selection?

**Mr SAWFORD**—Yes. Is that your beginning point? Is that what you are suggesting?

**Mr Brierley**—I think we need to look at how we create the labels on the training places, what labels we put on them. At the moment we do not and I think we need to.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Where would you start?

**Mr Brierley**—I would look at the graph showing where the shortages are. I would say: ‘Okay, obviously we have a problem in physical sciences, mathematics, languages and technology. Why don’t we bump up the number of teachers who are being trained in those areas by creating a certain number of vacancies in those positions?’ You might have 100 vacancies in a teacher training institution; what is wrong with saying 10 maths, 10 chemistry, 10 physics, or whatever it is, and whatever the appropriate number is, and general?

**Mr SAWFORD**—Again on the beginning point, part of your survey told us that beginning teachers do not relate well in country and remote areas. As a former school principal I always felt that that is where I would look for graduates. They would come from the country, they would come from remote areas, they would have come from disadvantaged backgrounds; they may have come from a specific ethnicity where they have had to struggle. They would have an edge to them. For me, it is better to have a punt on the success of those sorts of people and on their longevity; they will stay in a teaching career. Should we be doing something about that?

**Mr Brierley**—There is a strategy for that—that is, if you can get them out there.

**Mr SAWFORD**—No, I am going the other way. I do not think we are getting many kids from country and remote areas and disadvantaged backgrounds into teaching. I think it is a middle-class, feminised profession that is eating itself alive.

**Mr Brierley**—Yes.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I think it needs more diversity. How do you achieve that diversity?

**Mr Brierley**—Why don’t you create a number of positions for people with those qualifications? I do not know how that would work in the wider legislative environment.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—In South Australia we do have some targeted—where they get people from country locations and they will pay their HECS fees to go through uni, with the idea that they will go back to said country location to teach.

**Ms CORCORAN**—Who does that, I am sorry?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—South Australia.

**Ms CORCORAN**—You say ‘we’, but who—

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—The state government would pay for it.

**Mr SAWFORD**—The department.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—The department would pay for that to make sure you get some of those things. I am from a working-class background and know that teachers of my ilk are fairly working middle-class, and that is one of the serious issues when they are teaching in working-class schools. I think that is changing, though, because teaching is not as highly regarded as it

once was. When I went through my parents were so proud: the first person in the family with a university education and becoming a teacher. Now I talk to kids in the same area I grew up in and teaching is not up there, and with parents teaching is not up there.

**Ms BIRD**—Particularly if the parents were teachers. You have spoken about ‘interview’. My son is in his first year of science teaching at uni, by interview, although I would put a rider on that. They did interviews, but the person who made a decision about positions was not the one who interviewed. I put that on the table for my colleagues for when we raise those matters with the universities, as we must remember to explore more fully what they are doing in that area.

**Mr Brierley**—As for the way to get more teachers out to the bush—which is what I misunderstood you about—if you can get trainee teachers out into a country community, they will realise the benefits of being there. Sometimes housing offers are made and all sorts of things which induce them out there. The problem is getting them out to those country schools and being supported by the university in their practicum. They do not send them out to country schools, and that makes it all the harder.

Moving on to the next recommendation, school career structure should include recognised and funded positions for preservice teacher training and beginning teacher induction. This takes work and time. The staff of schools who are engaged with beginning teachers need to be experts. They need to be skilled. They need to be trained and recognised. Some state departments have already created those sorts of positions, but they have given them other duties. So things like advanced skills teachers or leading teachers, who are supposed to be there to do just this, are flooded with other administrative duties because the department has taken away funding for other responsibility positions to pay for those positions. So there needs to be something in the career structures to support this, particularly if we are to have a new relationship with universities. A teacher at a school who is working with a university should be supported and recognised.

The fourth recommendation is to make more targeted teacher training places in areas of teacher shortage—I have already talked about that. You could even think about this: if we are to have a situation where years 7 and 8 maths teachers are also teaching years 7 and 8 science in an effort to get fewer teachers in front of a class of kids at years 7 and 8, what is wrong with a teacher trained in maths also getting training in rudimentary science teaching? They would have three methods instead of two. Let us consider that.

The fifth one is the NIQTSL, the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership. It is the new person on the block. That should provide support for beginning teachers undertaking leadership positions. Obviously, that is an issue out there, and we should be talking about distributed teacher leadership. That is one thing we can do to support our teachers. NIQTSL should also provide support for teachers undertaking teacher training and mentoring roles in schools. Mentoring and coaching are not things that you just blunder into. Skills are involved and those skills can be taught. If we are going to build the capacity of our teaching people, then mentoring and coaching is the way of the future. These are good skills to have distributed through the schools.

