COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Reference: Teacher education

TUESDAY, 7 JUNE 2005

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Tuesday, 7 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, Mr Hartsuyker, Ms Livermore 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.

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Committee met at 8.32 am

KNOPP, Ms Kerri, Director, Strategic Relations, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria Inc

MAHER, Ms Aine, Director, Teaching and Learning, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria Inc

ROSS, Mr Alan, Deputy Chair, Board of Management, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria Inc

CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)—I declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training inquiry into teacher education. I welcome representatives of the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria. 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 parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Mr Ross—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make an opening statement.

Mr Ross—It is my pleasure to make a statement on behalf of the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria. The association represents the independent school sector. There are many schools of many different types within Victoria that the association represents. The association endeavoured to gain the opinions and views of its members and heads of schools in putting forward the association's submission. I think it is true to say that the independent schools of Victoria jealously guard their independence. As a result, any views which individual schools would put forward could perhaps be different from those of other members of the association. Nevertheless, I think the recommendations that we have made and the comments that we would make would be those of the independent schools of Victoria.

We think that attracting teachers to the profession is very important for the future of Australia. It is important that we attract capable and passionate professionals so that the education of our young people will be improved. It is important, as we have said in our recommendations, that we attract able people, people who have skills in numeracy and literacy and people who are prepared to learn, not only during their time as students at university and teachers college but also on the job. It is just as important to acquire an understanding of what happens in schools, how schools operate and how they develop relationships with their students on the job as it is to learn about the important theories of learning styles and pedagogy.

It is important that we train people for the profession and we develop a positive atmosphere in the country so that teaching is seen as being a desirable profession. It is important that we attract students who come from school and go into university. It is also important that we attract people who are in mid-career in other areas and professions. It is important that we enable those people who have started a career somewhere else to move from that career into teaching through some

form of internship in schools and perhaps payment while student teachers are preparing themselves to enter the profession full time.

Focusing on the positive elements of teaching as a profession is really important. All too often, society hears about the negative elements of teaching and how difficult it is to be a professional. Criticism is all too rife. I would like to see encouragement of teaching in a positive light.

The association's view is that there should be more than 45 days as a practicum, and that should be in blocks of time rather than small amounts of time infrequently. We believe that it is important that teachers in training understand what it is like to be a teacher. I do not think you ever get that understanding until you arrive at school for a preschool briefing, you teach all day, you have a lunchtime duty, you have parent-teacher interviews after school and then there is correction and preparation after that. That is the reality of a teacher's life, and I think it is important that teachers in training see that and are able to cope with that.

It is important in teacher training that students get the opportunity to go to schools of different types: government schools, Catholic schools, independent schools, rural schools and city schools—and different types of city schools. That different range of experience is very important. It is important that the university staff who are teaching the teachers have the opportunity to spend some time in schools. It might not be a bad idea for teachers at universities to spend a semester or a year every two or three years back in a school. If they are training teachers for schools, it is important for them to have an intimate and up-to-date knowledge of what is happening in schools.

Some of the disciplines in which it is difficult to attract teachers need attention. SOSE teachers are fairly easy to find, but teachers in mathematics and ICT and, in the future, teachers in an area like food technology are going to be very difficult to find because they are not being trained in the same numbers. So attracting those teachers to teacher training and giving them the opportunity to acquire those skills will be important. It is also important to have teachers trained in special needs. There are increasing numbers of children who are being identified with special needs. It is wonderful that those diagnostic skills are improving. Being able to cope with those skills is important, and teachers in training need those sorts of skills.

There is a great growth in the development of curriculum and pedagogy in the middle years. I think it is important for teachers to be given teacher training in the middle years—the middle years being from years 5 to 9. It means different things in different schools but it roughly covers those years. ESL is another areas which needs attention in teacher training. To have teachers who are trained in teaching children who do not have English as a native language to speak English as a second language is important.

The third area is teacher skills. Teachers, like everyone in schools, are learners, and it is important that their learning continues. Professional development of teachers is critical, and providing flexible ways in which teachers in schools can acquire skills to cope with children who are being taught for the 21st century is important. The teaching force at the moment is an ageing teaching force. Having those people acquire skills in ICT, learning styles and making sure that students are learning to the best of their ability is important. Providing people with those ICT skills to help children learn in the 21st century is important.

Of course, the bottom line is building relationships between teachers and students. Having professional development for teachers to continue that is very important. It would be good to look at ways in which the time on task was maximised in schools. If professional development for teachers took place during non-term time, it would enable students to have more time uninterrupted by staff going off on professional development. That would be highly desirable. Having said that, a lot of the useful professional development that takes place in schools takes place in-house, and it would be good to have ways in which that could be encouraged. Our recommendations were quite clearly put, and we would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

CHAIR—In your submission, you talked about attracting quality graduates into the teaching force, but did not particularly favour the interview process as necessarily being the way to do that. What are your suggestions on identifying those with talent and getting them into the teacher work force?

Mr Ross—I think the skills of literacy and numeracy are important, as is looking at their academic performance. Personally, I would not necessarily see an interview process as not being part of that selection. I think it would be quite appropriate, but that is a personal view. The skills in numeracy and literacy and academic ability are significantly important. I do not think it should be seen that teachers can get an easy ride into the profession, so I would not want to see quotas or ENTER scores for courses lowered so that students could get access.

Mr SAWFORD—You made a point about teaching careers being promoted to school students in a pretty negative way. There is lots of anecdotal information and submissions that we have received that teachers themselves are sometimes the worst people in putting negative attitudes towards kids and the career of teaching. How would you promote a teaching career?

Mr Ross—I talk to the kids in my school all the time about becoming teachers. There is a range of different personality types and academic levels that students have. I was talking to a student yesterday who is a bit of a villain. He said he was thinking of teaching, and I thought at the time, ‘Yes, he’d make a fantastic teacher because he has done it all.’ But there are also students who are highly able, particularly in the maths, sciences and ICT areas and students who have learnt another language who should be encouraged. Encouraging those people within the schools is, I think, the responsibility of society as a whole but it is most certainly the responsibility of the teachers, as professionals, to promote teaching as a career.

Mr SAWFORD—In your submission, you refer to the point of entry into teacher training and the point of exit into teaching. I would have thought that there is something lacking in the point of entry in terms of what happens in secondary schools and the discouragement of people who may in fact, in a more positive light, consider a teaching career. In the past we had demonstration schools. Some of the teachers in those schools had status—not necessarily through remuneration—and perhaps had a different attitude, a more positive attitude, towards teaching. Do you think we need to have a better think about pre-entry to teaching as well?

Mr Ross—It is the image that teaching has which is in need of developing in a positive way to promote teaching as a career pathway. I do not think it is true to say that, in all schools, teachers discourage students to become teachers. In fact, I would be surprised if that were the case in the independent school sector.

Mr SAWFORD—I remember a principal during the boys education inquiry saying that, out of the 3,000 boys in that school, not one wanted to be a teacher. That sends a terrible message.

Mr Ross—I agree. But, as I said at the start, independent schools are of different types, and I do not think that is necessarily the case in all schools. It is certainly not the case in many of the schools that I know of in the independent school sector.

Mr SAWFORD—Would you put more emphasis on the point of entry?

Mr Ross—Yes, absolutely. We need to encourage people to get into teaching as a profession and to see the positive side of teaching.

Mr SAWFORD—Do you have any idea as to how you would do that?

Mr Ross—I think it has to be on an individual basis. You cannot deny that teachers are poorly paid compared to some of the other professions and people in the world of big business. That is a fact. I think it is important that people go into teaching because they want to teach, to be in a caring profession. It is that sort of a vocation. You can attract some people with a financial lure. It may be, as we mentioned in the submission, that some form of assistance for people to lessen the burden while they are going from other professions into teaching would be an advantage. But, given that teaching is not as highly paid as some other careers, we have to encourage people to go into the profession for its other benefits—and there are many.

Ms LIVERMORE—I am interested in looking at the pracs. In your submission and in many of the submissions we have received it comes back a lot to the practicum that student teachers undertake in schools. There is practicum and there is practicum—and it is about making the pracs worth while when students are there, not necessarily just about making them longer, I presume. What do you do in your school to make sure that the pracs are worth while for students? How do you make sure a prac is a good prac for a student?

Mr Ross—When a request comes for a student teacher to come into the school, the person who is coordinating the program goes to the discipline areas and asks people who have skill sets and perhaps an interest in working with a student teacher to take on that student teacher. We try not to have a teacher supervising more than twice a year. When they agree to take on a student teacher, the coordinator of the student teacher program and that person or persons who are supervising meet with the student and work out a program that they will be involved in. That is monitored virtually on a daily basis.

It is important that, when they come into the school, they meet with everybody in the school so that they know what goes on in that school. So they spend time with me and they spend time with the business manager. They go to the primary school. They go on sports programs. If it is appropriate, we send them on camps and excursions. They do yard duty. They do all the things that teachers do. I believe it is important that, when they leave my school, they know how the school operates, what its strengths and weaknesses are and who the people are in the school. We try to give them a range of experiences so that they can develop relationships with the students. We talk about where they have been prior to coming to Billanook. It may be that they have taught years 7 and 8, so we would perhaps try to give them an opportunity to teach at different levels.

Ms LIVERMORE—Do you go through any formal mechanism for giving feedback to the student teachers or is that left to their university?

Mr Ross—It is part of the process that the university puts in place. The school itself, the teachers themselves, give feedback in a formal sense and in an informal sense—in a conversational sense.

Mr BARTLETT—Is it your view that teacher training organisations and education faculties are responsive enough to the needs of schools?

Mr Ross—I would have to say that they could be more responsive.

Mr BARTLETT—In what areas—could you elaborate on that?

Mr Ross—I think there is a very academic perspective that is held by some teacher training institutions and there is perhaps not a close understanding of what goes on in schools, the teaching and learning in schools and the whole daily program in a school. That area could be improved.

Mr BARTLETT—Do you think there is enough emphasis on pedagogy? Do you find teachers coming to your schools who are inadequately prepared to teach, for instance, the skills of literacy and numeracy in the early years?

Mr Ross—In the early years, yes. There has been some concern about that area expressed by our member schools. That has not been a difficulty in my situation. I think that some of the graduates who have come out in the last few years have been absolutely outstanding and well prepared. But a view that has been expressed by some of our member schools is that, particularly in the early years, the range of literacy skills have not been taught.

Mr BARTLETT—Is there a range of levels of preparation according to the various institutions from which they have come? Can you detect any sort of pattern?

Mr Ross—I would not want to be pointing fingers at any one institution. Like in all things, each has their own emphasis and their own programs. As a consequence, some of those train people better in some areas than others.

Mr BARTLETT—Does your organisation have any interaction with the education faculties and the teacher training courses? Do you think there is a capacity for better consultation between school organisations and education faculties to ensure that teachers are better prepared to meet the needs of schools?

Mr Ross—That is a very important role for both the association and member schools within the association. I represent the association on the Deakin University education faculty advisory board. That is one example of the way in which our association is involved. On that faculty advisory board there are representatives from the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and primary and secondary state principals.

Mr BARTLETT—How responsive are they? Do they take the view that they are the experts? Do they resent interference?

Mr Ross—No, they are seeking consultation. I think there are discussions to be had about whose responsibility it is to instruct trainee teachers in what happens in schools. It is my view that the recommendation the association made that people from the tertiary institutions spend some time in schools is a very good recommendation which may help in that regard. It is good for representatives of the teaching profession, practising teachers and principals to work with tertiary people on those advisory boards.

Mr BARTLETT—Can I take it from what you are saying that a lot more could be done?

Mr Ross—I think so.

Mr SAWFORD—I would like to pursue that a little further. You carefully used the word ‘consultation’ in terms of universities and schools. The connect between universities and schools is important to this inquiry. Consultation is a pretty low-level relationship skill; involvement is much higher. Is that what you are leading to?

Mr Ross—Deakin University has a faculty advisory board and they seek advice and they seek it openly and honestly. I have not been on the board long enough to know whether or not that advice will be followed through, but it would be my view that a closer consultation between what happens in schools and the way which teachers are prepared could be—

Mr SAWFORD—Is it consultation or is it involvement?

Mr Ross—I am not sure to what extent—

Mr SAWFORD—Involvement has almost an implication that you go into it in an equal partnership. Consultation means that someone has got information and gives someone else information. It is a different relationship.

Mr Ross—It is a different relationship. I am there by invitation and I can give the advice which is sought. At this stage that is about as far as I could go. But I have had conversations privately with people on that advisory board. I think it would be a good idea if they spent time in schools in order to see what did happen in schools. A lot of those people in faculties of education have come from school education but it may have been some time ago.

Mr SAWFORD—Is there a problem in teacher education faculties in that they do not have enough staff and schools do not have enough staff so that when it comes to teacher education in the school it is always hard for everybody involved and it is an additional responsibility that does not get sufficiently recognised or is not always recognised? Is that the problem?

Mr Ross—In most independent schools the professional responsibility that we see we have for teacher training is very seriously considered.

Mr SAWFORD—Who does it in your school?

Mr Ross—The deputy principal has had that role for a long time. Her role is very much a human relations role with the whole staff. Student teacher training and our own teacher welfare is part of that role.

Mr SAWFORD—Out of a year, how much time would she spent on teacher education?

Mr Ross—There being four terms, we would probably have student teachers in three of those terms. We have two with us at the moment and we would probably have six or eight per year. She would have an hour's interview at the start and probably an hour's interview at the end of the practicum and then daily follow-through with their supervising teachers. There would be casual conversations and then there would be the filling in of reports at the end of that.

Mr SAWFORD—How much time would the faculty staff spend visiting the school?

Mr Ross—There is usually one visit per teaching practicum for each discipline.

Mr SAWFORD—It is not much, is it?

Mr Ross—No.

Mr SAWFORD—If it were possible, would you increase that?

Mr Ross—Yes. It would be good to see the supervising staff visit the schools more often. I think they should visit more often.

Mr SAWFORD—More often is vague—how often? Should they be there every week students are there?

Mr Ross—If a student teacher is there for three weeks I think they should visit each week. The difficulty with that is that they probably have so many student teachers out that visiting those people during those three weeks would be difficult, and if they are going to country schools that again creates an issue for them.

Mr SAWFORD—The old demonstration schools where teachers were specially selected to be involved in teacher education—is there a role for those sorts of schools again?

Mr Ross—Yes, perhaps. I would like to think that the independent schools do take their role seriously in teacher training and that the people who offer and are selected within the schools to be the supervising teachers take those roles seriously. They do enjoy them for the most part and they take that professional responsibility of helping to train future teachers very seriously. From an independent school's point of view it is also quite an exciting thing to have new and young teachers coming into the school with their enthusiasm and passion for the job. Quite often we recruit from our student teachers as we see how good they are.

CHAIR—In your submission you talk about the need for practical experience in relation to teaching children with special needs or disabilities. How does that fit with providing that experience in your schools? Would that provide a challenge in increasing the practical experience you give students?

Mr Ross—Increasingly, independent schools have numbers of children with special needs in them. In my school in particular we have a unit where those children are assisted and we welcome young trainee teachers coming in who have an interest in that area. It would not be difficult for student teachers to find places where they would get great experience in those fields.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you for further information. We really appreciate your contribution today.

[9.03 am]

INGVARSON, Dr Lawrence, Research Director, Teaching and Learning Program, Australian Council for Educational Research

CHAIR—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should 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. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Dr Ingvarson—No.

CHAIR—I presume you would like to make an opening statement.

Dr Ingvarson—Yes, certainly. I believe you already have a copy of one of the papers. It is the main reason I have been asked to come before you and that is what I will spend most of the time on. I should say that there are several other areas in which we are doing research on teacher education. We have been involved for the past couple of years in an international study of teacher education comparing the way different countries go about teacher education and looking at the effectiveness of different approaches. We are in the middle of that study. We have done several studies for the Victorian Institute of Teaching—not just the one that you are looking at today—especially on the induction process and the development of methods for assessing teachers for registration. We also did a paper last year for MCEETYA on mapping teacher education practices in Australia. I think you may, through other channels, have access to that paper. It covered selection procedures currently used across Australia, the content of teacher education courses, issues in the practicum and methods for the evaluation and accreditation of teacher education programs. So I take this opportunity to slip those in.

The paper that I will talk about very briefly is about factors affecting the preparedness of beginning teachers. This particular study was conducted in Victoria with over 1,000 teachers from all courses. It provided a good way of comparing the effectiveness of different programs. We have repeated the study just recently in Queensland. If you want some further findings from the Queensland study I have brought some summaries of them here.

The paper I have just handed to you is a summary. I would just direct your attention very quickly—I will not take very long—to a conceptual map on the second page. This conceptual framework sets out the range of factors that we tested in the study. You can see there are on the right-hand side a range of outcome measures of teacher preparedness. In this study, they are measures based on self-report. So they are measures where we ask people: ‘Given the fact that you are in your second year of teaching, you have a whole year behind you, looking back at your first year, how well prepared were you in a range of areas?’ Those areas are related to registration standards—what the courses should have been preparing them for. As you move across that table, you see mediating variables, which are just things to do with the schools they were in in their first year. They may have a moderating effect on how well prepared they thought

they were. You may be less well-prepared in a certain kind of school than in another. The context does matter.

But the main interest in this study was in the column where it covers the teacher education features. There are three main features of teacher education programs that were included in the study being tested. The first was the structure—whether the course was a four-year BEd or a double degree or a postgraduate program. They are structural features of programs. The second box is the nature of the in-school experience—the practicum and teaching rounds. That included a number of variables, such as the number of days in the school and the actual quality of the practicum. The quality of the practicum was how strong the links were between the university and the school on the clarity of expectations and things like that. Another is whether it was a block, such as three-week blocks, or continuous practice in the schools for two days a week for a whole year or something like that. Another is whether the students had a single supervisor or shared them and what range of roles people played in the schools—whether they just went into the schools with one supervising teacher or whether they played a much wider role in the life of the school, learning about the community and other aspects of schools.

The last box is called ‘Opportunity to learn’, which is what people did get an opportunity to learn. There are four main factors here. One is the opportunity to learn the content to be taught. That particular variable is not just the facts or the subject matter or content but learning about the content in ways that help you teach it and learning about content in terms of the way students understand and develop their understanding of that content and how to present the content. It is a whole range of factors to do with understanding the content and how to teach it and how students learn it. ‘Practice of teaching’ was the extent to which people saw models of good teaching and got feedback about their own teaching and were encouraged to reflect on practice and things like that. ‘Assessment and planning’ was the extent to which they had opportunities to learn how to diagnose students’ understanding—how to assess students’ work and students’ progress—and plan units of work. Then there are a range of background factors, such as the teacher’s age and gender. They are just control variables to see if they made any difference. Another is whether people had a previous career.

To draw the story quickly to a close, you can see on the next page those diagrams. Those diagrams with all those lines going up and down and the first four boxes at the top of the page are measures of the opportunity to learn. As you look at the very first box there, you see that those vertical lines represent the mean scores for about 20 courses. You can see over towards the left-hand side that there is a course that is very high and some that are very low. That actually shows you a range of about 20 courses and shows students saying the opportunity to learn the content varied greatly from course to course. Is that diagram understood? The lines that go above and below the means give you the confidence, what the spread of scores is. So it is 95 per cent confidence intervals that the mean falls within that vertical range, that line. The one that is very high is statistically significantly different, not just accidentally, from the means for courses, for example, just towards the middle of the diagram that are very low on that page. So what you see in front of you is proof of great variation from course to course in the opportunity to learn the content.

Likewise in the next diagram, there is variation in the opportunity to actually get practice in teaching—the modelling, the reflection, the feedback and that kind of thing—or actually get into learning how to teach. The next one is about assessment and planning. Once again, you see

variation, though not so much. The one where there is a lot of variation is the last one to do with feedback about your teaching. You can see stark differences there across the courses. That is table 4. There are stark differences in the programs.

Let me go to the bottom table now. The bottom table is one of the outcome measures. It is just a straightforward measure, which is: ‘Given your first-year experience, how effective was your teacher education program in preparing you?’ You can see once again the pattern is similar. So the course that was very high in the other diagrams is very high in terms of people saying it was effective. So we use a statistical process. You do not want to look at all those tables over there.

I take you to the very last table, called table 4. In table 4, ‘Factors associated with reports of the overall effectiveness of preservice teacher education programs’, what you are looking at there in effect is the relative importance of all the variables in the diagram I showed you at the beginning of the talk. One thing stands out absolutely starkly. The most important factor—you see that 0.38—is the opportunity to learn the content that you are to teach and how students learn it and how to teach it. The other factor is the importance of feedback.

So you are looking at a whole range of factors here that actually did not seem to have much bearing really on how well-prepared people felt they were. A lot of things to do with the variation to the practicum did not seem to make much difference. There is one there that maybe had some kind of effect, and that was the width of the role—the range of things that people did do when they were in schools—but it is not a very strong effect. Everything else is swamped out here by the importance of that variable entitled ‘Opportunity to learn the content’. So that is the main message we just have to recognise here. This is repeated—I can show you the findings—in the same sort of table here for the Queensland study. I will pass that around.

When you think about it, I think it is very clear that this should be the case—obviously it is the case. Understanding of what you are to teach is fundamental. It is core professional knowledge. It is much more important than learning how to control classrooms. That is secondary. It is important. But the message here is to place primary importance on making sure that people have got that deep understanding of what they are expected to teach of the curriculum. If that is not in place you do not make up for it, or it is very difficult to make up for it. You can make up for a lack perhaps of classroom experience and control by getting some experience on the job, but it is very difficult to make up for the lack of content.

So I think this is a very interesting finding. As you look at the results that have just been passed around now, you see that there is a similar table for Queensland. This is based on a large study of all Queensland teacher training institutions. It is the same set of variables. As you read down the table, I draw your attention to the ones where it says: ‘Question 22. Opportunity to learn the content.’ The factor here is that big 0.358 and those three zeros. Those three zeros means that it is highly significant. It is a result that would not occur just due to chance. The other variable that is important there is the opportunity to learn the practice of teaching.

I suspect that one of the major weaknesses in teacher education at the moment is this lack of opportunity to link the theory that is being learnt in courses with what is being done on the teaching rounds. So please do not take what I am saying to be an either/or about whether teacher education should be based in universities or in schools. There is no doubt it should be in both—absolutely both. The most effective courses are able to have strong links between the theory and

the practice, so that when students are in schools they are actually practising theoretical things that have just been taught in the program, and the supervising teachers understand that and there are these close links.

The practicum is in a bad way because for much of the time students simply go to schools to get experience—just go to the schools, spend time there. There are weak links with what has been going on in the course. There is time in school and time in university and the links are weak.

The main reason this paper was produced was for the VIT, which was developing standards for assessing and accrediting teacher education programs. So that is the context: how should we assess and accredit teacher education programs and what should we be looking for and insist on in teacher education programs? So the main message here is: in the future, just as in the past, it is vitally important—it is essential—that people have that deep understanding of content but, in particular, that understanding of the research on how students learn the content. That is what really shows up, especially in early literacy and numeracy—understanding the nature of students' conceptual development in understanding what you are teaching. So it is not just content knowledge; it is what is called pedagogical content knowledge. That is understanding how to help someone learn this particular content, not just helping someone understand in general. It is understanding how to learn this particular content.

So teachers' professional knowledge is highly subject specific, not generic. A teacher is not: a teacher is a teacher is a teacher. All teachers are experts, or should be. A teacher who teaches early literacy and numeracy in the early childhood years cannot be taken and placed in a year 12 English lesson, and you cannot do the reverse. That subject matter knowledge is very, very different and the context is very different. What you need to know to be effective varies. So in developing and thinking about procedures for the accreditation of teacher education in the future I think it is extremely important to look for ways in which we base the decision about whether to register or let someone enter the profession on a very clear test: that they do have a very strong grasp of the content they are to teach.

The second diagram about Queensland that was just passed around shows some startling results here. In Queensland we were asked by the Commonwealth government to evaluate one particular program at the Central Queensland University—the Bachelor of Learning Management. As you look at the box on the first side, you can see the mean confidence intervals for this Bachelor of Learning Management program. That is a rating of the overall effectiveness of that program by the graduates—there are about 60 graduates in there. That is compared with graduates in other primary undergraduate programs. The other vertical lines are for: other CQU graduates doing a BEd by distance—that is not a good situation; non-Central Queensland University undergraduate courses, other primary training courses; double degrees—'DD' is double degrees; and 'GE' is graduate entry, postgraduates. That course stands out starkly when we have been doing this evaluation. We also followed 20 graduates from that university and observed them in their classroom last year. We observed another 15 or so graduates from other universities. They also stood out—the BLM graduates were significantly better, based on this observational study. We trained observers who went in and observed a literacy lesson and a numeracy lesson. There were two observers. We got several findings. The BLM graduates stood out.

On the back side of that page, it is the same old story. I have taken that measure ‘Opportunity to learn the content’. This diagram here is saying: on the measure of opportunity to learn the content, those students said they had very good opportunities to understand the content and how students learn the content and that sort of stuff. They stood out definitely. I have probably said enough. I am very happy to discuss the findings further if we have some time.

CHAIR—Thank you, Dr Ingvarson. Your research brings up some interesting findings insofar as witnesses we have heard from who have come from the schools are very much focused on the importance of practicum and more practicum as being a major component of a successful teaching course. Your findings appear very different from that. I am interested in your thoughts on the fact that the schools are saying a high degree of practicum is really the way to go yet your research is turning up different findings.

Dr Ingvarson—Definitely. It would be a mistake to think that teacher education is going to be improved by just moving more of it into schools. That proved to be the case in England. The teacher training agency over there tried desperately to move it into schools. They are still struggling to find any evidence that it improved teacher education. That is not the way to go. That is too simplistic.

The way to go is to, of course, recognise that the professional knowledge of a teacher is not just picked up anecdotally or on the run. Professional knowledge has to be based, first of all, on a deep knowledge of your subject matter, which means studying to a high level. That is what holds everything else together. But, on the other hand, this study and others that we have been doing show that we have a big weakness in terms of ensuring that the practical experience really is an opportunity to practise the theory that you have been learning in teacher education programs.

So the message here is to make the links much stronger. The practicum is in a very bad way. Teacher education programs—I have worked in teacher education programs for nearly 30 years—are poorly funded. If we are really serious about giving people opportunities to learn to teach, we have to not only improve the quality of the teacher education programs but also improve the induction of teachers. That is about moving the programs into the first year or two. We have to stop the business of throwing people into the full-time job the moment they start teaching. That is just crazy because people still have a lot to learn and you cannot learn it when you are fully occupied every day just thinking about coping with classroom control and things like that. That is a long answer to your question. It would be a mistake to just push teacher education out into schools.

CHAIR—With regard to the result of the teacher course and a focus on content, do you believe that a teacher who knows his subject backwards is very confident in that subject and that builds his strengths as a teacher? Is that a major driver in that result of your research—that strong content knowledge gives a confident teacher who can impart knowledge better to the children as well as just the actual knowledge itself?

Dr Ingvarson—Yes. The research indicates that you cannot use what are known to be effective teaching techniques unless you do understand the content deeply. If you do not understand, you are forced back on to the worst didactic textbook, going-by-the-rule book sort of teaching. A deep understanding frees you up to use good pedagogy, to discuss ideas, to relax, to

open up the discussion, to throw away the textbook and to throw away the work sheets because you are interested, you understand the ideas and you know how to promote those ideas and that discussion.

That is equally true of people teaching number in the earliest years to people teaching history at year 12. All other things being equal, someone who understands the subject matter deeply, of course, is more effective. But that is not to say that just knowing the subject matter means you will be a great teacher. I am just saying that, all other things being equal, someone who understands the subject matter is better and has a wider range of pedagogical techniques open to them.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a query about the management program in Queensland that rated very highly. Were the participants in that program young people, or were they teachers being retrained or people coming from other careers? Who were the actual participants in the program? There are a lot of management programs I am aware of.

Dr Ingvarson—It does have a strange title. When I first heard it, I nearly threw up. They have thrown out the idea of a Bachelor of Education. It is now a Bachelor of Learning Management. It means a Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Teaching. It has changed the emphasis. A teacher is a manager of learning rather than a teacher. It is not management in terms of principals or school administration. But the point you raise there is that the average age of people coming into teacher education in Australia now is in the late 20s. So just as many people over about 29 or 30 are coming into teacher education program as those who are under those ages. But we did not find a difference in their feelings of preparedness. Whether they had a previous career or not was not related to how well-prepared they felt they were for teaching.

Mr SAWFORD—I agree with your point that it seems teacher training placements in schools are all hit and miss and pretty laissez-faire. There was a time when principals were appointed in some schools called demonstration schools who had supposedly a superior knowledge of teacher education. That was the reason they were given that principal appointment. Staff in those schools were appointed to those schools because they were supposedly superior teachers and had better knowledge of teacher education. Often in that context they had a fairly close link to the teachers colleges in those days. Does that need to be revisited? Was there any value in that?

Dr Ingvarson—Yes. I think it is worth looking at. This is very much like a reform in the US that has been very big in the US, which is the professional development school. It is a very similar model. If you want to look up the research on professional development schools, it is much the same idea. It is like medical schools. It is worth looking at if the demonstration schools are very strong in providing models of good teaching and people do get the opportunity to see those models and discuss them, and if it is a very good place for getting feedback and trying things out in practice situations and getting a lot of coaching.

I cannot emphasise this point too strongly: the ability of the current system to provide effective feedback and coaching as you learn to teach is weak. It is a very big weakness. We found in another study that preparedness is much better when you have highly trained mentors or coaches who can give very insightful feedback, not just anecdotes like ‘Do not smile until Easter’ or something. It is when they can really give feedback that is insightful about the quality of teaching and effective teaching. They use teaching standards to give that feedback. If those

demonstration schools could be organised in that way and they could ease people into the profession with a gentle sort of stepping down, not just throw them into the deep end, yes, that would be good.

Mr SAWFORD—If my memory serves me correctly, some of the points you have been making are about the link between theory and what you actually do in the school. The demonstration schools' teachers knew what was being taught to those second- and third-year students.

Dr Ingvarson—Exactly.

Mr SAWFORD—And the demonstration lessons, the feedback, the activity and the discussions were related to those activities. So it was not hit and miss; it was very deliberate.

Dr Ingvarson—Exactly.

Mr SAWFORD—They became unfashionable.

Dr Ingvarson—We did have a period in the 1960s and 1970s where teacher education was just barely coping. Thousands of teachers were needed in a hurry as the whole system expanded, and I think it could not cope. There were too few demonstration schools.

Mr SAWFORD—Could it cope now?

Dr Ingvarson—I think it would be a good idea to try to give it a chance to cope. But your essential point there, I think, is that the people who are teaching in those schools understand themselves the recent research and theory on teaching, learning and assessment. They know as coaches how to give very good feedback. If the supervising teachers in those schools are highly trained mentors and coaches, I think you have a potentially very productive situation for learning how to teach.

Mr BARTLETT—You have focused on the importance of knowledge of content and knowledge of pedagogy related to that content as a critical point. Do you notice any difference in the quality of preparation in that regard between the training of secondary teachers who, say, do a three-year degree and a DipEd or a similar sort of course and the training of primary teachers who are focused through a Bachelor of Education degree?

Dr Ingvarson—No, not really. The last diagram you have here is for Queensland. I am not allowed to tell you the courses. I can tell you about the BLM because the Commonwealth department asked us to do the evaluation of it. I can point out that Victorian study. You go along all the courses and you see the highs and the lows. I can tell you that the highest one is an undergraduate BEd course for training PE teachers. Those people just raved about the strong connections all the time between the theory and the practice.

In this diagram here for Queensland, the course that is very high is a straightforward undergraduate training course for primary teaching. It has been rated very highly in terms of its effectiveness. It was also rated highly over here in terms of opportunity to learn the content. The

secondary courses are the graduate entries. Not all graduate entries are secondary, but they are graduates when they enter. So there is something strange going on there.

Mr BARTLETT—Their knowledge of the content of their subject matter is probably fairly strong, but is the knowledge of the pedagogy related to that content strong?

Dr Ingvarson—One little weakness with this study is that we did not ask people: ‘In your first year of teaching, did you get to teach in the area in which you are trained to teach?’ It is much more likely for secondary teachers that they finish up teaching subjects they are not trained to teach.

Mr BARTLETT—This is related to the undergraduate courses specifically training primary school teachers. Have you done any work or are you aware of any research into the effectiveness of training teachers on the different pedagogical needs of boys and girls?

Dr Ingvarson—I have not. I am not going to attempt to speak as an expert on that. Some of my colleagues at ACER are expert in that field. I am sure Ken Rowe is someone who could speak on that extensively.

Mr BARTLETT—And did in our last inquiry.

Dr Ingvarson—But this is an analysis we have not done in these programs, no.

Mr BARTLETT—Anecdotally, do you think a lot more can be done there in teacher training, or intuitively, just from your position?

Dr Ingvarson—That is a very big debate. Eighty per cent of primary teachers are female. I do not know the extent to which that has got—

Mr BARTLETT—What percentage of teaching academics are female and male?

Dr Ingvarson—The teacher educators?

Mr BARTLETT—Yes.

Dr Ingvarson—I am not sure. But from the experience of faculties I have known, it is probably pretty balanced. It was much higher on the male side in the 1970s and 1980s, but I think that has been well and truly redressed in the last 10 to 15 years.

Mr BARTLETT—I have one last question.

Dr Ingvarson—I am sure you can find those figures in the DEST statistics.

Mr BARTLETT—You make an interesting point here in your introduction that promotion within education faculties seems to be a bit more related to academic status et cetera rather than the ability to prepare teachers.

Dr Ingvarson—Definitely.

Mr BARTLETT—How do we address that?

Dr Ingvarson—Well, you could go straight to the Carrick committee and tell it not to use the silly system that it has developed for handing out annual prizes for good teachers and to develop a proper system for assessing academic teacher quality against teaching standards and build it into their career structure. You would then have the opportunity to give recognition to all academics who can demonstrate that their teaching has reached high standards, not a piddling couple of hundred who have the time to hand in an application to the Carrick committee for a prize. I could go on at great length about how the whole career structure really needs to be reoriented so that it gives just as much weight to evidence of quality teaching and evidence of professional development as to a good research record, which is very important. But at the moment it is a joke. There is a lot of talk about giving recognition to good teaching, but the Carrick approach is silly.

Mr BARTLETT—You talked in your submission about the importance of feedback for students. Would you like to expand on that.

Dr Ingvarson—It is very interesting that in some of the meta analyses of what makes an effective school teacher perhaps the thing that comes through more frequently than anything else is the capacity of that teacher to give feedback that is timely, accurate and useful to the students. It is not at all surprising that the feedback is also very important for learning to how to teach. The current system, especially for the professional development of teachers, is rather like running a massive training camp for learning how to play golf. You see lots of lectures about how to play golf and you see people playing golf. But when you go and do it yourself, there is no-one there to give you feedback. Teaching is performance. The occupation is, I suppose, not well-geared to coach and give insightful feedback about performance and practice. There is a kind of reluctance there. It may be seen as an intrusion into privacy. But by cutting off that feedback, that really insightful kind of feedback that is based on good research, you cut off a very, very important source of learning how to teach more effectively. It is a big gap.

Ms LIVERMORE—Related to the issue of feedback and the analysis you have done of the effectiveness of various courses, is there any relationship between the class size or the number of students in a course and the feedback or the effectiveness of feedback that they are getting? If you have a cohort of 30 teaching students at one university versus 300 somewhere else, does that come into it at all?

Dr Ingvarson—No, I do not think so. But you do raise another issue, which I think is worth a look. There are far too many teacher training institutions in Australia. If you look carefully at the report we did for MCEETYA on mapping teacher education programs in Australia, you will see very big differences between the TER scores that you need to get into certain programs compared with others. To get into primary teacher education at some universities, you need a TER score in Victoria of 85 to 90. To get into others, you will get in with 60. Teacher education programs should not be allowed to take in students below a certain TER score.

For primary school teaching, they should be not be allowed to take them in unless they pre-test them on their understanding of mathematics particularly. This is a very sexist thing to say,

but with 80 per cent to 90 per cent of people coming in to do primary teaching being women, I know from that there is a worry about mathematics. We are doing a lot of professional development for teachers in Western Australia. The big factor there affecting students' scores on numeracy is simply the teachers' anxiety about the mathematics they are teaching.

I went off the track there. I think it is a really interesting issue to look at whether, if a teacher education program cannot attract people above a certain TER score, they should continue to be funded. I think there are a lot of teacher education programs that are quite small. I think you need a critical mass. In demonstration schools you do not just have a one student to one teacher relationship. You have to have groups of students.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to dive in there for a second to elaborate on one point. You made a comment about mathematics. Should we be returning to some sort of requirement that within the TER those who want to enter teacher training should have a mathematics unit in their HSC or senior equivalent?

Dr Ingvarson—Or some way of simply testing the entry level of knowledge that they do have, whether it is the TER score or whatever.

Mr SAWFORD—English is still required, I think, isn't it?

Dr Ingvarson—Yes. Sure, yes.

Mr SAWFORD—Are you saying mathematics ought to be in there somehow?

Dr Ingvarson—Definitely. It varies. Some courses do require that, but it just varies from course to course. You will find some programs—I should have said that—are very strict about those entry levels. But if we are looking at a situation in the next few years where there is a need to increase the number of people coming into teacher education, we absolutely must avoid what happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when some teacher education programs simply filled up their quota and they went down, down, down in terms of the TER scores, well below 50 in many cases. You live with that problem for the rest of their careers. The ones who are more likely to stay in teaching are the ones with the lower TER entrance scores. Our research is clear on that. That is not fair to kids.

Mr BARTLETT—Could you repeat that about the ones who are most likely to stay in teaching.

Dr Ingvarson—The research on attrition rates is that attrition is more likely amongst people who can find alternative careers—that is, the abler ones in terms of the quality of their entrance scores and their university degrees. There is British research on that, American research on that and Australian research.

Ms LIVERMORE—I take it from your submission that one of the purposes of your research was to report back to VIT about accreditation.

Dr Ingvarson—Yes.

Ms LIVERMORE—Are you advocating or suggesting that accreditation needs to be tightened up for university courses?

Dr Ingvarson—Yes, very much.

Ms LIVERMORE—So some universities just would not cut the mustard?

Dr Ingvarson—The straightforward implication is that when VIT does accredit, it should look very closely at the content and the opportunities for feedback and the training and assessment, diagnosing assessment and planning, those very core things of teaching. But there is a problem that the VIT currently has a difficulty in implementing its accreditation. Under the legislation, it is set up to be an accrediting body. Universities claim they have alternative legal arrangements which mean that they do not necessarily have to comply with the VIT. So I would suggest you look very carefully at this National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership, which is seeking—this is part of its initial brief—to develop a national system for the accreditation of teacher education.

We did a survey of all the states and all the equivalents of the VIT—the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, the Western Australian College of Teaching and all those bodies—and the universities about their attitude to going national with accreditation. Except for New South Wales, all said it is a good idea and we should go national. It increases the cross-fertilisation of ideas across the states when you have assessors and accrediting panels coming from interstate to look at teacher education programs. You get much more cross-fertilisation of ideas. The model there that would be very effective is the Australian Medical Council. That was set up in 1985. The state ministers of health got together and the state medical practitioners boards got together and agreed to set up that body nationally to carry out the accreditation function. That took it outside the state. It was a much more independent body and, as I say, there were many more opportunities for comparisons across the country and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to return to the issue of mathematics. Maybe it is not quite in the terms of this inquiry. One of the statistics that I read that really worries me is that 25 years ago 100,000 students in Australia did pure mathematics or logic or something to that degree at university. The figure today is less than 16,000; they were last year’s figures. We have an emphasis on synthesis of material rather than analysis. Competition is out of favour and collaboration is in favour. Intuition is in favour and insight is out of favour. In the material that you often read, people steer away from what I think is a more balanced education approach and favour another style. There is this nature versus nurture argument, which I think is a pretty stupid argument. Both are valid. Competition and collaboration are both natural skills. You would think that analysis and synthesis are both valid approaches. Yet when you sort of analyse and read some of the submissions that we have, they seem very much tilted towards one side rather than the other. Do you get that impression? One of the things you said about the teacher education courses is that you found they were fairly well balanced.

Dr Ingvarson—I said they were fairly well balanced?

Mr SAWFORD—Balanced. Is that what you meant?

Dr Ingvarson—Between the theory and practice?

Mr SAWFORD—No. You said balanced.

Dr Ingvarson—There is great variation. I did sit for a while on the VIT as part of its accreditation panel. You could look at some courses and struggle to find any content in them over four years. By content, I mean what is in the curriculum. Others have a very strong emphasis on the content. There is just a big variation. My point is we have to stop thinking that teacher education programs are all much the same or that it is okay to let everyone do their own thing. We can see this variation in preparedness and we need to understand the factors affecting that. My main point is the factors that seem to be best explaining that are these core things to do with the content that you are teaching. But I am not saying just subject matter.

Mr SAWFORD—I know.

Dr Ingvarson—It is this rich knowledge about how people learn that subject matter and how to help people learn that. That is the rich stuff. It is about how to actually assess progress, to be good at diagnosing where students are at. You get this very, very good flow-on effect when teachers are excellent at diagnosing where students may be having misunderstandings and how to deal with those misunderstandings. It is that sort of quality of feedback that you can give. I am not saying either/or. But you initially raised the question about the number of students doing mathematics—advanced mathematics and applied mathematics. The same applies to science. We have a major problem in mathematics and science, but we are not alone. Many countries have this problem. But it is certainly in part related to the quality of people attracted into teaching maths and science.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you for further information. The secretariat will send you a proof of your evidence when it is available. The transcript will be available on the web site.

Dr Ingvarson—Sorry for speaking so fast.

CHAIR—Is it the wish of the committee that the documents tabled by the Australian Council for Educational Research be received by the committee as an exhibit and authorised for publication? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

[9.52 am]

CAVENAGH, Mr Raymond, Representative, Australian Education Union

DEVEREAUX, Ms Jenni, Acting Research Officer, Australian Education Union

CHAIR—I welcome representatives from the Australian Education Union. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should 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 information is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Mr Cavenagh—No.

CHAIR—I presume you would like to make an opening statement.

Mr Cavenagh—Thank you. I feel very privileged to have sat in on the last part of Lawrence's submission. Dr Ingvarson has a pretty good track record in education as one who analyses things very powerfully before he utters. I do not always agree with Lawrence, but you always have to listen to what he says.

There are two or three things I would like to raise very briefly. One is to do with the way the discussion about teacher education shifts and changes in various times. Back in the 1980s, when I was the member of a ministerial advisory committee in New South Wales, the argument and the public debate was about the quality of students. We were getting people with lower TERs or UAIs, as they are in New South Wales now. There was a good deal of anxiety about this, and Lawrence expressed that. In the latter part of the 1990s and the early 21st century, the discussion shifted. We suddenly find that the quality of most of the students, in some universities in particular, is pretty high. The tertiary education work that I do in a teacher education institution in New South Wales attracts extraordinarily able students in great numbers. So the public debate has now shifted to the quality of the courses. We are not so worried about the so-called quality of the students any more.

In all of these debates, there is very little knowledge about the relationship of those students who come in with lower scores and either their success at university or at teaching or, as Lawrence pointed out, their survival rate. They do know something about the survival rate but not about their success—whether they are good teachers. It really is a very open question. It was one of the things that the teaching union was worried about in the 1980s. But it is not really something that is known.

The second thing is that initial teacher education is part of a continuum and has always been so. When I started teaching back in the 1950s, the continuum was conducted by people who were supervisors. Lawrence mentioned the difficulty of providing people with further close clinical procedures which could improve their work. It is difficult. I can tell you now that the supervisory processes, which were the old industrial processes, the foreman type processes, were

very poor. They were exceptionally poor. It did not matter how often it was recast, they remained poor. It was partly a problem of time. So the question of teacher education and post-university teacher education is still one that is very, very difficult to make generalisations about.

The third thing is that we do tend to have some problems with the public utterances of people who are in positions of authority and power and sometimes public reports. Stuff that is really rumour and anecdote is accepted as evidence. We really have to be careful about that. I note that in the Victorian parliamentary report there was a statement that principals have said, ‘Far too often’. ‘Far too often’ is not a terribly useful piece of analysis. ‘Far too often’ might have been seven people out of 20, which does not give you much of a range in terms of the numbers of principals or teachers in the system. I think probably we all have to remember—having a union career, I am someone who is as much involved in propaganda as evidence—no matter how many times a rumour is repeated, it is still not evidence. Thank you.

Mr SAWFORD—One thing I found when I read through your submission was that there seemed to be a bit of a negative attitude in that I thought the author might have eaten some angry pills before writing it. One point made right at the very beginning about the terms of reference is that we have all these inquiries into teacher education and we seem to have had one every year for the last 25 years. Do you remember that point on the first page?

Mr Cavenagh—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—There has never been a House of Representatives inquiry into teacher education. There was recently a Senate inquiry. What was the point of saying this? Are you saying that there is just too much emphasis on this? Have they been unsuccessful? I could not get to what the point was.

Mr Cavenagh—I think it is a valid point. Remember that both of the references I made to previous inquiries were quotes from teacher educators. At point two, I said it would be worthwhile for the committee to have some people look through previous efforts to see if themes have emerged, see if there are problems that have sat in the system for a long time that keep on being identified and not addressed and see whether through this process—which we have no problem with, frankly—some new material comes on the deck which is of great value in looking at where we should be going. So that is really what that was about. I am sorry about the anger. I thought it was very moderate.

Mr SAWFORD—There is nothing necessarily wrong with anger. It is just that that was the impression I got.

Mr Cavenagh—I really did think it was a very moderate effort.

Mr SAWFORD—I might ask a couple of specific questions. When you say the teacher education program needs at least three fundamental strands to be of any value, you mention the philosophy-history strand. Would you like to react to that first?

Mr Cavenagh—What page is that on?

Mr SAWFORD—It is down the bottom of page 7. You say that a teacher education program needs at least three fundamental strands.