Finally, thank you for giving us the opportunity to present to you. You have an interesting job and interesting questions to ask. I will be following it very closely. Good luck in your endeavours.

**Mrs MARKUS**—Wendy, you talked about the management of students. Do you draw down to look at the specific social issues they are struggling with—obviously we know what some of those are—and what aspects may or may not be covered in training?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It seems there was very little covered in training. There are two factors. One is about standard classroom management. That is getting the kids in the class, getting them to do the work and how to deal with naughty kids. But then there are the much more complex issues to do with social dislocation and so on. From the types of comments received, neither of those things was covered well. They were ill-prepared for them and they wanted them done better. That was probably the biggest thing they wanted their training to better cover: student behaviour management.

**Mr HENRY**—I compliment you on your presentation. It has certainly crystallised a few of the issues for me. I have a million questions but we really do not have time for them.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Where would you begin?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—I am not sure what you mean.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I will give you an example. When you and I went through training, there was a definite approach to quasi recruiting with teaching scholarships and intermediate and leaving and whatever. It was not terribly heavy but it was deliberate. It was there, so there was a deliberate intent. There were demonstration schools. The links between the teachers colleges of those days and the demonstration schools were very strong, so there was a high professional association between those masters or methods—or whatever they were called in those days—and the university people in terms of education. Ted used the term ‘laissez faire’ to describe the current situation. It is all over the place: there is no framework, it is hit and miss, it is laissez faire. You get all these sorts of contrary and quite varied results—and not always satisfactory ones. There are the retention rates. The loss of people who have been trained as teachers is just appalling.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—And some do not make it to teaching, either. Some leave early just after getting in there, but some do not make it.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Do we go back and begin in the middle years of secondary school? In a previous inquiry, we heard from the principal of Scotch College in Melbourne. Not one of the 3,000 boys in that school wanted to be a teacher—not one. They gave very valid and pretty telling reasons why they would not want to be a teacher. That is terrible. Where do we begin?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—We have to start there. We have to get the best and brightest into teaching, and we have to do something about the reputation.

**Mr SAWFORD**—But the best and brightest are not necessarily the ones who pass exams. I think that was the point you were making.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes. I think Ted is right too. We need to interview, because some of that stuff is about passion, commitment and actually liking kids. Sometimes people do not know whether they will like kids and so on.

**Ms BIRD**—And it probably changes over time.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Or it changes over time. I think it is about the status of teaching, and I think you have to start there.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—I am sorry I could not be here for the entire session, because it sounds as though it has been fantastic. You might have already gone through this, but I would like an understanding of how pracs work—the logistics when a school takes on a prac teacher.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It is done pretty badly. I think it is standard across the board. We get a phone call. One of the many jobs of one teacher at my school is to look after student teachers. They ring and say, ‘We have to place 10 teachers.’ I find it interesting, because my current school is what I would call leafy green, a richer kind of school, so I get many prac teachers at my school. My previous school was seriously hard and we rarely got a prac teacher there—but that is where they will end up teaching, so that is where they need to do their prac.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—So the university is self-selecting—

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—There are certain places the universities like to go. They place students in places they like. Students need to go to the harder to staff and harder to teach schools. Anyway, the students come in and spend a few weeks there, they come and visit a couple of times, then they go again and get a report. It is very average. It is exactly what I went through when I went to college. It has not changed at all. The interaction between the school and the university is minimal. When you do give them feedback, they simply do not listen. I have been in circumstances where we have given feedback to universities about changing the nature of the practicum so it is not the way they have to do it, but they will not move.

**Ms BIRD**—Because they do not have the funds, obviously; they have been siphoned off.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—They simply say, ‘This is the way it works for us.’ For example, we have been in circumstances where we have wanted to do the middle school thing. We say, ‘This is what they are going to end up teaching, so they might as well do this while they are here.’ But the universities say, ‘No, we have to have them go with a class that is 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 in science rather than a science and maths prac experience.’ We say, ‘But that is what they are going to teach, so why aren’t you training them to do that?’