Mr Cavenagh—Yes. It needs philosophy-history, sociological and teaching practice strands.

Mr SAWFORD—I agree with you, by the way. I want to hear your insights into that.

Mr Cavenagh—I think one of the things that professionals do, and good tradesmen too, for that matter, is they understand where they come from and why things happen as they are. One of the problems we have working with teachers and teaching and with the community and teaching is that there is an expectation in a vast number of areas that things stay pretty much the same as they always were. I think more than anybody else teachers are expected to change and remain the same at the same time. This creates an enormous tension in the daily life of a teacher, particularly if there is a very active parent community. Frankly, almost all parent communities have very conservative views about what their kids should be learning. I was an historian. I always think history is pretty important. It seems to me that teachers should always come out of university understanding that education is really a study of ideas because they will be confronted endlessly with theories. They might not look like theories—they might look just like documents from the department—but all of them have a theoretical base.

Mr SAWFORD—That is the why bit. Go to the third strand. I will leave the second strand until last for a specific reason. Would you like to provide us with your insights on the teaching practice strand?

Mr Cavenagh—I have here a study of curriculum and methodologies. Methodologies is really a tough one for a teacher education institution or for someone who is observing teachers to really come to grips with because for every theory there is an equal and opposite theory, possibly in the same school and even sometimes in the same teacher's head—'Am I doing what is right by these kids in what I'm doing?' There is a whole pile of problems in relation to new technologies. Everybody can understand why they are available. When they get on top of them, particularly the computer, for instance, in the classroom, which is now very prominent, they do not always deal with it. It is a practical thing. New teachers and beginning teachers almost invariably report that they have more problems with discipline than they thought they were going to. What they call discipline is really the order, the kind of civic order of a classroom—how kids get on with things et cetera. All of those things can be taught to some extent in a teacher education program, particularly the curriculum strand and certainly the technology strand. Some of the other things are tougher, but they should at least be attempted.

Mr SAWFORD—Do you think they are done effectively?

Mr Cavenagh—The institution that I work with, I think, give it a pretty fair bat, particularly the curriculum part. They put a lot of time into the curriculum part. The matter of student behaviour is a much harder one. I really do not know how you give theories about student behaviour when you are dealing with student behaviour outside the situation itself because of the enormous variation in the way kids respond to things.

Mr SAWFORD—The second one is the sociological strand. I do not have any problem with that. When you use terms like 'socially constructed', do you think that is going into the

propaganda area? Would it have been much easier if you had used a more neutral term in terms of the processes involved? Was that done deliberately?

Mr Cavenagh—No. That is the way I talk. I wrote that bit and that is the way I would have called it. Most of the things we do in this room are socially constructed. The way we address each other is socially constructed. It is very important. I have a great belief in the notion of a civic society. Almost all of the rules that we adopt in a civil and civic society are socially constructed rules. No, I do not have any difficulty. But people have to understand that this is not necessarily a natural order, just as the 19th century had to come to grips with the 18th century notion that the natural social order was not really the way things had to be. People have to understand that a classroom is not necessarily something that is natural if they are going to deal with kids effectively.

Mr SAWFORD—Can it be both?

Mr Cavenagh—Yes, I think so. With some of the teachers I see now when I am dealing with students, as I am right now looking at students at prac, you can see that the social order that is constructed in the staffroom is in the classroom. It is quite different from what existed when I started teaching and through most of my teaching life. It is very positive. It has some problems, but it is very positive.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to ask about another area. I have some specific questions, which I will perhaps leave to the end. You mention on page 19, in investigating the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education, some interesting concepts in terms of the concurrent model and the consecutive model. Would you like to give us some insights into them.

Mr Cavenagh—They are historical things, really. When we had—

Mr SAWFORD—I know they are historic, but in the modern context.

Mr Cavenagh—I think it is a question of resources and time that universities stick with consecutive models. A lot of universities now bring concurrent things into their teacher education programs. What we have to recognise is that we pick up a lot of people who have completed degrees in other areas and who have decided at a later time that they want to teach. The whole of the Sydney university Master of Teaching program is about people who are looking for other careers. They come in with all kinds of qualifications. They all have to be university graduates. That is a primary and secondary model which is consecutive. So those models will always exist.

I do not think you can come to a conclusion which says one is better than the other. But you have to recognise that there is a social need for both of them and not be too critical about one versus the other. That is really the point I was trying to make. Sometimes I think people who enter university and want to be teachers in a secondary school could probably get into some concurrent model like Macquarie University, for instance, a bit earlier than they do. But it does mean putting them in classrooms, and that is really hard.

Ms LIVERMORE—I have a general question for either of you. We are training these students to go into the teaching profession. What are they walking into? What are the issues that teachers are bringing to the AEU at the moment? Could you give us a snapshot of the profession. We are sort of focusing on getting these students through university and into their first or second year of teaching. What is the broader context that they are entering into at the moment?

Mr Cavenagh—It is certainly much more complex than it was, as we would all recognise. I think probably for a lot of students the theories around the new assessment methodologies are probably the most complicated for them, as they are for a lot of practising teachers. There is the whole business of working on outcomes rather than input. There is a lot of beaut theory associated with it, but the complexity of the task really is very large for teachers to grapple with. Often they have to grapple with the trivia of it rather than the broad picture. I think students have a lot of trouble with that and beginning teachers and, as I said, some older teachers.

I think a lot of beginning teachers certainly have problems with behaviour. Most other professions, like, say, medicine or engineering—the ones Don Anderson investigated in his research that I mentioned—are not focused on large groups of people. They are focused on a lot of people—medicine is—but they are not focused on a large groups of people operating together in a situation where they are locked into a room almost for large periods of time. As old Bill Campbell said, nowhere do we put such large numbers of people in the small space we do for such a long time as we do with children. It is true. I think they have problems coming to grips with the way kids deal with that and the variety of the ways. Kids come into schools with some pretty horrendous problems.

When you watch the kids in the room, you see most of them. There might be the students sitting up the front or the teachers are sitting up the front and the kids are all sitting up the back. You watch them. A lot of them are lovely. They are just lovely little kids. They are sitting there and putting their hands up. They are answering questions. They are five or six years old. They are tiny. There are two rolling under the table over here and one kid picking his nose and looking at his play lunch over here and paying no attention. For a lot of those young teachers, it is very hard to find ways of bringing them in. It is not a single event situation. They have to learn to do it all the time.

You get into a secondary classroom and you have a whole pile of pretty spicy adolescent girls who are 14 years old. These kids are hitting their straps. They are not going to take too much lip from anybody. They can be very, very difficult. For a lot of young teachers who believe that they are there as transmitters of information—'I am here to teach. If you listen to me, you'll learn. Do these things I ask you to do'—these kids do not accept that at all, and I think that is hard for them. It is hard to give them the idea of it before they get into the classroom full time. We did introduce in the early 1990s the whole idea of a 10-week internship, which was probably the most significant development in teacher education in my time. Does that make sense? Is that what you wanted to know?

Ms LIVERMORE—I am also interested in the interaction between the new teachers and the existing teachers that they will be joining as colleagues. What are their colleagues facing in the profession? What are their colleagues going to be telling them about the profession when they get into schools? What issues are their colleagues facing? That is the broader question.

Mr Cavenagh—I always warn my students to steer clear of cynics. Cynics are death in teaching. Cynicism is just the end of the road. You should never get close to that. I think they often get told, 'You're in the real world now.' This is the kind of stuff that most professions do with young starters. I mentioned Robyn Ewing's and David Smith's research. I do not think it is as bad as they say. The systems are now looking at this question. It is associated with questions to do with mentoring, which Lawrence raised. Mentoring seems to be a much more positive process with a lot more potential than supervision, because it involves more people. When you look at mentoring, you cannot ask somebody to mentor if they are going to mentor a teacher into disliking teaching. It just will not work.

New South Wales is just conducting an experiment on 400 new graduates whom they nominated. There are two retired principals doing the work. They followed them through on the first round—with the principals and the ex-students or the beginning teachers themselves. Of the 400, only 12 principals said, 'We have some concerns about some aspects of their work. Basically they are okay.' The rest were glowing. So I think the survival rate and the rate of acknowledgement of the problems of being a new teacher are much better and stronger than possibly the teacher educators themselves think—and stronger than some of the research suggests.

Ms LIVERMORE—Thank you.

Mr BARTLETT—Thank you. That has been very interesting. How do you respond to Dr Ingvarson's comment about the need for mathematics ability for training teachers, even to the point that there be a requirement that in their year 12 studies they have done some course in mathematics or at least demonstrated an ability before they enter teacher training?

Mr Cavenagh—I taught with a lot of people—and I was one myself—who had no history of success in mathematics, and I thought I taught pretty well.

Mr BARTLETT—What did you teach, though?

Mr Cavenagh—I was a primary school teacher. When I went over to high school, I taught English and history. But I was a primary school teacher for most of my teaching, and I thought I did okay and that my colleagues did okay. Primary mathematics is pretty simple. It is not rocket science. Obviously if you are going to be a maths teacher I think you need a bit more. We do have problems there. We have huge problems with the number of university students who are doing maths and science.

Mr BARTLETT—Do you think that is partly related to the fact that a lot of primary teachers do not like maths and they grit their teeth and bear it?

Mr Cavenagh—No. Maths can be a lot of fun.

Mr BARTLETT—You think that and I might think that, but do the majority of teachers think that?

Mr Cavenagh—In the classrooms I have been in over the last four or five years—on this business of supervision—it is clear that they get a lot of hoot out of the maths lessons. There is a

lot of good stuff around. There are a lot of beaut programs, such as the Count Me in Too programs in infant school. They are very messy in terms of stuff but, by gee, they are beaut.

Mr BARTLETT—So it is your view that even those teachers who do not have a natural bent towards maths are still doing a good job teaching it?

Mr Cavenagh—I really do think so. Yes, I do not think there is any problem. There may be a problem at secondary school. You must remember that the arguments about the ways to teach mathematics are as old as schools themselves. I was on the council of the Curriculum Development Centre back in the late 1970s and early 1980s for four years while a national debate raged about the teaching of mathematics in secondary schools—between those people who wanted the more formal approach up front, like the way all of us were taught in high school, and the other side, led by Marjorie Carss from the University of Queensland, I think. That side were looking at the American problem solving model. This business about process and content really ebbs and flows all the way through the argument about mathematics—and a lot of other subjects as well—but at the end of the day teachers have major examinations to get kids through. That is what drives teaching and syllabuses. You have a certain amount of time and a certain amount of content and off you go.

Mr BARTLETT—On another tack, there is the issue of the attrition rate, particularly amongst young teachers, although it is not only a problem among young teachers. What is your view as to the main measures that we could take to reduce the attrition rate?

Mr Cavenagh—I think a lot of them have been addressed to some extent over the years. I do not think the attrition rate is anything like it was. I was a research officer for the New South Wales Teachers Federation in 1973. The first job I did was on attrition rates, which were up around 14 per cent. They were enormous.

Mr BARTLETT—It was 14 per cent out of what?

Mr Cavenagh—Out of the whole service. Fourteen per cent of the service was leaving every year. It was incredible. That was Australia-wide. There has always been a substantial attrition rate. When I look back at the people I went through teachers college with, I see that very few of them taught all their working lives. Only a handful taught all their working lives. So it has always been substantial.

Mr BARTLETT—What is the level now?

Mr Cavenagh—I think it is about two or three per cent. I do not think it is terribly high. One of the problems with attrition rate figures is that we never measure when they come back in. Attrition might be something that is a part of a working life anyway—that they pack up and go overseas for three or four years and resign and then come back and get on the casual list again or they get married and decide to do something else, such as go to another place or go overseas. We have an extraordinarily moveable population of young people in any profession now. Many of them will spend some part of their early married years or early adult years overseas. We should not count them as departures if they come back in. We should do something about the figures. We do not know. These figures are not known. We never know. So I do not think it is as big a problem as the teacher educators think it is, frankly.

CHAIR—We have heard from some witnesses that an improvement or an increase in the amount of practicum would be beneficial to teacher training, yet the ACER research tends to indicate that educational content is a major determinant. There are links between the two, quite obviously. What are your thoughts on the teacher practicum and the benefits for teacher training?

Mr Cavenagh—Students themselves think the practicums are important. No student will tell you this was a waste of time because it is kind of real-world stuff. It is becoming increasingly difficult. I thought the Victorian report was just from outer space with their recommendation. I forget what it was, but it was a huge number of days a year. It is just not possible. It is not going to happen. Sydney university has four people who work full time on teacher placement and prac and they struggle. They struggle every prac every year to get the people in practice.

To me, the real key—and it might relate back to the attrition process or the departure process—is in the first two or three years of teaching. People do leave university with high ideals—they think they are going to make a difference—but, if they go into a school which is badly run or extraordinarily difficult in terms of its enrolments and their experience is not a successful one, I think that is the crunch point. People do not leave when they are in fourth year university. They leave in their second or third year of teaching. We do not really know why. Some of it is about what I said earlier. Those who do decide to clear off might not clear off quite so quickly if more were done in the first two or three years.

The systems are now slowly waking up to this. They are starting to talk more about mentoring and induction programs. The systems themselves are doing some very good work—you should talk to them about what they are doing—with new teachers. Some of the stuff is very good. The teaching unions are doing stuff with new teachers. It is not all just ‘Come and join the union and be an activist.’ It is about surviving in the profession and learning how to deal with your colleagues et cetera. A lot of it is very professional. That is about it.

Mr SAWFORD—You make the point that the role of supervising teachers in the practicum has been undermined by poor remuneration and probably poor valuing. What would you do about it? What do you think we should do about that?

Mr Cavenagh—After all these years, I do not know whether remuneration, frankly—and my colleagues at the teacher unions will probably hit me over the head for this one—is the issue.

Mr SAWFORD—Is it status?

Mr Cavenagh—I think it is time. I think for a lot of teachers the pressure of managing their daily lives as well as teaching is such that a student in the room is just more work. It is just overload. That is just a guess. I have no research or information about it. But I do know we have an older group of people. The people who do it do it because they like doing it. There are a lot of them, but there are not enough. The school, as part of its environment—part of the way it looks at itself—has to see itself as an agent in the continual renewal of the profession. I do not really think that many schools talk about it in those terms

Mr SAWFORD—In the old days we had demonstration schools in many states, where the principal was specifically appointed because he or she had a greater knowledge and better links

with teacher education. Teachers were appointed to those schools because of their teaching skills.

Mr Cavenagh—I always thought demonstration lessons were a bit phoney. They gave you a sheet of paper and told you what was going on, and then you looked there and everything they did was what they said they were going to do on the piece of paper. I used to think to myself—

Mr SAWFORD—I do not remember demonstration schools being like that.

Mr Cavenagh—Well, that was my experience—from a long time ago—and I remember thinking, 'Crikey, none of my classrooms were like that.' I do not know whether it makes any difference. There are still a couple of demonstration schools around, but they do not cart students off to sit up the back of the room any more, I do not think, and watch a teacher's lesson. As a part of an experience, I suppose it would have value. We used to have 30 or 40 people sitting up the back of the room. It was really fake. That was my experience.

Mr SAWFORD—One of the things about demonstration schools is that, as Dr Ingvarson was saying, the links between the teacher education faculty and the school were often very close, and there was a continuing relationship. His research seems to indicate that that is a very strong point in terms of the studies. There is a lack of feedback to people training to be teachers and one way of perhaps trying to have a better connection between theory and practice is for the people involved to have a connection themselves.

Mr Cavenagh—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—We are at the beginning of this inquiry. Even in the initial submissions that are coming in, a number of people are pointing out an apparent lack of connection, either perceived or real or imagined, between the universities and the schools, where both groups are under pressure. I think you have acknowledged this too. Maybe there are better ways of making sure that that link between theory and practice is stronger and continuing, rather than the hit and miss that seems to happen today.

Mr Cavenagh—But having a demonstration school means one school benefits. They get some feedback for one school. Where I work, most of us who do prac supervision are casuals. They have had their staffing squeezed to the point where nobody has time to hop in the car and spend a morning out in a school, or very few do, and certainly not with the number of students that they have. The staffing numbers have fallen and the number of students has risen over the last few years. So if you have 500 or 600 students out on prac and somebody has to have a look at them, the staff just cannot do it. I think the business of connectedness is sometimes a bit overstated—I really do. You can get terrific things happening if you have a good university person who can get into a school for a period of time, and the schools like it. But the number of schools around any university is large and the number of staff is not. So there are a lot of practical problems. In terms of the courses themselves, the university I work in has a very close relationship. They work off the New South Wales primary and secondary syllabuses.

Mr SAWFORD—Well, how come some can do it and some cannot?

Mr Cavenagh—How is it that some universities can do it and some cannot? I think that is a topic that the committee should have a very close look at. I think Lawrence said, ‘Don’t treat the teacher education institutions as a group. You’ve got to look at them individually.’ What is it that they do? The mapping exercise that MCEETYA has put on the desk is really valuable, I think, in terms of getting some good information about what actually happens. I do not know, and none of our people would know either, about the differences.

Mr SAWFORD—This is a start-at-the-bottom question. If you were given the power to actually begin to make positive change in teacher education, what would you do? What is one thing you would do?

Mr Cavenagh—I would talk to schools more. The systems that run schools and the principals should spend more time with their staff talking about teacher education—what it is, what it does and what it means. You can do that if you are clear that the program you have is a good program, and I am clear that Sydney’s is—I think it is a great program. I think I would spend more time with schools. The New South Wales department has started doing that—talking to schools—and I know the others are too.

That is where the problem is. No other profession—and I have said this to teachers—bag their own professional training as readily as teachers do. People say, ‘Oh, university. I didn’t learn anything there.’ Remember the old DipEds, the end-on one-year DipEds? They were regarded with absolute contempt by most of the people who did them, possibly for quite good reason. You cannot sustain a profession and renew a profession in a climate where people have a disregard for their own educational and academic backgrounds.

Mr SAWFORD—It goes back to the point of entry, doesn’t it? We go back in a full circle, where we had people here this morning telling us that sometimes the worst advocates for encouraging young people to go into teaching are in fact teachers themselves.

Mr Cavenagh—That was very bad in the 1980s. I do not think it is quite as bad now. But there was a period in the 1980s where it was horrible. We actually had to go into schools and say, ‘Listen, cut it out, because we’re not going to survive as a profession if you keep doing it.’

Mr SAWFORD—So do you think that has decreased?

Mr Cavenagh—I think it has decreased a lot.

Ms LIVERMORE—I have a question, going back to what you said a minute ago, about the role of principals—the leadership they give to schools and the role they play in mentoring new teachers and in professional development for other teachers. This might be more of a question for the education departments, but do you know whether any of that comes into the assessment of principals or the consideration of principals when they go for promotion? Do they look at attrition rates out of that school?

Mr Cavenagh—No.

Ms LIVERMORE—None of that counts for anything for principals?

Mr Cavenagh—No. They have dodged it forever. I was on a body in New South Wales called the Education Commission of New South Wales and I asked about leave patterns in particular schools. I was told by the department that this was not a matter for the Education Commission and that they could handle it quite well. I had the view that if you had a school where 25 people a day were having a day off, sick or not sick, you had some problems in that school. I thought you could have identified a lot of poorly functioning schools that way, but the reply was, 'No, no way.' I do not think they do now.

CHAIR—That just about brings us to time. Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you for further information. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence as soon as it is available. The transcript will be placed on the web site. Thank you very much.

Mr SAWFORD—Thanks for the suggestion in your submission to follow things up. That was excellent.

Mr Cavenagh—Thank you very much.

Proceedings suspended from 10.32 am to 10.46 am

BAILEY, Mr Anthony, Executive Committee Member, VISTA—Association of Vocational Education and Training Professionals

SAINT-JAMES, Ms Virginia, Executive Member, VISTA—Association of Vocational Education and Training Professionals

VEAL, Ms Judith, President, VISTA—Association of Vocational Education and Training Professionals

WILLIAMSON, Mr Andrew, Vice-President, VISTA—Association of Vocational Education and Training Professionals

CHAIR—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should 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. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Ms Veal—No.

CHAIR—Would you care to make an opening statement?

Ms Veal—As president, I would just like to remind you that VISTA is cross-sectoral and includes professionals, practitioners, managers and leaders from across the entire sector. So that includes RTOs, private and TAFE; industry based trainers; educators in adult and community education; VET researchers; and career educators. Today, as part of our presentation, Anthony Bailey and Andrew Williamson will be presenting. I am here to represent the ACE sector. Virginia is here to support us with questions at the end.

As far as the ACE sector is concerned, as a deliverer of vocational training and as a sector which works collaboratively with schools, TAFEs and private providers, many of the issues being presented today are also of concern to the ACE sector. In addition to that, professional development is a major concern. In Victoria, for example, we have the TAFE Development Centre, which was recently established to support TAFE teachers. ACE practitioners and private RTOs are not able to access this service. So I think skills acquisition needs to be managed as part of a national training agenda. I think we cannot address national skills shortages without key stakeholders acknowledging the joint ownership of the problem. I will call on Anthony now, who will look at the ongoing development within the sector.

Mr Bailey—I was asked to look specifically at point 11. In the discussions we have had and in some of the research we have done, we feel that there are two key challenges for teachers in the VET system that might help us inform some of the debate around teacher education. The first challenge is a mechanism for maintaining the currency of competence. The second one is promoting a culture of continuous improvement in teaching practice in the VET sector. I think it is fair to say that within the VET sector there is a certain level of anxiety among teachers and trainers about industry competence. Given that many teachers have been teaching for some time,

they have not had a chance to re-engage with their industry. Therefore, compliance issues associated with something like, say, the AQTF become a real issue because the regular contact with industry is not there. They are the two key issues that I would like to mention to begin with.

Something else I would like to mention is that VET teachers are involved in varying communities of practice. They reflect the key issues, such as maintaining currency of skills and then also teaching community of practice. I will move on a bit later to how we would like to look at addressing those in teacher education.

I guess we need to look at strategies to help maintain industry skills. It sometimes comes back to funding and how we can find the funds to do that. I have been involved with a couple of examples of industry based work placement for VET teachers. There was a very successful program working with a large hotel chain who were happy to have VET teachers come and spend time in their workplace. That often is not the case, but in this case it was and it was very successful. It is a model that I think we can use not only in the VET sector here but also in the ACE sector, if ACE sectors are involved in the sorts of programs we are involved in. I guess the heading there would be industry engagement from the VET perspective. Following on from that, secondments would be another strategy that could be used to allow VET practitioners to have time out of the teaching environment and to work in industry. If need be, we can provide you with examples of that sort of thing.

In terms of continuous improvement, the issue that I think needs to be raised is giving VET teachers, and particularly new VET teachers, time to reflect on their practice as teachers. In the VET sector, often teachers come as industry professionals first and as qualified teachers second. There is a challenge there to give them the opportunity and the scope to develop as teachers while presenting their industry skills. Often you will find people are employed for their industry skills as opposed to their teaching background or their teaching experience. For many VET sector organisations, it is a real challenge to get the balance between a suitably qualified industry professional and a qualified teacher. They are just some of the issues that I thought we could raise to start the conversation.

Mr Williamson—I would like to complement what Anthony said. I manage a youth learning department inside a TAFE and have been involved in that sort of area with the school age students. I notice that point 9 is about investigating the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training. I think that that split between the tertiary and secondary levels is becoming a lot more blurred. I think there is a lot of room for improvement in sharing between the two sectors—that is the secondary area and, certainly, the VET sector that students may have gone into.

I think the VET sector has been called upon more and more to provide alternative education options for young people. Certainly we have a state government directive to provide alternative education options for young people who are not fitting into the schools system. There is a reintroduction, firstly, through the VET in Schools initiative. In Victoria, we have the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning, which is an alternative to our VCE—which is our higher school certificate—and it is increasingly vocationally oriented. The VET sector—that is ACE, RTOs and TAFEs together—is being asked to enter into that schools system and to provide these options and to blend in with the school curriculum and to form these partnerships. At the

moment, our partnerships are really based around financial arrangements rather than the sharing of pedagogy.

The adult learning environment that we provide for young people is incredibly suitable for a lot of students who are disengaging with the school system. We are happy to be taking up those young people. But there is a lot that TAFE, RTOs and the ACE sector can learn from schools about the way they engage young people in education and training. By the same token, there is a lot that we can teach schools about the way we engage young people in education and training.

There is not at all a seamless movement between the two sectors. I think there is a great need for that—an honest relationship, an honest sharing of resources and opportunities. In Victoria, the VCAL option that we offer has the same funding source whether you are at school, in the ACE sector or part of TAFE, yet resources are distributed very differently according to which sector you belong to. Perhaps we can look at the introduction of VET training modules into the Bachelor of Education. Perhaps we can look at a stint for trainers in the VET sector moving into schools. Our languages are so completely different that for a young person it is a huge leap to move from school into the VET sector. I think we need an honest sharing between those two sectors.

In Queensland, I noticed that they have recently started up a dual sector institution, which is TAFE and school. We do not have that in Victoria. We are starting to get there. I think the partnership between industry, the VET sector and schools needs to be enhanced with an honest sharing of resources.

At the moment, if we look at literacy and numeracy tools, the DEST web site has an enormous range of resources but as a TAFE we have no access to them. Despite the fact that the young person has chosen to pursue their education through an adult learning environment in a TAFE, they are denied access to those resources and our staff are denied access to those resources because we do not have the log in code and we are not a government school. My issue is really around that sharing of resources between the schools sector and the VET sector to make a smooth transition for young people moving between school into further education and training and then on into employment.

Ms Veal—That is all as far as our formal presentation is concerned.

CHAIR—Thank you. I am interested in the trade skills stream. It tends to be that someone very skilled in a particular trade would be placed in front of a classroom. What things do you think we should be doing to more adequately upskill a person from a trades background to be put in front of a classroom? How adequately do you think most of those people are coping? Where do you see the best opportunities for improvement?

Mr Williamson—As Anthony said, we want them to be fully engaged with two communities of practice and professionally develop through both of them. One is their industry skilling and one is their teacher training. We very rarely have trainers who come to us who have come straight from an education background. They tend to come from the industry. They do a minimum qualification of a certificate IV as a workplace trainer and assessor. It has been revamped again this year and continues to be developed, but it is a very small qualification in terms of teacher training.

In Victoria, we have a multi-enterprise certified agreement within the TAFE sector, which has started to introduce a system where you do not get an incremental rise in salary and so forth unless you have teacher qualifications. So we are looking at teacher rounds and so forth. So there is another level. We are looking at a graduate diploma level qualification. I think it is a lot to ask a trade professional to somehow get their teacher qualifications and then enter into the TAFE course fully qualified as a teacher and have industry currency. I think that is a big issue.

CHAIR—I have a question with regard to the younger people who choose a TAFE strand for their education. TAFE teachers used to teaching adult classes in the past may be facing potentially an increasing number of young people. Do you think they are well-skilled in dealing with that younger cohort, as it were? Can you suggest any improvements there, if need be?

Mr Williamson—I find it would be based on the individual, to a very large capacity. I am from a traditional trade. I am a chef by trade. We have chefs inside our organisation who teach in a traditional manner. They are quite stuck in their ways in that they teach in the same way they were taught so many years ago. With the young people, particularly those non-traditional learners who are wavering about whether or not they even want to continue with any sort of education and training, we need training professionals who think a little bit outside the square and who are able to accommodate both the school system and where we are trying to get them to, which is a successful employment outcome or further education so they will actually be able to go on to an employment outcome at the end. So being able to see both the big picture and the minutiae of being able to engage individuals in the classroom tends to come down to the individual teacher.

Ms Saint-James—I would like to respond to that. The area I work in covers adults in adult literacy and English as a second language at low levels, generally. We are getting more and more young people coming into the courses. It is very challenging for our staff because they present very different dynamics, particularly in the classroom, to your traditional adult learning environment. We have spent quite a lot of time trying to improve the professional development of our staff. Picking up on Andrew's point before, it is those sorts of situations where our staff may benefit from the mix with secondary schools—learning to deal better with that cohort of students. I think the notion of a seamlessness between the two sectors is actually quite critical in terms of our professional development.

Ms Veal—I will add to that too. I am from AMES, or Adult Multicultural Education Services. We are in partnership with a number of schools and TAFEs in delivering to young people. We are delivering programs in conjunction with schools because the schools really are not equipped to deliver the literacy-ESL side of the curriculum. They also do not have a curriculum that really fits the needs of these young people. What we are doing is working with schools. They are providing the school based subjects. We are providing the language, literacy and numeracy. We are also placing some of these young people into TAFEs for that VET component. We are really working across a number of organisations there.

Mr Bailey—I want to go back to the point about the teacher who is coming into the sector as an industry professional. One thing that I have seen various TAFE colleges do is to identify industry professionals they would like to come and work with them. For example, like Andrew, I am a chef by background, and we have great networks in the hospitality industry.

CHAIR—A great profession.

Mr Bailey—We have identified a couple of leading chefs in Melbourne who we think would be good at working with our students, for example. We have approached them and said, 'In order to teach, you need to have this qualification. We're prepared to support you to undertake that qualification.' We also give them a pre-induction period before they actually start teaching so that the quality of teacher development can be assessed before they actually start teaching. They also have an opportunity to not go any further, because, like the chefs who taught the way they were taught, they might find they do not want to do it. I think that that could extend across all trade skills. I do not see that being particularly specific to any one area. But it does mean that we need to be more flexible in the way that we recruit. We certainly need to engage more in our industries so that they know that we are looking for particular sorts of individuals with particular sets of skills.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to change the focus a little. Ted Brierley, who is the president of the Australian Secondary Principals Association, and a group met us in Canberra last Thursday. I will read a quote from him which was reported in the *Age* in March this year:

We're very short of technology teachers but technology courses have virtually disappeared from the face of the Earth in Australia's universities.

Is there any role still for universities to have VET courses? Who does?

Ms Saint-James—I come from a dual sector university. More than 50 per cent of our delivery is in VET. The area that I am in we call ACFE, or Adult Community and Further Education. I actually see it now as one of our great strengths, because it should provide opportunities for easy movement between VET and higher education courses. It provides opportunities for mix and match. We are also in the fortunate situation of having an education area in higher education which then works to support our VET staff. It is actually quite an advantage, I think.

Mr SAWFORD—It is not as widespread as it could be?

Ms Saint-James—No. I know a lot of the stand-alone TAFEs have good arrangements with higher education, but there is great debate about whether you should actually have dual sector or not and what it actually means. I think, as with everything, it is what you make of it. We are certainly working very hard to create seamlessness and to maximise opportunities for people by having the three sectors of ACFE, TAFE and higher education.

Mr SAWFORD—In a previous inquiry on boys education, it was the experience of this committee that the people we ran into in almost every state in Australia—both in the city and in regional areas—involved in technology and VET in schools were 55 or older. There was a much older profile than in other faculties. Is that still the situation? Is it the situation here in Victoria?

Ms Saint-James—In my department, where I have over 80 staff, our average age is 52. I have only five people aged under 40, which is a huge problem. We are not attracting enough young people into the area to keep us going. In the next five or 10 years, we are going to be very short of qualified people. We are currently going into a fairly intensive period of professional development in language and literacy to be able to supply ourselves with teachers for the next

five to 10 years. I know across our TAFE sector I think the average age is well into the 50s. So it is a problem, yes.

Mr Bailey—I will add to that from a trade skills point of view. You have a bit of a catch-22 there because you do want them to be slightly older. That means they will have had significant experience in the industry. As a centre manager, I would not really be looking to employ anyone with less than eight years industry experience in, say, several sectors of the industry, because you really want someone who has significant experience. Hopefully, that would also include overseas experience. Having said that, I totally agree with Virginia. I think in the next five years we are going to have a lot of trouble recruiting. It is partly, I think, due to the casualisation of the teaching work force—you cannot offer contracts or flexible permanent arrangements to staff that would encourage them to leave the industry and come and work for you. They are taking a significant drop in salary to come and work in the VET sector. Their motivation has to be pretty high to, in some cases, drop their salary by $30,000 a year.

Mr Williamson—I think it is important that that did come up in the boys education inquiry. There is that issue in attracting younger males before they get into that parental stage. I guess they are seen as parental role models by young men. How do you attract males into the education system to be role models that are still tangible and who are an age that is of interest to our adolescent males?

Mr SAWFORD—I want to ask a very specific question. If you want, you can nominate your own personal experience. I am interested in the two of you. You were chefs?

Mr Bailey—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—What happened? I am interested in the process. What went through your mind? Why did you make that transition? How did you make that transition? What happened?

Mr Williamson—My original degree is in philosophy. I discovered that there was not a great call for philosophers in Australia.

Mr SAWFORD—That is a pity. We need thinkers more than anyone else.

Mr Williamson—As I worked my way through university, I started as a dishwasher and ended up becoming trade qualified on my exit from university, and then I was one of those kids who wondered and wandered. Hospitality was a fantastic career option for me in that I could travel and work and learn. I saw a job ad for a teacher and it sort of brought two worlds together. I enjoy the philosophy of hospitality. I enjoy—

Mr SAWFORD—Where did you train as a chef?

Mr Williamson—At Regency College.

Mr SAWFORD—In South Australia?

Mr Williamson—Yes. I am an Adelaide boy.

Mr SAWFORD—I thought so. In my electorate. What about you, Anthony?

Mr Bailey—I was at a technical school in Melbourne, which was the wrong school but it was the school of my father, my uncles, my cousins and all my brothers. I could not wait to leave. I saw a job advertised in the local hotel and left school on the Wednesday and started work on the Thursday. I did my apprenticeship at Box Hill. I liked Box Hill so much I am back now 20 years later running the show. I completed my apprenticeship, went and spent a couple of years overseas and came back and thought there was a little bit more to the world. I actually went to university. I did a double degree at Melbourne.

Mr SAWFORD—In what?

Mr Bailey—In arts and theology. Then a friend of mine who was teaching casually as a chef instructor said, 'There's this great casual job going at Swinburne. You know, you really should do it. Someone is going to call you at the end of the day and ask you whether you want to do it.' Sure enough, a woman, who is now a friend of mine, rang and said, 'We need a casual cookery teacher.' I said, 'But I've never taught before.' She said, 'That's okay. Come out. I know you're a really good chef. You can do it.' I was teaching the very next day, eight years ago. I really enjoyed it.

Mr SAWFORD—What sort of professional development did you do from that day you began with no teaching qualification?

Mr Bailey—I was just sort of making it up as I went along for six months, as a lot of them did in those days. Then I did some teacher training after that.

Mr SAWFORD—How much?

Mr Bailey—I did a two-year Graduate Diploma of Vocational Education and Training. I am now doing a Master of Education.

Mr SAWFORD—How did you survive financially in that little period? It seems to me from a number of submissions that it is very difficult for people to go through that graduate diploma course.

Mr Bailey—I was working. I had about three jobs. I was teaching casually the maximum number of hours that I could teach, which was about eight hours a week. I was working casually for an employment agency in cookery, which was the majority of my income at that time. I was studying Saturday and Sunday.

Mr Williamson—Hospitality lends itself to that sort of integrated life of studying and working.

Mr BARTLETT—I want to return to vocational education and training. Obviously the ideal is that teachers in the classroom have specialist training and have industry experience and currency et cetera. The reality, though, is that a lot of teachers who end up teaching VET courses in school do it without any training. Within the school environment, there is a shortage of VET teachers. Someone who is maybe trained in home science, for instance—I am not sure what they

call it now—ends up teaching a VET course rather than just teaching the home science curriculum course. Teachers who have some ability with computers or might even be prepared to teach computer studies end up teaching business related VET courses. Economics teachers end up teaching business VET courses and so on. So there are a lot of teachers who end up teaching VET courses who are unprepared in any of their training for it.

Equally, there are teachers who end up giving career advice who are totally unprepared and untrained for it as well. One of the recommendations we made in the last inquiry into VET in schools was that all secondary teacher training courses at least ought to have as a compulsory component one unit that provides the groundwork in case teachers are called on to teach VET. So it is the ability to teach workplace employability skills and all those sorts of things. Can you just comment on whether you think that is a workable sort of proposal and how effective it might be>

Mr Williamson—I think it is a workable proposal. I do not think it is adequate, though.

Mr BARTLETT—Sure.

Mr Williamson—We certainly see a lot of—exactly as you said—home economics teachers teaching hospitality. For young people, I think a lot of the time it is the stories you tell that make it alive to them inside an artificial environment like a training kitchen. Doing a unit on how to teach VET subjects inside your Bachelor of Education is a great start. But really I think that the interaction and the communication and the sharing of stories and tales and so forth between sectors and between industry professionals will actually mean that your trade professional becomes a better teacher and your teacher becomes able to share some of those stories and capture, even to a small extent, the life and the character of the industry they are representing. A career teacher, I guess, is one of those people who needs to have a concept of a large variety or a range of industries to direct a young person towards—or at least a range of contacts that he or she might be able to call upon so that the young person can have a chat to the geologist, the chef, the teacher or what have you.

Mr BARTLETT—Clearly for a VET teacher that industry currency is critical. Given your backgrounds as professional chefs, do you think there is a capacity for VET teachers to be released from the classroom to take an industry placement? Obviously that needs to happen. One of the critical issues with that, though, is who funds it. Does the school fund it? Do you think from your experience that there would be many employers out there who would be somehow willing to contribute to that?

Mr Bailey—If funding is the issue. I think that if you can present to the industry partner that there is going to be some genuine benefit for them to be involved in it, they will do that. For example, in the experience I had with a large hotel chain, the benefit that we promoted to them was that they would have access to our students and they would have a chance to look at our students pre-employment. If they thought that our students were worthy of employing in their business, we would set up an arrangement whereby the students could go and work there. They were actually tapping into a labour pool. You have got to sell it. They are not going to do it for altruistic reasons. They are a business.

Mr BARTLETT—Self-interest is a great motivator.

Mr Bailey—Indeed. If you can get an outcome for them that is tangible, I think that is going to work. For example, we are already looking at the Commonwealth Games at the Box Hill institute. Staff in a number of areas will participate in the games as an example of industry experience. That is not just in our area. It could be in communications or IT. It could be in literacy areas with tour guides and all sorts of things. The scope to have VET teachers involved in large-scale public events is broad. It can only help them to take, as we say, the stories back into the classroom.

CHAIR—I would like to hark back for a moment to the issue of young people who are electing that alternative strand of study. I imagine that teachers in the VET stream would come across quite a few young people who have basically fallen through the cracks of the conventional school environment. They have taken the decision to come back and try to get the qualification. They are perhaps under peer pressure to drop out because it may be daggy to get an education. Their friends perhaps do not share what they are trying to do. Do VET teachers feel they have the skills to deal with those young people who are perhaps on the edge of either staying in the system or maybe falling back out of the system?

Mr Williamson—As Virginia said earlier, those students who are returning or who are rejecting school want something extra from their teacher. They want a special teacher who can first and foremost engage them before they actually teach them. It is a big ask for any kind of teacher. There are certain people who can handle it and others who cannot. They tend to self-select within the organisations. Certainly those teachers require a great deal more in terms of their development than a straight trade teacher.

At the moment, I am looking at putting my department through units from a certificate IV in youth work because the issues they come to us with are so broad and really very challenging. They have been to counsellors and through that mill. They want people they respect and they can share information with. They disclose incredible information. Supporting staff through that in itself is a great challenge. Developing staff to handle those sorts of situations and to not carry it home at the end of the night is a whole other wing to teaching those re-engaging young people. In most TAFEs, they have actually set up departments in their own right to handle those special needs of young people. We are seeing that the nexus between youth work, VET training and even school training is becoming much more blended. That youth work-education seam is much more integrated now.

Ms Saint-James—I want to pick up on that. The area I formerly managed had a number of youth programs particularly targeted at what we call disconnected young people. There were two really serious issues related to that. The first was a resourcing issue. As a TAFE, we were not resourced in the same way as a secondary school was, for example, to support these young people. You are dealing with very seriously challenged kids in lots of cases. The other issue which flowed from that was that we had tremendously high burnout rates from staff. So you are dealing with staff turnover fairly rapidly. Two or three years in some of these programs for a lot of people is enough. So it is not just a matter of skilling people up and then letting them go. You have got to constantly re-skill. You have to provide a broader range of professional development than just straight teaching development. You have to provide a greater range of support mechanisms for those support teachers as well. I had a program of providing debriefing and these sorts of activities for staff. They are dealing with some very challenging situations.

Mr SAWFORD—That burnout was also reported to us in the boys education inquiry. What do you do about it?

Ms Saint-James—My approach was to try and not have people working completely in one area, even though they may be very committed to the young people. You are dealing with a lot of challenging situations on a day-to-day basis and often people who would very much take on board the issues for young people. You are not just kind of dealing with a problem; you are really trying to support them. I find the people who go into these areas are very strongly committed to young people. But it takes an enormous amount of energy out of people to keep doing that sort of work. The other problem is if people stay in the area too long, you can actually become a bit blase about it. You become immune to a lot of those issues that the young people are presenting. So there are actually arguments for moving people in and out anyway.

As I said, my technique was to try to mix things up a little bit and provide different sorts of support. I know our organisation puts in place a range of additional professional development activities targeting that particular group, but I still do not think it is enough. I think there are still a lot of resourcing issues that need to be addressed. As Andrew said, we are funded in the same way per student as a school is but we do not have all the additional structures that a school would have. So that does present us with a huge challenge.

Mr Williamson—I will add to that as well. In this area, we sort of introduce another community of practice, which is that youth work community of practice. Having good relationships with the agencies—DHS and Juvenile Justice—that deal with these young people on a day-to-day basis means that there are things my staff experience which they would not share with any other staff. Other staff would be horrified and would reject that. They need to be able to tell stories, even behind closed doors. They need to go through a debriefing process in supervision in the same way that you find in the agencies. We model it a little on that community of practice. We have good relationships with those agencies out in the community. There is discourse and there are strategies that we learn from them that we introduce into our programs.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a specific question and an open-ended one. The first is maybe to Andrew and Anthony. Would you like to give us some insights into how you reconcile teaching and trade skills or industry skills? How did you reconcile those two things—the theory and the practice?

Mr Bailey—I guess I went into teaching without any teaching background and I was largely left by myself just to get on with it and do it, which I did not mind, I have to say. I would not let that happen—

Mr SAWFORD—That is the traditional way—sink or swim.

Mr Bailey—Yes, sink or swim. I started swimming straight away, which was great. Because I did not have anyone saying to me there was one particular way to do it, I found I would change it around. I realised that the students needed to incorporate theory into practice. There was no point sitting—

Mr SAWFORD—What was the age of the students you were teaching?

Mr Bailey—I had two groups. I had a group of students under 18. They were 15 to 18. I had another group of students in my first experience who were all mature age—that is, 21 to 55. In some respects, that was much more challenging than the younger group. I just found that putting theory and practice together in the classroom is really the only way to get a good outcome in my particular vocational area.

One of the things I am just thinking about now is that since I have been here—from 1997 to 2005—the role of the VET teacher has changed dramatically. There is a significant role for counselling and those sorts of things. It is almost like, in a sense, because we are industry practitioners we do not really need to look at some of the industry stuff anymore. We need to look at all the other aspects of the teaching role—being a promoter of learning, helping people become self-directed and those sorts of things. It is really to focus on the pedagogical issues of teaching. I have never had any difficulty reconciling either aspects of the teaching activity. I have just kind of done it, really.

Mr Williamson—I think I would agree with that. When you are in the industry and training apprentices, it is an intimate one-on-one situation for the majority. Then you go into a classroom and you are trying to project that to a whole range of individuals. I think you draw out skills in your new environment with whatever you can from your old environment. I go back to cooking and trying to get 30 or 40 meals out simultaneously that are all needing to be slightly differently prepared for the individuals who are in the room. The classroom is quite a similar situation, where you have 20 individuals who will all want something slightly different. You are trying to get it out to them at the same time or get something to them at the same time. You kind of draw that across. I think one of the greatest things with cooking that I learnt was that if you get your preparation right, you can take that on and handle the most stressful of situations in a trade environment. It is the same with your classroom. You can prepare. If you have your preparation right, the chances are you will actually go all right in front of the class as well. I think you just draw out what you need from each world and translate it across.

Mr SAWFORD—And this is the open-ended question: if you had the authority, and we gave it to you, to institute a fundamental change in teacher education in VET, where would you start and what would you do?

Mr Bailey—Thank you.

CHAIR—You always ask simple questions.

Mr Bailey—I am always wary about coming back to resourcing and just talking about there not being enough money. I do not think that is a very inventive way of approaching a problem. But I think there is an issue about releasing staff to go and learn more about their practice. There are two main communities of practice for the VET professional—their industry skills and their teaching practice. It is giving them time to do both. There is a structure within their employment contract that says the organisation wants staff to be here for a certain number of hours. Inherent in that is that we want them to develop themselves. There needs to be a way to still provide them with an income to go out into industry and develop themselves further, be that going to another TAFE or another school or into the ACE sector and learning more about how other people train. I think that as teachers we quite often work alone. That would be an enhancement to our teaching practice. But there needs to be the time and funding for us to be released into industry

to keep our trade skills current as well. I am uncomfortable with that coming down to just a resourcing issue, but I suspect that it is.

Ms Saint-James—I want to pick up on that. My initial training was as a physical education teacher. Right from the start of my course, I was out working in schools at swimming pools and all sorts of things. The practical experience, the real-life experience, was part of the whole learning process. I think one of the issues for me with a lot of teaching is that you do not actually get out into a school or get into a real environment until your final year. The practical application of what you are doing is very limited. Your ability to take real-life experiences back into your learning environment does not really occur very much. Obviously with VET practitioners you have a great opportunity to blend the two things together. I would like to see some really good parallel processes of learning in higher education or whatever and your actual experiences so the two things are actually complementing each other. If I could change the education process, that is what I would like to do.

Ms LIVERMORE—That leads to a question I had in mind for Virginia. Do you have student teachers coming into the program that you run?