**Ms LIVERMORE**—Do you have any anecdotal or formal feedback about what teachers are telling students? No matter what we do, if teachers are saying, ‘You do not want to do this’—

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—There is research that shows that teachers are telling students not to teach. It is a real issue. They say to their own children, ‘Do not be a teacher.’ I have known teachers who have said, ‘I will disinherit you if you go into teaching.’ They say to kids, ‘Do not teach.’ If a kid says, ‘I want to teach,’ they say: ‘Why would you do that? Do something else.’

**Mr Brierley**—My impression is that it is lessening but not much. I think that is still the main attitude. It is improving but not much.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It is also from the top down. We have researched that too because we have a principal shortage. It is about principals saying, ‘Do not be school leaders.’ So it is a whole culture.

**Mr SAWFORD**—The fundamental question in your beginning point was about the status of teachers, wasn’t it?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It was.

**Mr SAWFORD**—And how you address that. Why is that happening?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—I think it is tied up with many things. My parents believed that anyone with a university education was close to God; if a doctor said it, you paid attention—that sort of thing. We do not believe in that anymore. A university education is not what it once was; it is not the meal ticket it once was. At one stage, doctors, teachers and so on were the people who set the moral tone of society. We do not believe in those people anymore. We do not believe in priests anymore. There is distrust in our society regarding positions of authority.

**Ms CORCORAN**—I refer to the earlier question about the practicums. It is not clear to me how a university student ends up in a school. Does the student choose that school or does the university point the kid at that school?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Usually the university chooses, to my understanding.

**Ms CORCORAN**—Does a school put up its hand and say, ‘I’m prepared to be part of this process’?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—No, the universities usually ring us and say, ‘Will you take some students?’

**Ms CORCORAN**—Say you have been rung and I turn up at your door. How do you put me in a classroom? Does a teacher put up their hand and say, ‘I am prepared to take someone’?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes.

**Ms CORCORAN**—So it is self-selecting. Do you take an interest in who is putting their hand up or are you just glad that someone has put their hand up?

**Mr Brierley**—Sometimes the wrong people put their hands up, which is why you need this career structure—that is, so that you make sure that people in there have the skills. Also, the universities send people out to places where it is affordable for them to go. I have known country schools to ring up universities and say, ‘We want to volunteer for some student teachers,’ and they have said, ‘No, we cannot get people out there.’

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—They tend to go where they are wanted to go. It is driven by what university people want. It is not what beginning teachers, graduates or trainee teachers want; it is what the university lecturers want with placements, I think.

**Ms BIRD**—I want to make a very quick comment. I am a teacher by training; I was trained in the early eighties. I find this really interesting. To some extent, I believe that, if we had held this meeting when I trained, we would have heard all the same things. We all thought that the university people were there because they could not cope with the classroom and that, if we got the unis in, they would tell us that the teachers were all ageing and were boring the kids and that they did not want to go to teach. You would have heard much the same stuff, I think. I appreciate that in your presentation you have focused more on what is different. I do not want to produce a report that is simply an academic analysis of a situation; I want the federal government to do something. Out of what you have said, two things come to me. One is that perhaps there should be some funding for models of improvement of practicums in schools. Would that be valuable?

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Very much so. We have to change the nature of the practicum.

**Ms BIRD**—I do not think it would be ongoing funding, given our role, but encouragement for and support of schools that are trying to do something different would be valuable.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—We cannot keep training them the same way as we did 30 years ago. I do not think my training adequately prepared me for teaching, but it was better and more in line then than now.

**Ms BIRD**—So targeted funding to support that happening more would be a useful thing?

**Mr Brierley**—And also a better relationship between schools and universities—a new one.

**Ms BIRD**—You could fund all sorts of models. You would just have your guidelines for what you are trying to achieve.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—There is no real relationship at all now.

**Mr See**—I would say one thing about the status and quality of teaching. If you look at some of those comments about how you find teaching, you will find a huge flow of positive comments about teaching. Young teachers find it exciting, interesting, challenging—all those sorts of things. You could look at sharing those things with the rest of the community, because it is not all bad.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—It is not all bad; that is the other thing.

**Mr See**—You saw there those comments ‘as expected’, ‘better than expected’ and ‘much better than expected.’ A significant number of people are finding teaching pretty good.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. Your contribution has been very valuable. Some committee members may have questions they did not have the opportunity to ask during the presentation. We would like to put those to you in writing and we look forward to a response to those.

**Ms Teasdale-Smith**—Yes.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Sawford**):

The committee authorise the publication of the evidence given before it at the public hearing this day, including publication on the electronic parliamentary database of the proof transcript.

**Committee adjourned at 11.03 am**