Ms Saint-James—Not a lot. There is one quick point I want to make in relation to that. A couple of years ago, VISTA was involved in a number of programs where students in their final year at university were having career advice counselling. We went along. Most of them did not know about the VET sector. They did not know about employment opportunities in the VET area. I think that we need to actually do something to address that issue, definitely.

Ms LIVERMORE—I notice in one submission—I think it is La Trobe University, who might be coming in next—they talk about their students participating in adult literacy courses and things like that as part of their options for their prac. I wonder if there is scope for that link between teacher education courses and the VET sector to be initiated.

Ms Saint-James—Because we have an education area in VU, we have the opportunities for student teachers to work in our area. We have had a small number but nowhere near the number I would really like. I would like to get more people in. I see them as potential employees down the track.

Ms LIVERMORE—Do you think that is just a lack of awareness?

Ms Saint-James—I think a lot of people do not see themselves having careers in VET. I am in adult literacy and English as a second language. People can come straight from university into my courses. It is the same with AMES.

Ms Veal—We certainly have a lot through on the practicum placement, yes, and an ongoing stream from most of the major learning institutions.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We will contact you if we require further information. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence as soon as it is available. The transcript will also be posted on our web site. Thank you.

[11.35 am]

CARTLEDGE, Dr Damon Neil, Coordinator, Adult, Vocational and Technology Education, School of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

HEYWOOD, Dr Peta, Coordinator, Pre-service Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

NEVILLE, Dr Bernard William, Associate Professor of Education, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

PRAIN, Associate Professor Vaughan Richard, Deputy Dean and Head of School, School of Education, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

SHEED, Dr Jennifer, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

TOBIAS, Dr Stephen, Deputy Head of School, School of Education, La Trobe University

CHAIR—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that these 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 parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission? If not, I invite you to make an opening statement.

Prof. Prain—We welcome this opportunity to talk to the inquiry and we welcome its recognition of the central importance of teacher education in our country. I am going to talk just for 10 minutes, briefly addressing each of the terms of reference. We have a group with a lot of expertise that can answer individual questions.

In relation to the first point, entry into our courses is generally via academic aptitude. That means year 12 results or degree results. The mature age students do further literacy and numeracy tests. It is probably not the most ideal method, but we get so many applicants that it is what we currently do as a practical solution. On the second issue of the quality of students, we believe the quality of students into our courses is improving. In general, if we take the one-year DipEd course, typically students have more than a straight degree. They are often older students. The median age now is 30, as you probably heard from other reports. We are getting high-quality applicants into our programs. It is an interesting time at La Trobe because the university has seen fit to create a new faculty of education with 1,100 students or so in four years with a one-year course. We have five campuses. Each of those campuses in Victoria is involved in teacher preparation. The campuses are Bendigo, where the new faculty is based; Bundoora in Melbourne; Shepparton; Albury-Wodonga; and Mildura. So we are involved in teacher preparation in a wide range of campuses in a new faculty in a university that is seeing education as a high priority.

On the third point of criteria for selection, staff into our school are selected on merit in terms of teaching and research expertise. I guess there has been a problem in recruitment, as I am sure you are going to hear over and over again. Of the comparable pay scales in relation to other jobs, even in relation to teaching, we now have principals who get more money than professors. This creates challenges for the system. It is very hard to sum up quickly the philosophy of what we do across all those courses and campuses. Our program is very much based on evidence based practices. We are interested in learner diversity, an experiential practical approach and in having a strong relationship with schools and a student-oriented focus. We see that teaching and preparation for teaching is not just a technical matter. It is not just the business of skilling people. It involves a holistic approach where we focus on feelings and on an understanding of that role in relation to students.

In terms of question 6, which is about the interaction and relationship with other university faculty disciplines, as you may know, we run various double degrees, such as a Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts, and Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education. We see it important to build connections between discipline knowledge and education background.

The question of what the curriculum is is certainly a hot topic. As you have noted here in your terms of reference, we too are concerned that the curriculum for teacher preparation should be very much about important issues in terms of Indigenous students. I see it as one of the few things you have not listed there in terms of issues facing teacher preparation. I will make a very quick point that pluralistic approaches are needed. This applies to teaching literacy. We do not have one doctrinaire approach to how you teach. I am sure you will hear this over and over again. We are lucky here in Victoria in that the new Victorian Institute of Teaching has played a very important part in terms of focusing on high-quality accreditation processes. This means that our courses go through very exacting reviews in terms of reaccreditation. All of our courses have just been through that process and are seen as exemplary in terms of understanding key issues facing teacher preparation.

On point 8, which concerns the relationship with schools, clearly it is a crucial role that the schools play. Our written submission covered a lot of points in relation to that. We listed various ways in which we extend the program beyond the practicum, which is the mainstay of teacher preparation in terms of schools. However, we want to make the point that teacher preparation has to be a combination of university and school based work. There has to be scope for reflection outside the school context and the development of skills and understandings at the university.

Point 9 relates to the current split. We too see that there is perhaps something artificial in the current split between primary and secondary teacher preparation. Our courses reflect this in that we offer programs that engage teachers in learning about the middle years, such as P to 9 and P to 12. We have a range of programs as it is important to have teacher preparation involved across that divide.

On the question of professional development, it is a very interesting time in Australia. There is considerable input from both federal and state and private consortia in offering professional development. The point we would like to make to the committee is that it is valuable to have this input, but perhaps there is scope for more coordination across all of the professional development opportunities both at state and federal level. We seem to often have overlap. Again,

there is a crucial role in universities providing quality assurance for professional development. This is sometimes the case but not always in terms of what is going on around this country now.

Finally, on the question of the adequacy of funding, as you would well know, universities are strapped for cash. The effect of that is a trickle down onto all the faculties in terms of what they can provide. La Trobe is a university that puts education as a high priority. We consider we are well treated. But the university in general would have concerns about recurrent funding. I will stop there.

CHAIR—Thank you. With regard to resources for the practicum, you indicated in your submission that there should be a substantial increase in the resources for teacher placements. How do you see the current level of resourcing of the practicum and how much do you think it should be increased by?

Dr Tobias—The practicum does take a considerable amount of funding. The costs of visiting students and paying supervising teachers across a region are quite substantial. In Bendigo at the moment, we are paying teachers $300,000 to supervise. We believe strongly in having a collaborative role to the point where we would like to maintain that sort of contact. We know from experience that visiting students while they are on practicum and interacting with the teachers, for that matter, during the practicum is extremely important. It is extremely important for a number of reasons. It gives the students the contact back with the university. They can discuss theoretical issues and, more likely, curriculum issues about implementation and how to do it. We have a lovely relationship with our students that way.

It is also an excellent avenue for us to interact with the classroom teacher. I believe across our region anyway that we have a great relationship with schools. It is very healthy. We are able to at other times call on those schools and teachers for assistance or even research or to develop greater and far deeper links with the school communities. So there is a great call for us to do that in our local schools. As far as how much it costs and possibly how much—

Prof. Prain—In a one-year DipEd course, the cost of the practicum is about $1,200, which means it is a sizeable proportion of the money coming in to provide a one-year program. It would be a great assistance to the quality and the provision if we had more money available. As you will hear from other universities, that cost is not necessarily easily met in terms of the money available.

CHAIR—In an ideal world, by how much would you raise the investment in the practicum?

Dr Neville—I would say that currently there is no investment in the practicum in the sense that the money we receive from the university to run our teacher education programs does not pay for the teacher education programs. They are only supported by cross-subsidisation from other courses—from fee-paying courses from international students and so on. When one takes the $1,200 out per student per year, what remains is not actually sufficient to maintain the courses. If that amount were added to what we receive through some procedure or other, it would be a much more comfortable situation for us.

I will take up a point from here. The budgetary pressure on us leads us to have bigger classes, which we do not think is a good idea, less interactive teaching and fewer visits to schools by

staff. You will probably have heard from other institutions that some of them have had to abandon the notion of visits from staff to schools altogether because of budgetary considerations. It is something which can be cut out routinely bureaucratically, but it is something which really does affect the quality of what we do.

CHAIR—Sure. If you were to look at the current resources devoted to the practicum sector of the course, what proportion of increase would you see as giving an optimal result—10 per cent, 15 per cent or 20 per cent?

Dr Neville—For me, in terms of my acquaintance with the budget, we really need the whole of the practicum payment to teachers to be added to our budget, which is the $1,200 per student in a one-year program. It is about one-third of our total cost.

Mr BARTLETT—By way of clarification, how do you derive that figure of $1,200?

Prof. Prain—That is two methods, two rounds and the payment to schools or teachers.

Mr BARTLETT—Payment to the classroom teachers?

Prof. Prain—Yes. For the supervision of the student.

Dr Heywood—That is for 45 days teaching experience in a one-year course. Ideally, a 60-day teaching experience would be beneficial. To overcome that, we give them 15 days in what we call fieldwork, where they go into educational institutions and see how they operate in a different way. Teachers do not get paid for that. There is always a little bit of a conflict in whether you should take this student in on fieldwork when you are not getting paid.

Mr BARTLETT—So the $1,200 is paid to the classroom teacher for their work in supervising and writing a report?

Dr Heywood—Yes. Only for the 45 days.

Prof. Prain—In some private schools, it goes to the school, not the teachers. But it is the cost of the supervision of the two methods for two rounds. So there are additional costs. As you could well appreciate in a regional context, if we have a three-hour drive to Sea Lake and back, in time, they are all additional costs to actually providing a professional experience for the student teacher. So the $1,200 is the absolute minimum cost of actually just covering their requirements. It does not cover all the costs.

Mr BARTLETT—I notice in point eight and in your introductory comment that you make the point that it is difficult to get enough placements and enough supervising teachers. Is part of the reason for that simply the fact that classroom teachers do not see the $1,200 as adequate to pay for the extra effort?

Prof. Prain—It would be a mix.

Dr Heywood—At the moment, many teachers do not see it as their role to take on student teachers. More importantly, we in the university have no control over who takes on the role of

supervising the student teachers. In some cases, you have people who are actually not doing their job efficiently. Because we have to rely on the schools to nominate who does it and because there is this very delicate negotiation with a lot of students needing a lot of places, I think it would be very beneficial if we were able to pay them a little more money and the university would have some way of accepting or coaching or monitoring the way they supervise the student teachers.

It is a very important part of the program. I am currently dealing with quite a few students who feel they have had a very difficult time with supervisors who are not modelling splendid teaching and have not treated them with the kind of respect and care that a beginning teacher needs. So I feel quite strongly that this area of teacher supervision in the schools is one that is probably shared by many people and one that we should be looking at.

CHAIR—An argument has been put that in many other professions the professionals take on training responsibilities as part of their professional responsibility rather than as a paid position. Would you ascribe to that view? Do we need to look at fostering that teacher training for ongoing professionals or that teacher training ethic, if you like?

Dr Neville—There was an attempt within the award for teachers some years ago to include the supervision of student teachers as part of the award for senior teachers. That fell in something of a hole because suddenly we found we did not have enough people offering to do it. There simply were not enough people at senior level in a position to do it. People who were recently graduated themselves were called on to do it and they were not being paid the salary which was supposed to go with it.

I do not think it is only a matter of financial reward for supervising teachers. I think there is a status thing and other kinds of rewards that need to go with it. I think some sort of accreditation or recognition of the status of the position is something that needs to be introduced into the profession.

Dr Sheed—Given the current climate, it is totally unrealistic to expect teachers to take it on as an extra duty to what they already have. There are a very large number of students trying to find placements in schools. I think in our society the way we seal transactions is through some sort of payment or whatever. Taking up Peter's point and Bernie's point, if there were money there, we would be able to have greater requirements of supervising teachers in terms of the quality of the product they deliver and the way they treat students. Practicum and practicum supervision and finding placements is a very elaborate dance at the moment. As many people have said, it is maintaining those relationships with schools. It happens because we do visit and because there is that personal contact. Keeping up that personal contact costs money. I think the financing of the practicum and thinking through how it might be better financed is probably a critical issue for this particular review.

Prof. Prain—Teacher preparation is of course more than just our time with the students. There is also the question of mentoring and transition. Here in Victoria the Victorian Institute of Teaching is looking at the idea of accrediting people to be mentors. But they are often the very people that we find the best supervising teachers. So there are still challenges in how we are going to have a system that is very effective in terms of teacher preparation while they are

studying but also providing transition. As you would appreciate, transition into the profession and being supported in those first few years is really crucial to retaining people in the profession.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to ask a crass question about money. How is it allocated in the university? Why is it that you, Professor Prain, are getting less than a principal of an equivalent school? Why is it that full-time people in teacher education are paid so little in some institutions? There seems to be something drastically wrong with the amount of money that is given to an education faculty. Does the money subsidise other faculties or is it the other way around? When I read through the submissions from the universities, I find it totally unacceptable.

Prof. Prain—We agree.

Mr SAWFORD—I know. How does this happen?

Prof. Prain—As you well appreciate, there are historical reasons for this. The status of teaching and the status of teacher education within the system are all factors that have contributed to that history and that state that we have now.

Mr SAWFORD—You would have been better off in a teachers college.

Prof. Prain—Then again, that is another question about status and pecking order as to what is seen as relatively important within a higher education system.

Mr SAWFORD—What is the actual differential between a relative salary in teacher education and what happens to, say, a top-level experienced teacher? What is the differential?

Dr Neville—A beginning teacher is currently on $43,000 or something like that, which is about the salary that a junior academic would get in a university. The junior academic, in most faculties, comes straight from a PhD at the age of 22 or 23 and has an academic career. If we want to employ a teacher at $43,000, we are looking for someone who has teaching experience and a PhD, which is hard enough to get. But to have the kind of experience we want, they are going to be a senior teacher with a salary at least in the $50,000s, and we expect them to have a PhD on top of that. At the top levels, I think there are high schools in Victoria where the principal would earn $120,000. A professor of education’s salary starts at about $90,000 and goes up to about $100,000. That is how I understand it. The main difference is getting people to take a drop in salary in order to become teacher educators.

Mr SAWFORD—Not very attractive.

Dr Heywood—To become a teacher educator in a university, this requirement of having a doctorate puts a huge impediment in front of teachers. We have currently what we call recent professional practice applicant staff members that we have been able to put on at junior academic salaries. Of course, that is a very low rate of pay for them. But we can accept them because they have recent practice in the classroom, which is terribly important in keeping your course up to date and running.

Mr SAWFORD—What percentage of your teacher educators would have recent teaching experience in schools?

Prof. Prain—Nowadays, most staff are involved in research on working in schools. There is a strong requirement that we are seen as involved in collaborative partnerships either through research or other kinds of programs or in service or consultancy. If we are talking full time, it is a kind of release, so there are very few in that category. But in most cases, people would have had some recent experience.

Mr SAWFORD—La Trobe has the most interesting arrangement in terms of being in regional areas. In terms of organising those practicums, that must obviously bring great problems. Can you tell me how you structure a practicum in the four years of teaching? What happens? How is it structured? What happens in the first year, second year, third year and fourth year?

Dr Tobias—In the first year—this is a BEd (Primary) course—

Mr SAWFORD—That will do as an example.

Dr Tobias—These students can actually be dual trained and come out as middle year teachers as well. In the first year, we believe in getting them out into the classroom as quickly as we can. We do so in the third week of first semester of first year. They are out there one day a week basically for a semester—about 10 weeks, I suppose—over first and second semester. In second year, we have two three-week rounds, one in each semester, and the same again in third year. We have different variations to that. In the third year, they can take on an alternative practicum, which may be one day a week or two days a week for a whole semester, to take up the same amount of time.

Next year will be the first time the fourth year of the course has been run. We have called it field experience on purpose to move away from the notion of practicum. The practicum requirements for the course will have been achieved by the end of third year. In our fourth year, we are looking for more action research type work with the schools and interaction with the schools. So the students actually go into the schools as a real partner and take on real responsibilities in that classroom. They can really play with the big boys in terms of showing their skills and working side by side with a teacher. At the moment, that is down at 25 days in the fourth year. So it is a lot of time out in schools. It is spread right through the course. We believe that is a very good model. It has worked for us quite well.

Mr SAWFORD—I have one last question. Is there any role for a modern equivalent of a demonstration school? I have a good memory of demonstration schools, where the best principals were around and the best teachers. Basically, the highest common factor in education dominated what happened. There were continuing links with the teacher educators. In other words, those people knew each other on a personal basis, so the relationship was not only professional; it was personal and it was continuing. I acknowledge that with the numbers involved it is only a part of an answer, but it could be a very positive part at particular stages of a practicum in terms of either the fourth year or maybe the third year of a course. Do you have any views on a modern equivalent of the old demonstration school in its more positive light?

Dr Neville—At the metropolitan campus, a number of principals in the area close to La Trobe would be very interested in having a particular kind of partnership with the School of Education at Bundoora in which their teachers came and taught within the program and students went to those schools on an ongoing basis. They have a bit of trouble persuading their staff that this is a

good idea. We are working, I think, that kind of partnership with half-a-dozen schools. We have—I am thinking of the secondary level—an intake each year of about 140 students. This is possible within half-a-dozen schools. We have, as I said, considerable interest from a number of principals. But changing the culture of those schools so that they have student teachers with them day after day after day may be a little bit difficult.

Mr SAWFORD—You mentioned status earlier. One of the advantages of the older demonstration school was that the principal was paid a differential; it was not a great differential. He or she was recognised as an educational leader. The teachers appointed to that school were paid a small differential. But there was status. There was definitely status. I think people saw it as an opportunity to push their career forward in a whole range of ways. Is that still valid today?

Dr Tobias—I think so. I think it is an excellent point you have hit on there. It would keep teachers in the classroom and maybe even returning to the university to undertake higher education, like a master's or PhD program. But they would stay in the school, which financially they are better off doing than coming into the university. It does raise the stakes and it does add more credibility to a program. From our investigations, we believe that collaboration is the way to go, certainly with practicum. But it is about a close relationship, not just dropping somebody off from the car as you are driving past when they go into the school. It is actually working hand in hand with the classroom teacher and with the student teacher as they undertake those practicum studies.

Mr SAWFORD—It is a way of removing the $1,200. In those days, it came in with a salary component from the education department.

Dr Tobias—I might add that, as Jennifer said, schools are extremely busy. There is a lot of unease out there. Teaching is quite a difficult, challenging job nowadays. Likewise, if you have a teacher who is not quite up to scratch or a student teacher that actually takes a lot of nurturing—some teachers do not have time to do that—it is not plain sailing all the way.

Dr Sheed—I think one of the things that would be really important with that concept would be to have a greater focus on learning. My memory of demonstration schools from Sydney university in the 1970s is not a good memory in many ways because my memory of the teachers in those schools is that they were absolute control freaks. I would have a concern about people who were demonstration teachers who did not really have a good understanding of how students learn. So if there was a diversity of models that students could tap into in terms of working with Indigenous students and working with students in low socio-economic groups and things like that, and we recognise diverse models of good teaching, I would feel a lot more comfortable with it. But I do not see it as a valid substitute for actually paying teachers in schools for what they do when they take on our students. We really want them to give them something and deliver something. I think that really does have to be funded. I agree with Steve that we need a close collaboration with schools. We need many things. We need many diverse models, I think. There is not just one answer to all these issues.

Mr SAWFORD—No. I understand that.

Mr BARTLETT—I have a question about the ability and preparation of primary teachers to teach mathematics at the primary level. Earlier we had Dr Ingvarson from ACER suggesting that

there was a real inadequacy in that area and that in selecting trainee teachers we ought to see whether they have done a component of mathematics, even to the point that they have a maths unit in their HSC as a prerequisite for teacher training. Yet the gentleman from the AEU said that was not an issue at all and that in his experience nearly all teachers in the classroom are teaching maths very well at the primary level. I would be interested in your views about the quality of the teaching of mathematics at the primary level and the training and the prerequisites for that.

Dr Tobias—I am a maths education lecturer. I do work with the primary and the secondary cohort. I will contextualise it a little bit for you. You can have DipEd students who have had a three-year undergraduate degree in mathematics or science or whatever—a related field, but it is certainly at least a minor in mathematics discipline studies—who still cannot tell you some fundamental grade 3 mathematics. They do not understand it. They have learnt it in an algorithmic way. They have been very good at that. They have just repeated or regurgitated that sort of information when it came to the exams. You need to know more than the mathematics. You need to understand the mathematics when you ask a question like how many halves are there in three-quarters. A mathematically trained person will go for an algorithm and look for a rule. A good primary school teacher will go for a picture, concrete material or another way of actually dealing with that sort of task. Basically that is our point: I do not think they need more mathematics. They need more quality mathematics education and lots of experience to nurture that.

From our experience, primary teachers generally are female and generally come from arts sort of subject areas in their VCE and usually have poor attitudes towards mathematics. So there in itself is a huge problem for us in our teaching of mathematics. That is where we need to address it. I do not think doing more maths as a discipline is going to solve that. In fact, it could make the problem worse. It is actually nurturing those students through the mathematics in a contextual way so that when they are learning, they are actually learning how to teach as well. They are learning to teach and to learn about the mathematics. That is the way we do it at Bendigo.

Mr BARTLETT—So do you think that is happening effectively? Are you turning out good maths teachers even from students who have not done any maths at senior high school?

Dr Tobias—I feel sure that we are doing that and achieving that to a great extent. We are turning students around to in their fourth year actually choosing to do more work in mathematics.

Dr Sheed—One of the interesting things coming through the four-year course is that about 20 students do the mathematics education subjects. They also take the mathematics discipline in the maths department. They are being hired preferentially because of that background in secondary schools to teach mathematics in the junior secondary areas. There is something about that nurturing and that confidence in their ability to do mathematics and to teach children how to do it that somehow the regular graduates coming through secondary courses do not seem to have. So I think there is something really important happening there. A lot of maths educators would say that.

Dr Heywood—In the one-year DipEd at Bundoora, we have people who come in with a self-confessed maths phobia. When they overcome that and realise they actually can do maths and,

what is more, they can get that light of understanding in their students' eyes, they become very enthusiastic mathematics teachers. So actually finding they can do something they used to be frightened of is very empowering. I think we are doing well. I support what Steve said: it is an issue but it is one that we are actually working on successfully.

Mr SAWFORD—I come from the other end of what Steve was saying. I have a tertiary qualification with a distinction in mathematics. I went out teaching for four or five years and suddenly realised, after being exposed to Professor Zoltan Dienes from Canada one year, that I knew sweet bloody nothing about mathematics. It comes the other way as well. A lot of people who have high qualifications in mathematics do not know anything about mathematics either and particularly, as Stephen explained so well, the teaching of it. It was not until four or five years into my teaching career that I suddenly had to start learning again what mathematics was all about.

Dr Cartledge—One of the other key issues we are dealing with here is that we are looking at it as a linear progression from university studies to teacher education. I would suggest, quite different to the undergraduate model at our Bendigo School of Education, in the School of Educational Studies there is quite a deal of a lag between when they have finished their formal studies and when they take up a teacher education program. I think too we cannot just look at what is embedded in an undergraduate degree program as being indicative of what is going to come out the other end for maths education.

Ms LIVERMORE—There has been some reference in previous hearings to the idea of the overloaded curriculum for teaching students at universities. Do you have any views on what is in the curriculum and whether you would regard it as overloaded? Is there anything that you think could possibly be left out of it?

Dr Neville—I could make some comment. I have been in this teacher education business for more than three decades. Over that time, I have regularly engaged in arguments about whether a one-year teacher preparation program is sufficient and whether you can you fit everything in and so on. I think the kind of compromises that we make are at least fair ones. It is largely a matter of raising issues and giving basic technique. The arguments for saying that there should be a two-year preparation would suggest that after two years at university people are better teachers than people who have spent one year at university and one year in the classroom. I think we need to see teacher education as the beginning of the process. In Victoria, there is provisional registration for the first year, desirably with good mentoring. The question of the overloaded curriculum is something that is addressed over two years rather than over one.

Dr Heywood—I think I will add to that. There is certainly a lot that we have to deal with. You cannot deal with every issue, but you can alert people to ways of handling the issues that are likely to arise. I think once they are in the classroom, that is really when you bring all your learning together and you apply it in the context that you are working in. With good mentoring, that should be really good.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to ask one last question which follows on from what Kirsten was saying. Who decides what is in and what is out in the courses? How often do you change them?

Dr Tobias—A course coordinator would hold annual reviews at least twice a year. They would hold a review with students. This is what we have decided to do in Bendigo with the BEd. There are annual reviews from students and staff to consider the health of the course.

Dr Cartledge—We are also largely driven by an accreditation process for teacher registration. We need to be bound by their rules and regulations and requirements.

Mr SAWFORD—What sort of responses do some of the students give?

Dr Neville—To the content or the process?

Mr SAWFORD—Both.

Dr Heywood—You will be seeing some of our students this afternoon, if they can find their way here and get through the processes.

Mr SAWFORD—We will put that question to them.

Ms LIVERMORE—I want to follow up on that. Do your partner schools have any input?

Dr Heywood—We invite the schools to inform on a regular basis us about what they think a student teacher should know. We have meetings with the principals. We invite them to come in and talk with the students so that we keep in touch with what schools are requiring. But the accreditation process has been supportive of where we go and what we put in. In particular, for instance, they are very keen to have an ethics component in the course. We have sort of touched on ethics, but with their input we are really focusing more heavily on an ethics component, clearly, and decidedly there is an ethics component.

Dr Neville—The accreditation process with VIT demands that the course is structured to a particular template which covers particular content. VIT is not terribly concerned with how we do this but needs to be assured that we do cover what is regarded by the VIT and this accreditation committee as the necessary components of effective teacher education. On top of that, we have ongoing dialogue with the people in schools and we have ongoing evaluation by our students.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you if we need to seek further information. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence as soon as it is available. The transcript will be placed on our web site.

[12.19 pm]

BROWN, Mrs Jennifer Elizabeth, Coordinator, Pre-Service Programs, Clayton Campus, Faculty of Education, Monash University

CORRIGAN, Dr Deborah Joy, Associate Dean, Teaching, Faculty of Education, Monash University

LOUGHRAN, Professor Jeffrey John, Associate Dean, Professor of Curriculum and Professional Practice, Faculty of Education, Clayton Campus, Monash University

NUTTALL, Dr Joce, Senior Lecturer, Peninsula Campus, Monash University

CHAIR—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I advise should 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 parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Dr Corrigan—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make an opening statement.

Dr Corrigan—Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend the inquiry. We have brought a team together from Monash that we think will cover the broad range of Monash's experience in teacher education. We are a university that exists over three campuses in teacher education. The Clayton campus has secondary education, both undergraduate and graduate. The Gippsland campus has primary and secondary education, both on campus and by distance education. The Peninsula campus has early childhood and primary education predominantly on campus. So we have brought a range of people who can talk about all of those experiences. We thought we would do a bit of a team effort in terms of our opening statement. I will hand over to John.

Prof. Loughran—My first part of the role was to try to give you a brief contextual picture of Monash. I am going to go through some of the ideas that are the philosophy that underpins our approach to teacher education from early childhood onwards. The first issue we would make—I trust you have probably heard this quite a lot so far today—is that we differentiate dramatically between training and education. We are not happy with the notion of the dichotomies that are set up in separating teacher preparation off into the idea of training or education. We look at it in terms of the development of competency being important but that teaching education is about moving way beyond the competencies themselves. The way our programs are organised, it is very important to us that the learning about teaching occurs within the experience of doing that, not through the notion of embedded understanding as a result of sitting in a lecture theatre. The way we approach our teaching, in that we adjust the course and be responsive to our students, is trying to embed learning in the experience of learning to teach.

We think teacher preparation itself is by definition incomplete because it is preparing people to begin a career; it is not an end unto itself. The programs at Monash University would be amongst the most researched teacher preparation programs internationally. We are very well known for that work. The research of our teacher preparation has been fundamental in shaping the nature of our courses. We see an important difficulty in teacher preparation in establishing the differences in the perspectives of the different stakeholders—teachers, principals, students, student teachers and teacher educators—and trying to moderate those different perspectives that are important in shaping the nature of our programs.

Finally, one of the difficult things for us—we have confronted this over the last six or so years when we moved to double degree programs—has been the recognition of the difference between viewing teacher preparation in terms of time as opposed to the quality of the experience. One of the things we have come to recognise and shape our programs with is the importance of teaching the student as opposed to just delivering the curriculum. Philosophically, they are the things that shape the nature of our programs and the way we teach them. We see it as crucial that the arguments about teacher education encompass a language of teaching about teaching—what the teacher educators are attempting to do, because teaching is a discipline in its own right—and learning about teaching. The dual agendas in that are crucial in understanding what teacher preparation can do and what expectations are realistic.

Dr Corrigan—One of the other things we want to bring to you in our opening statements is the notion of being teacher ready. It is really a balance between needs, concerns and expectations. Our role as teacher educators at Monash University is to make sure that that remains in balance and that none of those three actually overcomes the others. So the expectations should not outweigh the concerns and needs of all the people involved. The people involved in that are the students themselves, the schools and the university as the teacher educators. We need to maintain that balance really quite closely. That also relies very much on partnerships. We view teacher education at Monash University very much as a partnership where there are responsibilities on all those people in the partnership, both schools and teacher educators. It is about managing a meaningful relationship and a meaningful partnership and taking those responsibilities seriously. I think those are probably our opening statements.

CHAIR—There has been a lot of discussion about the practicum. Do you feel that you are able to devote enough resources to the practicum? If not, how would you proportionately increase it?

Dr Corrigan—Proportionately increase it? In terms of the practicum, I think we probably need to separate out the notion of time in schools with the financial resourcing of the practicum. I am quite passionate about this because I actually do quite a bit of research on this both here and in the UK, where obviously they spend more time in schools. I hear quite often schools saying that student teachers need to spend more time in schools. I would contend that that is not the real issue; that it is about making sense of those school experiences and that it is actually the sense that students make of it. To do that, they need time to reflect, to make sense, to think about it and think through their problems. Whether that is in school or whether that is in university is not really the issue. It is about the sense-making of those experiences so that students have the opportunity to link their theoretical framework with their practical experiences. That is what leads them forward in terms of meaningful teaching experiences. So it is not just a function of the amount of time. There is plenty of evidence now starting to come out of the UK that in fact it

is not about the amount of time that is spent in school but actually the reflective framework and the pedagogical framework that student teachers develop. That is a really critical part.

In terms of the financial resourcing, it is very expensive to conduct the practicum, as it is in any profession that involves some sort of clinical placement. Teaching is no exception. We underestimate the time and effort and the financial resources on all the partners that are involved. There is an expectation on the university to visit while people are in the school. There is an expectation on teachers within the school to be paid. There is the time and expertise of those experts in those different fields. All of that has a financial implication. So if you are asking me whether it is financially well resourced, I would have to say no. It is actually costing us money. We are having to subsidise our teacher education programs from our other successful programs that do not require clinical placements. So, no, it is not adequately financially resourced at all.

Mr SAWFORD—Is it the most formidable challenge?

Dr Corrigan—The practicum?

Mr SAWFORD—No, the funding.

Dr Corrigan—I think everybody at Monash is committed to teacher education, and it is costing us money. There is definitely a public good in it. So, yes, it is a real formidable challenge to actually maintain all of those things that we think are important and value when it is costing you money. The economic driver is that you are actually not going into deficit all the time. That is a real possibility for faculties of education across the country.

Mr SAWFORD—In an ideal world, how would you reorganise that?

Prof. Loughran—It has to do with the level of funding that you get for a student in education compared to some other disciplines. Education would be one of the lowest funded.

Mr SAWFORD—Who decides that amount?

Prof. Loughran—It is partly from the university but it is also Commonwealth funding as well. Over the last 15 years you can map through the changes. When we moved from the previous model in the mid-1980s to the relative funding model, the notion of the practicum was an issue that started to arise then. There was an allocation that disappeared slowly over time, so the cost of the practicum became involved in the formula for the allocation of students into the universities. Over time that has slowly disappeared so that now the practicum is part of the cost, and the weighting for a student teacher is one of the lowest in the university. So the practicum is a very expensive component in lots of ways. It is not just financially. It is expensive time-wise when you want to maintain contact with the schools and you want to keep supervising teachers in touch with what is happening and vice versa—the teacher educators in touch with the school. There are lots of costs that are not necessarily financial in terms of the initial funding but become financial in terms of maintaining expertise and contact. So it is a complicated issue. But the cost of the practicum is certainly substantial and not covered appropriately.

Dr Nuttall—And there is a pragmatic structural aspect to this in the present environment. Because the federal government has placed a ceiling on the ability of universities to increase

fees, within teacher education and, I understand, within nursing as well we are limited in our ability to increase fees which might provide an additional income stream for us to support the practicum. But at the same time over here industrial awards are increasing for supervising teachers and their payments for supervision are built into those awards. So as they rise and yet the ceiling remains on our potential to generate income through fees, for example, as Dr Corrigan says, we are forced to look to other activities, which then has the knock-on effect of taking our eye off the ball in terms of the practicum. So at all times we are attempting to balance these multiple pressures in order to deliver the best practicum experience.

I am involved in a research project at the moment that has recently surveyed over 7,000 supervising teachers who work at various times on Monash's behalf in schools. We are not hearing from those teachers that they want students to be in schools more. What they are asking for is a closer relationship, a partnership, with the university. As John has signalled, that costs a lot of money once we factor in time, which again is time otherwise spent on research and entrepreneurial activities. Again, there is always that tension in spreading our load as teacher educators.

Mr SAWFORD—Some of the cost of the practicum could be shared. Why is it always the university paying? It would seem to me that the education departments in each state—and they did traditionally—play a significant role in funding. Why has that formula been lost? Is there any chance of that being resurrected?

Mrs Brown—One of the views we need to put here is that we do not consider ourselves as only preparing teachers for teaching in our state and our systems here. Our teacher education and the preservice education cohorts are a fairly moveable global cohort. We are certainly preparing teachers to be able to work in other states and certainly to be able to work all around the world. That is the way in which our students view themselves as well. So it is a move from the old studentship model of my generation. I think it is really important that we keep that in perspective all the time. So I am not saying that the education department should not have some part in it. In some ways the Victorian education department is trying to do that through its moves to provide some minimal financial support to students who are willing to go to country placements for their final teaching practicum placement. But we do have to be realistic about this. It would not be an employer-pays model in that support.

One of the other things I think is missing from the discussion here that I think you are alluding to is that other people have been referring to the difficulty in finding suitable placements, particularly at the secondary level, because of the expectations on schools. Particularly in Victoria at the moment we have a great deal of curriculum change going on. Working effectively with the student teacher is the way our supervisors in schools see themselves—they want to be able to do the job properly. So if they take the responsibility of working with a student teacher in their teacher preparation, they see it as sort of another add-on to what is already part of their very busy lives. So we are actually experiencing a reluctance on the part of people who would be really suitable supervisors in schools because they feel they cannot provide their side of the partnership, basically. They are having to deal with changes in curriculum, they have other responsibilities in schools and they do not feel they have the time to work with a student teacher.

Mr SAWFORD—But if you gave that teacher a far more understanding and skilful principal and deputy—senior staff committed to teacher education—and if you gave the teacher status and remuneration, could you do it?

Mrs Brown—I think one of the things that has slipped out of the awards, if I am correct—and I am pretty sure I am on this—is that being responsible for preservice education was recognised as part of the way to move up levels of the ladder. That seems to have moved a little bit. Unfortunately, the best people are the ones who are the busiest. They are the ones who are saying, 'If I can't do the job properly, then I don't want to do it at all.' We do have to be extraordinarily persuasive. We have some schools with whom we have very good relationships. We say, 'We really need these students in your schools because you are going to provide them with the sort of experience that they can build on and they can share with others in the cohort back at the university,' and those schools bend over backwards. There is no pattern to those schools. It is not the big schools; it is not the little schools. It is just a range of schools that we have strong relationships with, and we have built them up over the years. They are informal relationships, though, not formal.

Dr Corrigan—So this is a real undermining of the partnership. Everybody would recognise that a partnership is really important. But it is under significant strain to survive for lots of different reasons from both sides of the argument. So keeping those communication channels open is vitally important. But it is to make sure that you are actually working together. That is a really difficult thing because of all the constraints that are being placed on a meaningful partnership at present.

Mrs Brown—We see that visiting our students is a really important part of that partnership. We do see our students working in schools. If we do not because they are placed in the country or interstate, we make that contact by phone or electronically so that we have a chat forum under way.

Dr Corrigan—We are putting significant resources into an ICT platform for the supervision of teachers on placement so that we can actually keep the dialogue going between the schools, the universities and the students while they are out there. That dialogue is really important to maintaining that relationship and a meaningful experience for the students.

Prof. Loughran—Your question, though, is still an interesting point. If there were professional status being involved in being an expert practitioner in a school, sharing that wisdom and helping to shape student teachers, yes, that would be a bonus. That would be an excellent thing.

Mr SAWFORD—There are varying views of history in hindsight. I come from an experience where demonstration schools were outstanding. You were exposed to outstanding principals and outstanding teacher educators. Your peers in that school had so many skills that the highest common factor was derived from what happened in the school. Sure, people were busy, but people had the leadership and the continuing contact, not the haphazard, laissez faire—

Dr Corrigan—Yes, that is right.

Mr SAWFORD—They continued with the same sort of people. They had the strength of character to be able to say: 'Look, we have too much on our curriculum. We are going to drop it out. We're not going to do this. What we are going to do we're going to do properly.' That takes an enormous amount of strength in both the leadership of the university and at the school. You can sustain these things, but it seems to me that there is something still missing. There is money missing from the university end and there is money missing from the school end. I think there is status missing. There is status also in your level too. I do not think teacher educators are remunerated enough, nor are professors of education et cetera. You have a huge problem here where education in this country is just undervalued.

Dr Corrigan—I would not disagree with that at all.

Mr SAWFORD—It is a matter of trying to win the debate—the political debate as well as the educational debate. Sometimes I think even those of us who are very sympathetic to education despair that the debate gets lost. The debate goes off at angles.

Dr Corrigan—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—In fact, I think it has no impact on the political situation. You need to tie the two things together. From our perspective, this is not a sexy committee to be on, but it has done some very valuable work over the last 15 or 16 years. I think that is because people are committed, the same as you. You do not go into teacher education to be a millionaire.

Dr Corrigan—No.

Prof. Loughran—That is an excellent point. We would argue that one of the things that is a defining feature of the way we view teacher education and practice at Monash is that, like I said at the outset, we actually see teaching as a discipline in its own right. That is not a common view amongst teachers. It is certainly not a common view amongst academics. So to actually consider that you are carving a career as a teacher of teaching means that you are immediately putting yourself in a position where are you behind the eight ball to begin with. Now that does not make us resile from that position. What it means is that the development of our research profile and our way of approaching teacher education is about helping people see that teaching is not something that is a matter of tips and tricks and a recipe and a bag of tricks. It is about actually developing beyond the competence. So the way we teach in teacher education depends on us modelling those practices and behaviours and allowing our own practice to be critiqued so we can encourage student teachers to view that same sort of thing regardless of the vulnerability they feel as beginning professionals.

We would see exactly the same being crucial in a school situation. So the student teachers do not sit in a practicum thinking that they have to do what their supervising teacher says in order to make the grade. They are encouraged to experiment, take risks and develop their ability beyond the simple model that is put before them. We would see ourselves at Monash as dramatically encouraging that all of the time. The difficulty, of course, is that the context those student teachers go into influences whether that is encouraged or discouraged. So lifting the status of what it means to actually supervise means not judging and means building, growing and developing. That is a dramatically different thing.

Dr Nuttall—I think it is very important to stress that we have identified a lot of problems but we are not sitting on our hands about this. We are looking for innovative alternatives. We are not only exploring and evaluating those alternatives but we are researching them as we go so we have an empirical basis to say, 'In the face of these constraints and these possibilities, here is an alternative model and here is some basis and evidence for whether this model is effective or not.'

Probably the best, most recent example of that is the final year internship in the primary program at Peninsula, where students are placed in the same school for the entire year and effectively become junior staff members. It is turning into a real win-win because the very smart schools recognise the very smart students and see this as an opportunity to acculturate those students in the mores of that school and at the end of that year offer them a position in teaching. So the line between being the student and the beginning teacher becomes blurred. It is working very effectively for the schools. It works effectively for us because we develop a more intense relationship with a smaller number of schools who we feel we can rely on to support our students along the lines that John is describing—that it is not a recipe and that it is a very complex role. That process of enculturation and support is something that we are starting to see in that internship developing as a very effective partnership.

Prof. Loughran—And not to be mistaken with just socialising them into the job. There is a difference between that and being professionalised—and it is the professionalising that we are attempting to do, not the socialising.

Dr Corrigan—Absolutely.

Prof. Loughran—Socialising is important, but that is not the point.

Dr Corrigan—I suppose our courses also demonstrate it in the fact that we have no one particular model for practicum either. The primary program has an internship. We have block placements. We have other interns that operate on slightly different types of models. We have had school based practices in the past. Now whenever we undertake all those things we make sure we research all of those models. It will change because the contexts are different. For example, the Gippsland campus is a rural campus. So the context for Gippsland is very different from what it might be for Clayton or Peninsula. So we have to be very certain that we are actually researching all of this. To that end, we also as a faculty put financial resources into that in terms of the research. We are currently running a research project within the faculty to bring together all of those ideas about the multiple models that we currently have across the faculty.

Ms LIVERMORE—John was talking about the ethos of Monash towards the teacher education program being about viewing teaching as a very learned profession and trying to promote that view. Do you have a view on whether there are too many teacher education courses in Australia? Is the number and sheer spread of courses out there undermining that notion that this is a very specialised, highly professional discipline? I know that is a controversial question.

Prof. Loughran—That is really tough. It would not really matter how many there were. It is the pressure that a different institution is under and the amount of resources they put towards their teacher preparation. So you could have an excellent teacher preparation program with 60 students. In fact, the smaller in some cases, the better. The bigger they get, perhaps the more difficult it is to maintain issues of quality. I do not think it is about the number. I think it is about

the philosophical approach you adopt in the way that you approach teacher preparation. Again, without harping on it too much, our faculty has made a big push. I am the first professor, in essence, in teacher education in our faculty. If you check with universities around Australia you will find that there are very few that have a professor of teacher education. For a place like Monash to have one is quite an unbelievable thing.

Ms LIVERMORE—It comes back to accreditation or the role of the accreditation agencies. You talk about the fundamental importance of the prac and the huge problems you are experiencing in maintaining the quality in the prac experiences that you want to offer as part of your course. Is that going to collide at any time? Are courses going to start falling foul of accreditation agencies because they cannot guarantee those prac experiences, because the cooperation is not there?

Prof. Loughran—It is there, I would say.

Dr Corrigan—It is already there. It is increasingly difficult to find the places, particularly in the secondary area. There are instances where placements have had to be delayed. You only have a small window of opportunity in a school year. You are relying largely on schools here. They operate for 30 weeks a year. To do those placements, when you think about the number of students that are requiring placements, we are already there. So it is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. It is getting more and more difficult, particularly in the secondary level.

Mrs Brown—At any one time, for example, at the Clayton campus, we are trying to place 450 final year students—that is the final year of our double degree programs and the graduate DipEd program—and 300 at each of the first of the three year levels of the undergraduate program, the double degree programs. So it is huge numbers we are dealing with.

Dr Nuttall—And another 420 at Peninsula.

Mrs Brown—And another 300 plus through Gippsland.

Dr Corrigan—I think we have over 5,000 placements a year in schools.

Mrs Brown—And there is physically contacting all the schools and requesting it. The secondary level will always be more difficult because it is discipline based, so we have to place students in their specialist areas. That becomes more difficult too. Some of the difficulties that have arisen, for example, in language teaching placements and more recently in the science teaching placements are because one of the expectations we have is that the supervising teacher in the school has a minimum of two years teaching experience. There has been such a turnover recently that a lot of the teachers who are teaching science and maths and languages in schools do not have that two years experience. In an ideal situation, what would be a fantastic school for a placement just becomes unavailable because they have actually employed one of our graduates from last year. That is the sort of ongoing issue we have there.

Dr Corrigan—We have tried to be quite innovative about how we address some of this. We are clearly defining what we believe is a quality practicum and what our expectations are for a practicum experience of a teacher education student at Monash University. We are currently looking at notions that schools will have to meet some criteria to meet our quality processes. We

have also started to explore our extensive international links. For example, in the next two weeks we have a cohort going to the Cook Islands that will be doing their placements over there. We have great demand from English-speaking schools overseas that would like to take our students, which would be a fantastic experience for them, but at the same point in time we are going to have to manage the quality. There are certain expectations that we have. We think they are fantastic opportunities for students because it gives them such a broad perspective, but the bottom line is they still have to meet those basic quality requirements that we have put in place. So we are working quite hard on that.

Ms LIVERMORE—Are you feeling at the moment that it is just seen as the university's problem? You are out there saying, 'We have these problems with placing prac students,' and basically you are on your own as a university. Is there any sense in the school system that—

Dr Corrigan—Schools are very busy places.

Mrs Brown—We find the principals extraordinarily supportive.

Dr Corrigan—They are under incredible pressure. The whole notion of accountability creates such a different climate in schools. We are all probably ex teachers. From when we were teaching in schools or were principals in schools, it is such a different climate because that business model of accountability has really been a driver in schools. So principals are still really supportive. Yes, it is easy to blame the other people because everybody is so pressured. I do constantly have to fight off schools saying it is all the university's fault, but I understand why they are saying that—it is because of the sheer pressures they are under. It is linked to that loss of status, that expectation that you are nurturing somebody into a profession, that they are beginning a profession. From a school's perspective, it wants somebody who is up and running, but that person is entering a profession for the first time so it is going to take a bit of time to get to know that profession. So that is a real difficulty. I can understand why they are saying that.

Mr BARTLETT—I think you were here when I asked the people from La Trobe about preparation for teaching mathematics. Do you want me to repeat the question?

Dr Nuttall—I think we got the question.

Mr BARTLETT—I would be interested in your view briefly on that.

Dr Nuttall—Briefly, I think it is important to make a distinction between understanding mathematics and teaching mathematics. Knowing maths and teaching maths are not the same thing. It probably seems self-evident but it is worth restating. All entrants to our primary and secondary programs are required to have a VCE unit in mathematics.

Mrs Brown—Two units.

Dr Nuttall—Two units.

Mr BARTLETT—For primary teaching as well?

Mrs Brown—Yes.

Dr Nuttall—And obviously specialist methods students in secondary will be coming through with a mathematics degree background. Primary teaching in particular is a heavily feminised profession, and we know from many years of research now about the relationship between gender and maths phobia. I think your previous submission talked about the teaching of mathematics. Deb might want to add to that. Again, there are those multiple tensions. There is how much mathematics they know—and that is reasonably well-researched in Australia, the mathematics competence of entering student teachers. There are the pedagogical strategies that they need to teach maths effectively at a range of levels—in my case, through the primary school, prep to age 12. There is also their own disposition towards the teaching of mathematics—how they feel about it. I am faced with potentially 200 students in a lecture, and the X factor for any of those students at any one time could be any of those three. So there is always that tension. I do not think there is one key to improving the teaching of mathematics. We have to address all three. It is the disposition, the knowledge and the pedagogical strategies.

Mr BARTLETT—But the fact that you require a degree of competency at entry level certainly solves some of that problem. On a different issue, you made comments about the partnership in training between schools and universities, I think particularly from the point of view of schools assisting your work in preparing teachers, educating trainee teachers. But I am wondering how effective you think education faculties are in responding to the needs of schools and the changing needs of schools and the changing issues. I am thinking particularly, for example, of the issue of boys education.

One of the views put to us fairly strongly in the inquiry into boys education was that many practitioners in the schools and many parents were well aware of issues regarding the underperformance of boys et cetera. Yet there seemed to be a view expressed that education faculties and academia were not so aware of that, and if they were aware they were not so responsive. One academic I am thinking of, who has done a lot of work in that area, commented I think on record to the inquiry but certainly to me recently about the opposition he faces within the education faculty at his university because he wants to address issues of boys education. So I guess I have two questions. Firstly, how responsive are education faculties to those changing issues within schools? Secondly, is there a way in which we could perhaps improve that responsiveness? Is there an avenue for better consultation so the issues and needs that schools have are better communicated to deans of education and professors of education et cetera so their concerns are expressed in the pedagogy that is taught?

Dr Corrigan—Who wants to go first!

Prof. Loughran—It is somewhat paradoxical. If you think about the complexity of teaching and learning, one of the things that immediately springs to mind when you say that is that in a given university there can be a specialist in boys and boys learning and so, inevitably, that person wants to drive that agenda in teacher preparation. In a different university it may be expected that the curriculum itself drives the responsiveness to that issue rather than the person. So you have this difficulty in what teacher preparation is as to what is it that actually drives the curriculum. So we all have specialties ourselves that I am sure, given an opportunity, we would like to have be the most important thing in the curriculum and be the thing which drives it.

However, the way our program is set up, there is a continual change regardless of the paperwork that goes with changing the name of a unit or what is involved in it. There is a

continual change in the way the curriculum is taught in being responsive to what is happening in schools. Again, it is paradoxical. Depending where you are, the problem you describe is very true or in other situations it is not the case. In other ways, our visits, our work and our research in schools actually throw up issues, problems and dilemmas that the schools are not aware of. But when we are able to demonstrate the data that supports it, it becomes immediately clear. Debbie heads up the school review projects here for the state government. We have learnt an awful lot from those projects about individual schools and what they are doing and are able to help in that regard, even though it was not necessarily a researched project designed to do that.

Dr Corrigan—That is right.

Mr BARTLETT—Do you think there is any benefit from formalising that somewhat? Instead of that frequent and obviously productive feedback from schools and so on, do you think there is a need for a more formalised or structured feedback process whereby organisations and school principals and teachers et cetera are meeting with deans of education faculties to convey the needs in school? Do you think that happens effectively in an ad hoc way?

Prof. Loughran—If you go backwards to before the boys problem, it was girls learning in science. So the McClintock Collective highlighted that issue; they brought it from schools to universities. It happened that at Monash we had—we still have—a very strong science education group. Our programs changed dramatically, and those changes in teaching procedures to encourage girls to be involved in science spun off into all of the other teaching areas as well. So it is also about what is on the agenda at a given time. In one sense you could argue that the concentration on girls brought out what in previous times was the enormous passivity of boys as learners. It just became more accentuated when the focus on girls education highlighted their ability to be independent, constructive and thoughtful learners when boys were relatively passive and uncaring.

Dr Corrigan—Our interaction with schools demonstrates our philosophical approach to teacher education. I am in schools at least once a week, yet I still teach at university. I am on lots of external committees and meeting lots of people all the time, as are many of my colleagues, but I am also researching in schools, as are all of my colleagues. So we take quite seriously the fact that we have research skills that are of use to schools. We research with schools, not on schools. So that partnership is part of our public responsibility for school education. It is to really take our skills into the school and help the school develop, just as we want them to give us their skills in developing our teachers. It is a two-way street. That is what I mean about the partnership and taking those partnerships seriously. It is not just about what the schools can do for us, it is what we can do for them as well. That sounds like a famous line! But it really comes out in practice. We take the responsibility of researching our practice and the practice in schools very, very seriously. That is a philosophical approach that we quite openly articulate. Students know that too.

Mr BARTLETT—Do you think all universities do that?

Prof. Loughran—No.

Dr Corrigan—No.

Mrs Brown—The other thing is that we need to emphasise that we want to be proactive, not just reactive. The sort of work that we are doing and the ways in which we are working with schools as critical friends and so forth is encouraging them to think about new ideas about teaching and learning. It is really important that as a university education faculty we are proactive and we are not just reacting to: 'Here's another problem. You solve it. We've got bullying this week. We've got boys next week'—that sort of thing.

Dr Corrigan—Many of our faculty are ex-teachers, so we are actually quite passionate about the quality of teachers in schools. We take that seriously. We really do want to do the best for the schools at some significant cost. But schools respond to that too. The concern for me is the fact that it is very difficult to see the next generation of teacher educators coming behind us. They do not have that passion. There are many questions as to why people would go into teacher education to start with. Again, it comes back to intrinsic rewards. We are not doing it for the money, obviously. It is that valuing and the raising of the status. It comes back to the point you were making before about raising that status and making it important and ensuring not only the succession in schools but that the succession is in teacher education as well.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to make a final comment. Thanks for the submission. I think we all found it very interesting to read. Thanks more for the participation of the four of you here this morning. With the enthusiasm that you have all shown, teacher education at Monash is probably going pretty well.

Dr Corrigan—Can I tell my dean you said that?

Mr SAWFORD—You can. I take the point you made last, in terms of what happens down the track. The political debate needs to be won, and the political debate at the moment is in abeyance. That is a great disappointment. It is one on which not only politicians but education departments and independent school authorities and universities, particularly those in teacher education, ought to show a bit more collaboration in the sense of getting the debate back on and in the right area, rather than having adversarial roles, which I think John alluded to earlier. We destroy ourselves in education rather than promote. We are very good at destroying but we are not very good at promoting. Maybe somewhere down the track we can learn a better way to win the political debate.

Prof. Loughran—I want to say one last thing. Debbie and I debated this for some time and thought about things before we put in that submission. You raise one of the things that is a passion for us. It is not on the agenda politically, it is not on your terms of reference—it is almost as if it does not exist. But the reality is the shift from being a teacher to being a teacher educator is dramatic. It is a different profession. It has different expectations and requirements. It has an important and necessary component of academic rigour that encourages us to learn what it means to teach about teaching, what it means to understand how students learn to be teachers and to be able to moderate and mediate the difference between their needs and concerns and our expectations for their development. Those things are not done by delivering the right content and the right information at the right time. So the ability to develop as a teacher educator is a crucial element within this debate that is never mentioned in any way. We term that: developing a pedagogy of teacher education. It is about learning how to teach about teaching in appropriate ways so that it is seen as a complex, interrelated and an important facet of our work, not a

transmissive model of dropping information into student teachers' heads and saying: 'Now you've got it. Go out and do it.'.

Dr Corrigan—It has spin-offs too for our university. Suddenly our other faculties in our university are starting to recognise the rich resource they have in the Faculty of Education in terms of teaching and the pedagogy of teaching that they can take into the adult setting as well in the university. It has those spin-offs. We have developed expertise in teaching and we are quite happy to share it.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may need to contact you in the future for further information.

Proceedings suspended from 1.06 pm to 2.05 pm

FAWNS, Dr Roderick, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne

MISSON, Associate Professor, Head, Department of Language, Literature and Arts Education, University of Melbourne

MOSS, Dr Julianne, Head, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Department of Learning and Educational Development, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne

STACEY, Professor Kaye, Foundation Professor of Mathematics Education, Department of Science and Mathematics Education, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne

URE, Associate Professor, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne

CHAIR—Good afternoon. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should 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. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Prof. Misson—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Prof. Ure—Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to present evidence on teacher education here today. In my role as Associate Dean (Academic) of the Faculty of Education, I oversee both undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education. My role includes overseeing the selection of candidates and the coherence of programs and the quality of teaching in teacher education. As a researcher, I am also engaged in research on mentoring in the school experience during preservice teacher preparation.

You have obtained the names and the basic roles of our team here. I want to mention a few points about them in terms of the kinds of information that you might like to obtain from them. Professor Kaye Stacey is widely known for her research into the development of computation skills and classroom mathematics. She has previously prepared the faculty's submission to the *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future* review. She has a particular interest in excellence in science and maths education and has suggestions to make concerning barriers to qualified science and maths teachers. Professor Stacey is also a very strong advocate for quality in mathematics education. She is a force in our faculty for a very strong stream in mathematics education in our four-year Bachelor of Education (Primary).

Associate Professor Ray Misson was formerly Associate Dean for Preservice Programs. He now oversees modern languages education and arts education and has his own expertise in the area of literacy education, especially at the secondary level. He has recently completed an audit on literacy and arts education in the Faculty of Education at Melbourne. He is able to comment on benchmarks and standards in teacher education. Like Professor Stacey, he has been

instrumental in ensuring that all courses for the preparation of primary and secondary teachers in the faculty include a strong emphasis on student awareness of literacy and language demands in classroom instruction and a strong emphasis on meeting the diverse needs of school students.

Dr Rod Fawns is a secondary science teacher. He has had many yearns experience with the graduate diploma of education and is able to comment on this course and its effectiveness in the preparation of graduates for teaching. Dr Fawns works closely with schools and has much to add on the nature of the university-school partnership in teacher education and on the needs of mature age teacher education students.

Dr Julianne Moss heads our curriculum, teaching and learning unit, which coordinates core units in teaching, learning and assessment in all our courses. Dr Moss has recently returned from the USA, where both she and I undertook a review of the influence of the Teachers for a New Era project on teacher education programs. That project is currently being funded through the Carnegie Foundation. Dr Moss has a particular interest in the early induction of student teachers, early mentoring and the ongoing professional development of teachers in the field. She is currently engaged in the delivery of a program for the professional development of teachers in Victoria for leadership around the new state initiatives in curriculum.

Turning to our submission, we have highlighted our concerns for research into teacher education. Teacher education is inextricably linked to social change, changes in expectations for student outcomes and implications for changes in the curriculum. As teacher educators, we continually review the changing nature of schools and the related needs of teacher education students. Our submission highlights the need for a sustained agenda for research about teacher education and maintains that quality and innovation in teacher education are likely to develop from a system that supports diverse approaches to teacher education as fostered through a strong research orientation.

In closing this introductory section of our presentation, I would like to extend an apology from our faculty dean, Professor Field Rickards, who has asked that we stress the impact of the capped CSP fee for education on nursing and teacher education. While this step was taken to quarantine education and to make it more attractive to prospective students, it has paradoxically resulted in the opposite effect. In the global budget of the university, the Faculty of Education now attracts less funding per student than other faculties and it is unable to make up for this loss. Consequently, the faculty can only survive if other faculties cross-subsidise education faculty activities. Further, there is no evidence this change has increased the number of applicants for teacher education courses. In fact, we registered a slightly lower number of applications this year. Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you. I was very interested in the comment in your paper that many of the comments about teacher education are not backed up by research and research findings. That is certainly the situation with a number of aspects of the evidence that has been presented to the committee. I was wondering if you could start off by answering a general question about what you believe at the university you do very well and what elements of your activities you believe you would like to improve on.

Prof. Ure—I think that we do foundation and induction of student teachers to the profession well. We set our students up to understand theoretical perspectives on curriculum design and the

implications for students with diverse needs. We certainly foster a great deal of confidence in our students that they understand education as a discipline. I think the things that we would like to do better are around the areas of that link between theory and practice. To some extent, we feel our hands are tied in terms of how closely we can work with our students in schools. Our faculty has an academic staff of under 200 and we do 4,500 placements a year in schools. We cannot work really closely with our students in schools, so there is an issue for us around the structuring of the professional experience in our programs.

Prof. Misson—I might add that one of the real strengths of the University of Melbourne's program is the relationship between discipline studies and Education. This is especially true in the BEd (Primary) course, because in that course we have the four-year sequence of majors—a four-year major study in language and literacy, a four-year major study in maths education, three years in science and technology education, two years in health and physical education and arts education—so teachers coming out of it do have a really strong discipline base in all of the areas of the curriculum as generalist teachers.

We also, of course, made the commitment a few years back—which led to the discontinuation of the secondary course—that we wanted the best people from undergraduate degrees in discipline areas to come into teacher education through the graduate diploma in education course and what was at that time the secondary bachelor of teaching course. So I think fundamental to education at Melbourne has been the keeping of educational studies and discipline studies in the particular teaching areas.

Mr SAWFORD—How does Melbourne university allocate money in terms of the education faculty? You mentioned, Christine, that funding has been reduced. Has that happened in other faculties?

Prof. Ure—What has happened is that we have not been able to benefit from the fee increase that other faculties have been able to charge their students. By virtue of that fact, our faculty gets less money per student than other faculties do. So we are the poor faculty of the university. We can only maintain our programs by cross-subsidisation from the other faculties.

Mr SAWFORD—Is there any future other than that?

Prof. Ure—Under the existing way of raising money for faculties in universities, our other options are fee-paying students and overseas students. Education is a difficult area to attract people to. We certainly do have fee targets to build our faculty budget. We have managed to achieve them over the last few years. But if we are looking at long-term planning, we are currently earning over 50 per cent of our budget at the moment.

Mr SAWFORD—This must have an impact in terms of the salaries that are paid to people in teacher education. It must have some impact on how you attract people into teacher education. It must have some impact on the way you cost the expenditure on practicums and so on. Would you like to comment on those aspects?

Prof. Ure—I think Ray Misson might be best to take that question, because he is the head of department.

Prof. Misson—And I have to worry about budgets. What it has an impact on, of course, is the staff-student ratio. The amount of money that we pay to schools is set by the award, so we have to pay out $25 a day to the school. That has to come off the top of the budget. There are the enterprise agreements for the salary levels, which are common across the university. I know that some faculties that are trying to attract people will pay higher salaries, but we pay the base salaries that are negotiated. That means that we get the lump sum each year in the department for running our programs. We have to do that within that amount of money we get. So the only thing that can give, in a sense, is workloads. So we have over the last couple of years had to increase workloads, and we have had to increase staff-student ratios because the funding in real terms has gone down and looks as if it will next year. So people are working a lot harder in their teaching. Of course, the pressure on people to do research is getting no less. So there are a lot of very stressed people there.

There is also a move, which I think is unfortunate, to employ more sessional staff because sessional staff are cheaper and you get a lot more teaching done. So the tenured staff tend now to be surrounded by a number of sessional staff. But of course sessional staff are not producing the research. They are not doing the administration in general. They add pressure to the workload of the tenured staff because they have to be managed.

Mr SAWFORD—If the cost of the practicum were removed and put on to someone else, would that be a big advantage?

Prof. Misson—If the amount of money coming into the faculty stayed the same, it would be a huge advantage. We pay $1.6 million of our budget out to schools. Last year, it was a $19 million budget. So $1.6 million simply goes out into payment to schools, and that is without counting the additional cost of running a five-person unit which is actually doing the placements in schools. I do not know what the figures are at the moment, but certainly five years ago when I was associate dean it was about $1.9 million that was actually going on the practicum placements and getting the students out into schools.

Mr SAWFORD—If that figure were put back into the faculty, what changes would you initiate?

Prof. Misson—For one thing, we would be able to develop better relations with schools because there would be more freedom in the staffing to have people go out and establish good relations with schools and go out more often to see students.

Mr SAWFORD—The same people going to the same schools?

Prof. Misson—Obviously if we had another $1.6 million in our budget, we would have a lot more people. Of course we would also not have to have classes as we do now. The average class in my department is about 32 people. Our classrooms all have to accommodate at least 32 people. They are up to 36 and 37 often. This is the standard mode of teaching in the Faculty of Education at the moment. One thing we would certainly do is reduce class size.

Prof. Stacey—There is another thing I would like to see done. We have had a policy in our mathematics education group of bringing a really excellent teacher from schools to work with us for two years at a time. That has been allowed under the enterprise bargaining. Over the last six

years, we have been looking for such a person to work with us. A classroom teacher in mathematics who is of the right calibre, the sort of person we want, is earning about $65,000 a year. When we ask them to come into our department, we ask them to take a salary of $45,000. Miraculously, we have had three very good people who for various temporary aspects of their life have wanted to come and work with us. But it seems to me really to be an unsustainable thing having to work with people on maternity leave or people who are close to retirement. So we really just do not have the resources to bring in the really leading teachers we want to work with us.

One of the difficulties is that when they are with us they cannot perform the whole range of roles that an academic has to perform. They are really excellent with our students and we really want them for this. But they are usually not able to really do any research of their own. They have never perhaps taught a large group of 100 adults before. There are a lot of things to learn. That disparity in salaries means it is very difficult for us to justify spending the money. If we had more money, we could do more of that.

Mr SAWFORD—Are there any other changed dynamics that you would look at in terms of making teacher education more successful?

Prof. Ure—I think a big area would be in our work with schools. I think we would want to have staff who had roles that would engage them with schools in a sort of productive manner. At the moment, although I would not say it is not productive, it is limited in terms of what we can do with schools. Our staff go to visit their students in schools. That is really the extent of what they can do. There is no professional development for the teachers in schools to work with our students. We rely entirely on the teachers reading the materials and interpreting what it is that we want them to do with our students. So there is no sort of productive partnership in that sense, in terms of access between the two groups. I should say there are pockets of it, but they are very, very limited. Certainly my colleagues either side of me, Rod and Dr Moss, run school based programs with their students. But it is a very limited part of our overall practice. We would want to see a big change there.

Mr SAWFORD—Are there difficulties in placing your students?

Prof. Ure—Enormous difficulties. The whole issue of placing students is as follows: we request schools to take them, but they are not obliged to take them. At the moment, because there is a lot of pressure on us to take international students, it might take us 20 requests to get an international student into a school. Schools will read the name and if they do not like it they will not take the student. There are a lot of issues for us with school placements and managing that.

Mr SAWFORD—What is more important for the schools, in your view? Is it status or is it remuneration or is it a combination of both?

Dr Fawns—I think in many respects where we have had a collaborative partnership with a school, it is because the school saw a number of advantages for their staff. It is not necessarily generic; it is with individual teams of teachers or with individual charters that the school has. The identities of the school will vary. It is quite a complex arrangement to manage the development of teacher education and to develop the schools at the same time. Clearly they are interdependent. One could not talk about the development of teacher education at the University

of Melbourne and the development of education in Victoria separately. Clearly they are related, not just institutionally but, in a sense, obviously, through staffing both within the university and within schools. Regularly we are involved in advising principals in schools about their staffing prospects. In a sense, we are in a position to know these students.

There are all types of complex organic relations in a faculty of this age, really. The Department of Education is 100 years old. Most of the people, in a sense, have been trained through this program. So there are lots of connections which I see as organic and which need to be serviced. At the moment, as Ray has pointed out, the student-staff ratios are so enormous that, in a sense, unless you take 40 or so students out to a school with you, the faculty cannot afford to have you in a school. So just a visit to a student in a school on a one-on-one ratio means you are working in debt for the rest of the week. Where you have in the science area 180 students to see in a year and to assess, which is a mandatory requirement, it would be a full-time allotment for those staff to do that, let alone maintain a career in teacher education.

Mr SAWFORD—What is the attrition rate like in teacher education among your staff?

Prof. Ure—It currently is 8.4 per cent and sitting just below the university average of around 8.6 per cent.

Mr SAWFORD—So it is nothing outstanding?

Prof. Ure—No. It was high in 1998. It was up over 18 per cent. It has gradually fallen down since that time. We would think that is just due to the job market. People see there is a high likelihood of getting employment, so they stay.

Mr SAWFORD—I have one last question. How does Melbourne organise your practicum in each of the four years? How is it organised?

Prof. Ure—Do you mean in terms of the way—

Mr SAWFORD—The time.

Prof. Ure—Most of our placements are block placements.

Mr SAWFORD—What happens in year one?

Prof. Ure—In year one in the BEd (Primary), they start with a one-week observation round in semester one. Then they undertake a two-week placement in semester two. Each semester they have a placement. It is usually a three-week placement in each semester until the final year, where they are just about to undertake a four-week placement. It is what we call their ready-to-teach placement. They are expected to show full independence in the classroom. They maintain an ongoing placement in that school until the end of the year, at two days a week.

Mr SAWFORD—Has the structure of that practicum changed much in the last four or five years?

Prof. Ure—Not much in the last four or five years, no.

Mr SAWFORD—So the schools are happy?

Prof. Ure—Yes. Schools understand what we are doing in that practicum. We do not tend to have problems in placing the students in the BEd (Primary) program.

Dr Fawns—The problem is more severe with secondary, of course, because the load falls differently across departments. We have such a high level of enrolments in the secondary course at the moment that all the time we are wondering whether in fact for the next placement we will be able to find positions for all the students.

Prof. Ure—It is a very stressed area.

Prof. Misson—That is in the graduate diploma of education program, the one-year program, in which there are 45 days. So there are three three-week placements. We have maintained that because we feel it is important to give students a variety of different schools. But with a program of 600 people, doing three placements for each of 600 people is a massive operation.

Prof. Ure—I should say we run a BEd (Primary). We also run a combined early childhood-primary degree as well, which is called the BECE. We also run a Bachelor of Teaching (Primary), which is a postgraduate two-year program, plus the one-year graduate diploma. Our two-year Bachelor of Teaching is run in combined degrees with arts, science, creative arts and music. So we run an enormous range of programs.

Mr BARTLETT—Professor Stacey, I want to ask you about the quality of teaching mathematics at primary level. We have had quite an interesting range of opinions here this morning. Dr Ingvarson from ACER indicated that there are a lot of people coming into primary education who are not equipped to teach mathematics at that level and there ought to be a minimum test for entry, including doing HSC level mathematics at some level or another. We had a representative from the AEU arguing the opposite—that in fact anyone can teach maths if they are trained in the right way. He alluded to numerous examples of very capable maths teachers at primary level. Of our other two universities, La Trobe agreed with the representative from the AEU that anyone could be trained to teach maths. We had Monash taking the other view—that there ought to be a minimum entry requirement. I would very interested, particularly with your expertise, in your opinion on that.

Prof. Stacey—This is something that we feel very strongly about. We are really very pleased with what we do in the four-year BEd (Primary) at Melbourne university. We have studied our students quite a lot. As I think Ray mentioned, we have in our course four years of mathematics education—one subject in each of those four years. My belief is that we actually are able in that four years to train really good, strong teachers of numeracy for the Australian system. For example, have a look at the professional development. The state of New South Wales has spent a lot of money and time with an excellent program called Count Me in Too. Victoria has the early numeracy research project. We are able to take the work that those teachers have done as professional development. We actually have that sort of material in our preservice teacher education. As well as doing early numeracy, we do late numeracy, so we are not just stopping at grade 2 or grade 3, we are actually training them up to grade 6. I think we have a very strong pedagogical content knowledge. We develop that.

You have to build that pedagogical content knowledge on a strong content knowledge of mathematics. Really, our first two years are perhaps about 70 per cent content of primary mathematics and then 30 per cent teaching. Then we swap around in the third and fourth year. We work very hard to give our students a really solid understanding of mathematics. We test them. We make sure that they pass a hurdle requirement so we can be sure that they are actually of quite a good standard.

We have looked at the applicants we have at Melbourne university to see whether we could move our entry requirement from year 11 to year 12 mathematics. What I saw was that in Victoria we cannot do that without losing as many of the top students as the students who are closer to the cut-off point for our TER. Our ENTER is fairly high. It is around about 85.6. In fact, another observation is that since it went up from about 75 we have seen a real improvement in the basic understanding of mathematics. So with good quality applicants it really shows. But we felt that we could not ask for year 12 instead of year 11 without losing some really good students. My feeling is that there is no reason why you need to do year 12 mathematics to be a good primary teacher.

As to an entrance test, this is really very interesting because we have actually been working with ACER on thinking about what would be in an entrance test. Maybe we could have an entrance test as an alternative to year 12.

Mr BARTLETT—An entrance test focused on maths or a variety of subjects?

Prof. Stacey—On maths, yes. But you have to be very, very careful. An entrance test should not be an exit test. What we do is teach students the language in which to explain their fundamental understandings of mathematics. We give them ways of explaining. We give them perhaps another look at the basic understanding. I think most people in the community have just a practical, intuitive understanding. I think it would be interesting to try to develop a test like that. But it will only really tell us who has a really good chance of succeeding in teacher education.

Mr BARTLETT—But at the moment, if they do year 11, that is adequate?

Prof. Stacey—They do year 11 for us. But they also then have that reasonably high TER.

Mr BARTLETT—On the broader issue of entrance into university for teacher training, you say there is an ENTER of about 85?

Prof. Stacey—For us, yes.

Mr BARTLETT—Does Melbourne university do anything in terms of aptitude and psychological testing for potential teachers?

Prof. Ure—No, we do not.

Mr BARTLETT—Do you think there is an argument for that or not? Is the TER on its own adequate?

Prof. Ure—I can tell you why we do not do it; it is just too hard. It could be discriminatory in terms of how we might make those judgments.

Mr BARTLETT—In terms of subjectivity?

Prof. Ure—Yes, that is right, because of the subjective nature of them. We do not have any clear guidelines. Probably all the members at this table have been involved in selection procedures where we have interviewed students. It is enormously time consuming. We get over 2,000 applicants for the Graduate Diploma of Education. We take 600. We go for the highest scoring students. In the BEd (Primary), again, we had about 1,900 applicants this year. We took 153.

Prof. Stacey—I guess another point is that, say, in the secondary area—in areas where you have a shortage—we take all the applicants whom we feel will be able to cope with the course. I do not think in those areas—

Prof. Ure—In the graduate diploma we screen out low scores. Sometimes we would screen out low GPAs for, say, science and maths and not take them even though we might want the numbers.

Prof. Stacey—Yes. Low academic scores. Not on other grounds.

Mr BARTLETT—Finally, Christine, I think you said 600 out of 2,000 for the graduate entry course?

Prof. Ure—Yes. About 2,200.

Mr BARTLETT—From your experience in dealing with those students and watching them in their practicums and so on, would many of them not have the necessary personal attributes to be teachers? Do you notice many? Generally, does that level of academic achievement mean most of them cope okay?

Prof. Ure—Most of them cope okay. Certainly we build our courses around the basis that we are building those teaching skills in our students. We would certainly not fundamentally accept that all teachers are born, not made. We accept that we can make them. There are a small number of students that we counsel out. Over the last few years, there have probably been half a dozen that I would have actually counselled out of the course, for a variety of reasons. For some of them it was psychological. For some of them it was just to do with robustness. Some of the students just did not have teacher presence. For some of them, it was a matter of organisational skills. There is a range of reasons for counselling someone out.

Dr Fawns—It is probably worth remarking that for the graduate diploma of education course the average age of entry is now 30. Approximately half would be teaching as a second career. They are not entering contingently in that sort of sense. It is somewhat more strategic. They have often had children of their own who have attended schools. They have taught themselves. They like learning, so they have chosen to come in. They will also choose to leave if they find that it is not going to suit them. In a sense, it is not an immature audience any more.

Prof. Ure—We also have a policy in the graduate diploma, which is our big group, to try and put our first school placement relatively early in the course so they get a sense of teaching and they can make a decision as to whether or not they should be there. We certainly encourage them to think about whether it is for them.

Ms LIVERMORE—You talk a lot in your submission about the importance of research to underpin your course. I am wondering whether you could explain to us what major gaps you consider exist in our understanding at the moment of what makes a good teacher and what makes a good teacher education program. Have you narrowed it down to a few things at this point?

Dr Moss—I guess one problem is the availability of Australian data. Traditionally we have been actually relying on studies from the US and the UK. We do not in this country have a large amount of research dollars invested in education research broadly or, more particularly, in teacher education. You will notice in our submission that Christine draws attention to our recent visit to the United States and the Teachers for a New Era project, where there has been a very strong commitment to teacher education research that has been taken up with a whole university focus. That research funding is emanating from the pro vice-chancellor level. It is really making the statement that teacher education matters and so does teacher education research. All those programs that we visited were being heavily supported by recent research initiatives. It is not unusual for our colleagues in the US to be running research projects involving millions of research dollars—$US35 million is not an uncommon figure. If you actually added up the research grants that we all currently have—and we are all busy researching—in terms of the dollar value and the way that we have to access that, it is really creating an issue for us. It is not the potential but probably the opportunity.

Ms LIVERMORE—What are the major differences between the teacher education programs that you saw in the United States, based on their research findings, and what is currently the best practice in Australia? Were there major points of difference?

Dr Moss—We were particularly focusing on the transition into the profession—the induction years. Leading institutions in the US are now actually seeing their teacher education preparation as being in fact seven years. That is, they are looking at a graduate entry program, which is the equivalent of the first degree, two years of teacher education and then two years following that first degree being linked to the university. All of those programs were being heavily driven by a research evidence base. That is one of the criteria of the funding—that the research has to be able to support and develop the knowledge in the field.

Mr SAWFORD—How diverse are the school leavers that come into teacher education as a group? Do you get a lot from country areas and regional areas? Is that number diminishing or increasing? What is happening with Indigenous youth coming into teacher education? What is happening with particular ethnic minorities coming in and people from disadvantaged backgrounds? Do you have any information that tells us about any trends regarding the school leavers coming into teacher education—not those at the mature end?

Prof. Ure—I am just sort of picturing the group more than drawing on the figures.

Mr SAWFORD—While you are thinking, let me say that as a former principal I actually went and poached graduates, which you were not supposed to do in South Australia at that time. You

find out information from a small grapevine very quickly. It is interesting that some of the most successful teachers came from those sorts of backgrounds. There was an edge to them. It did not have to be a fire in the belly edge. Sometimes it was a very quiet edge. But it was people from country areas, disadvantaged backgrounds and particular ethnic minorities and Indigenous students. Sometimes on the surface they did not have the qualities of a teacher but they became very good teachers.

Prof. Ure—We certainly have a mixed group of students. At the same time we do have a high ENTER score at Melbourne. We do have a targeted access program. We certainly offer 20 per cent of places to targeted access students, although it is difficult for Education to fill its quota in that area. For Indigenous students we have tried a number of programs. We have actually found it difficult for them to sort of sustain their progress through the course. We do take alternative action, though. We have actually three different Indigenous communities now where we send our students. We are trying to engage with the Indigenous community in education through those sorts of procedures. We certainly do have rural students. We have a rural mentor program. We have a large number of students actually going out to school placements. So we try to address the broad issues in education.

But getting back to your question, which is really about the group of students, certainly in the graduate diploma they are diverse. They are diverse in age, for a start. They range from about 22 up to about 55 in age. Probably the area where we are limited is in the males coming into education. I do not know whether anyone else wants to add to that.

Prof. Misson—Could I just say that about four or five years ago I was chairing the university's transition committee. Certainly there we did have some statistics to show that there were more country students coming into education than some other fields. I suspect they were from a greater diversity of backgrounds. That was just the feeling I got from looking at this data, yes.

Dr Fawns—It is probably true to say on the other hand that I have noticed teacher education has become a more popular course, so teaching is attracting bigger numbers of applicants. I have noticed that we are getting more eastern suburban applicants than previously. That probably reflects a trend in the other direction, in a way. It could be good for teaching. In a sense, teaching is recognised now as more of a middle-class aspiration. But in a sense it does not mean necessarily that that would be what you would want. In a sense, we will have to respond to what pool society provides us with. It is the same in particular areas. I have noticed this in the science and maths area over the years. Quite often when I ask people, 'Are you the first person in your family to come to Melbourne university or to have a university degree?', there is quite a high proportion still in that category. I suspect it would be higher with that group than it probably is in the arts area, for instance.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you should we need further information. The secretariat will provide you with a proof transcript of your evidence as soon as it is available. It will also be available on the web site.

[2.46 pm]

CHEREDNICHENKO, Dr Brenda Frances, Head, School of Education, Victoria University

CACCIATTOLO, Dr Marcelle Nicole, Lecturer, School of Education, Victoria University

ECKERSLEY, Dr William, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Victoria University

KRUGER, Associate Professor Tony, Chair, Preservice Portfolio, School of Education, Victoria University

MOORE, Mr Rodney Crawford, Coordinator, Career Change Program, School of Education, Victoria University

CHAIR—Good afternoon. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should 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. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Dr Cherednichenko—Not at this time.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some opening remarks.

Dr Cherednichenko—Thanks very much for having us here today. We have behind us a group of students who are going to meet with you later in the day.

CHAIR—Welcome.

Dr Cherednichenko—And there are some of their young people as well. It is great that they can attest to the truth of our testimony. Thank you for having us all here. We made a submission to the inquiry based on the work that we do in the School of Education at Victoria University. The principle for action in our school is around our school philosophy, which is about learners, communities and social action. From that basis we are trying to build a teacher education program that values the individuality of the people who come to us as preservice teachers. More importantly, it is centred on developing opportunities to enhance the learning of young people whom they teach both throughout their programs and when they graduate.

We have a Bachelor of Education that is P to 12—that is, our graduates are eligible to be registered to teach in both primary and secondary schools. It is a four-year undergraduate degree. In that degree we also have a special cohort of people with prior degrees. We call it an accelerated program or an advanced standing program. We also have a Graduate Diploma of Secondary Education, which is the traditional one-year Diploma of Education that most people will be familiar with. We have early childhood and postcompulsory teacher education for

university teachers as well. We have quite a broad suite of teacher education activity that we engage in.

The principle of our work is that the learning of the young person is the high priority. That is our central focus—the young person in the school. From that, we construct our programs around what we call partnerships. Our partnerships with our schools and community learning settings, mostly with schools, are about engaging our preservice teachers in work that schools value as contributing to the learning of their students. We begin our partnership construction with the negotiation with the schools telling us what it is that their young people need and how our preservice teachers, while they are in their preservice teacher education program, can build their own knowledge about being a professional through the engagement of real learning needs that young people might have. So that is our underpinning philosophy and our underpinning practice.

From there, we work to engage with the diversity that is our communities. We work in the western suburbs of Melbourne primarily but also to the north. We have the Career Change Program, which is a state-wide teacher education program for people who are changing careers and coming to teaching after being something else. Mostly, our communities tend to be very diverse and they tend to be socioeconomically disadvantaged in the main, so it is very important to us that we bring a rich diversity to the student body, the preservice teacher group, as well. So our selection processes are by application and often interview in an attempt to reflect the diversity and to build a cohort of teachers who are different and who are valued for their difference.

The other thing I would like to say that is significant about our course is that the construction of the curriculum is an ongoing inquiry. From the practice base, from the partnership, preservice teachers are encouraged to frame, individually and together and with their lecturers, questions that they bring back to the university classroom. Those questions, if you like, drive the rich inquiry and build the research base, the theoretical base, that they then take back as they practise in classrooms. Our preservice teachers work in schools every week of their courses—they have one day a week in schools as well as blocks of time in schools. That is constructed through our negotiated arrangements with our schools.

Our preservice teachers in the four-year program get about twice the number of days in schools as they are required to have for registration in Victoria. In the DipEd, they have about one-third more days. We are able to do that because we build these curriculum development arrangements with schools. We do not have extra funding to provide for that, so it is about negotiating and developing relationships with everyone to do that. It is a big issue. The greatest challenge to us, I think, is funding teacher education and the way it is funded through the university allocations as well as through all the other funding sources. I have put that out there on the table at least.

CHAIR—I might start with a very broad question. You did indicate the philosophy behind your strategies with regard to education. What things do you believe you do really well? What things do you believe you would like to do better?

Dr Eckersley—I think one of our strengths is what Brenda has just alluded to, which is our partnership program. I think it is one that has enabled our colleagues behind us—hopefully they will concur—to have opportunities to work in schools on an ongoing basis. Most of our

preservice teachers spend a year in a particular school. It enables them to get to know the school and the teachers and the students and many parents. Eventually they get a familiarity with the culture of the place and what makes it tick. As a result of that, it enables them to work more effectively in supporting the students of the school in their learning. So they spend typically a day a week and then the series of block placements, which enables them to develop a lot of skills and be very productive from the school perspective. With the odd exception, most of our schools continue each year to say, ‘Yes, we’d like more of your students.’ We are always encouraged by that.

Ms LIVERMORE—I might break in there to clarify something. When the students are in the schools doing that work, are they fully supervised or is that distinct from the formal supervised pracs they do in the school?

Dr Eckersley—They have an applied curriculum project, which is defined as a project that is identified in negotiation with the school and that either individuals or, typically, groups of preservice teachers work on as a contribution to student learning. So we have a myriad of different types of projects. It can be literacy support, lunchtime activities with physical education students—they are many and varied.

Ms LIVERMORE—Whatever the school needs.

Dr Eckersley—Yes. I am not sure what definitions you are alluding to, but it is not supervised, in that sense. However, our block days are supervised, and our mentors who work with us are paid for those days.

Dr Cherednichenko—I think the nature of the relationship we build with the school is another thing we do well and could do better. I would argue the things we do well are the things we need to do better. Partnerships, inquiry, collaboration, negotiation and building relationships with communities and schools I think are the things that are the strength of our work, but they are things that we are constantly working on to do better. That would be my comment to that.

Prof. Kruger—Let me add something. We undertook a review of the whole preservice teacher education program in 2003-04. We identified that the partnership basis of the course, in terms of our relationships with schools, was the core of our work. The conventional university program that we had was not supporting the school based component of the work well enough. We have revised both our undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programs to locate the practice by preservice teachers in schools as the starting point and the end point of our university program. So we have ways in which preservice teachers bring their experiences from school back to the university and then from the university take deeper understanding and plans for improved practice back to the school setting. We believe that, commencing in 2006, we now have a program at the university which is integrated, as much as we can get it at the moment, with authentic practice in schools.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a question about what that partnership looks like. I am impressed by the enthusiasm you have for teacher education. It seems to have a very practical and a very commonsense bent, which is not always a description that is given of teacher education. Brenda, you said you like to improve what you do well. What is a great quality of that current partnership

that your university has with a school and how would you like to see that change? Can you describe the current situation and describe where you would want to go?

Dr Cherednichenko—The current situation is that we invite schools to tell us what their needs are and how preservice teachers might work with them to deliver on their learners' needs. We negotiate with our preservice teachers people who have strengths in an area or perhaps have a learning need in an area. So there might be a maths project in a middle year program in a secondary school and we might put together to work in a team some people who are secondary maths but also some people for whom maths might be something they want to strengthen. So it is that developing of the team to work around the issue and to respond to the learning need of kids in a real way over an extended period of time. Out of that you build a meaningful relationship with the teachers in the school, who see this as adding value to what is going on in their classroom and to the outcomes for their kids. You have to remember that most of the schools we are in would probably be classified as underresourced for many of these things as well, so they are very keen.

Tony alluded to part of it. We have said for a while our teacher education program has to move. It is all very well to negotiate what goes on in the school. But if we are still running lectures, tutes or whatever—and we do not do much of that, I must admit—that are not flexible and do not enable our preservice teachers to get the curriculum knowledge that they need to be able to work on the needs of school kids then we are letting them down as well. That is another layer that we hope we have got right or we are going to have another go at.

The things that get in the way that we could do better are having greater access and feeling that teachers are freer to take on more extended work and work in richer ways with preservice teachers. Teachers are pretty exhausted out there. Even when they see opportunities with preservice teachers, it is still another thing that they might need to think about. I will be absolutely frank: not every one of our preservice teachers adds the most amazing value to a school. Sometimes they can be challenging in themselves—none of the ones here are, mind you. But sometimes that happens.

The other thing we do is that each partnership has a university lecturer attached to it to help generate, discuss and build the nature of the partnership, monitor progress and work with preservice teachers and the mentor teachers in the schools. We would love to have more money to spend more time. We have tried. I will perhaps get Rod to talk about his program and some of the things that he has done. We have actually had some site based teacher education running where we have done more of our work in schools with larger groups using teachers more as co-lecturers, if you like, in curriculum development and curriculum learning for preservice teachers. The great constraint around that is resourcing and finances for schools and the university.

We would love to do much more of that. We have had some terrific pockets of success. At one of our campuses where we have a small program that began two years ago—it is in its third year—we are actually trying to build the whole program in that way from the ground up. That has been very successful but very labour intensive and very time and resource intensive. So we are heading there. We are not going fast enough. We did some research that Tony led in 1999—the site based teacher education report—for DEST which documented some of our early practices in this way. Even though it was never published, it actually taught us a great deal about

taking the next steps. So we are keen to head on down that path. We would love to be able to explore that more fully.

Prof. Kruger—There is one more question that we face in developing our partnerships. This is not to blame our colleagues in schools but they come to us with a preconception about what teacher education practice is. They assume it looks like supervised teaching practice as they experienced it in the past. It takes us a little while to convince our colleagues in schools that there is a different starting point. The starting point is our school colleagues, teachers in schools, working with our preservice teachers and with a university colleague on a question about school student learning. There is a bit of counterintuitive thinking that goes into our project partnerships. We say the core of teacher education is about supporting the learning of school students. On the way, preservice teachers learn to teach because they can demonstrate that they have contributed to the learning of school students. That is a different way of thinking about the practice of preservice teachers.

Typically with a new school we might get a question: 'What do you expect of your preservice teachers?' That might mean conventionally or that they have got to do 25 lessons that have to be in these areas and they have to do a child study and it has got to look like this. They are the kinds of conversations we have with school colleagues who are new to our way of thinking. We say: 'No, what we want our preservice teachers to do is to work with you on a question that is high priority for you and your school.' It may be thinking about something that is getting in the way of your kids learning. It could be literacy, it could be science, whatever it might be.' IT is one of the popular projects.

Once we have the learning of school students as the starting point of partnerships, then our preservice teachers find a way into the school and make this authentic contribution. It can take a while. One of the reasons it takes a while is that we do not have the resources to be able to communicate effectively to all schools all of the time. In our submission you will find an example of that contribution at Fawkner Secondary College with the Breaking Out program. That is a school that has got the idea that preservice teachers should contribute to the learning of school students. The school could not run the program, that year anyway, without our preservice teachers.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to take you back to an earlier statement you made. I assume you have changed quite dramatically the way teacher education is organised. What made that change happen? Who drove that change?

Prof. Kruger—The School of Education at Victoria University had its first intake of preservice teachers in 1985. It was a Diploma of Teaching course at what was then Footscray Institute. The course started with a commitment to, first, the western suburbs of Melbourne that it was going to be—I was going to use the word 'authentic' again—connected to the interests of the kinds of schools that are located in places like the western region of Melbourne.

The second commitment that the course had—I was not there then, despite my age—was the idea that the course was going to be grounded in practice. So what you are hearing now is a continuation of that commitment, of saying that there is not a problem with starting with practice and valuing practice in teacher education. The real problem is the way in which the university relates to that practice, not the practice itself. There might be questions about how well schools

do their jobs and teachers do their jobs, but our concern is how the university relates to the practice that is going on in schools. And, lo and behold, people who have been selected to work in the School of Education at Victoria University have been selected partly for their commitment to that kind of ideology. I think that is the general reason. There are personalities involved with why the course is the way it is now. Many of the personalities are sitting at the table in front of you.

Mr SAWFORD—I gathered that. There are some interesting things you have said. I will take up two and then hand over to my colleague Kerry. You are the first ones to actually mention application and interview. How many teacher education places do you have? How many do you interview in selection?

Dr Cherednichenko—We currently have just under 700 Bachelor of Education P-12 FTE, or full-time equivalent, students and we have about 100 DipEd, or Graduate Diploma of Secondary Education, preservice teachers. This year we had 4,000 applications on VTAC for about 200 coming in to the BEd. We had a very high increase in first round offers—the university is very pleased—for education. There were about 900 applications for the DipEd. So it is very competitive. If you do not make an application you do not get looked at. So it is not about ENTER score per se. We had nearly 2,800 paper applications for our BEd. We look at them all. We rank them.

We have four core criteria with some subsets that we look at. The applications ask people to address those issues. One is their academic capability. There is part of that in there, that is for sure, but it is not the total measure. Another is their interest in, and understanding of, the course they are entering and their reason for entering that course. We want to know that they know they are coming to a teaching program and that it is P-12 or it is graduate diploma in secondary education and that it is in the western region of Melbourne primarily. We work with about 300 schools and other settings each week. We have all these sites of teacher education happening every week. They need to know that that is where they are going to be located and have some comment on why they want to work in that program. We ask them to tell us about their experience with young people and learning questions. We look for more than: ‘I like babysitting my cousins.’ So we are looking for some rich experience they might have had.

We are looking for their suitability. What do the references say about them? What is their suitability for teaching? Who is supporting them to become a teacher? What do they bring? Through that process we manage to get a very diverse group of people into our programs. To some extent, I suppose—I do not want to say this—there is a semi-filtering. We do not take people who all look the same because we are looking for people who are different. That comes out in the application process.

Mr SAWFORD—What brought people to that conclusion, the one you just said?

Dr Cherednichenko—Sorry?

Mr SAWFORD—I agree with you, but what brought your organisation to actually believe that?

Dr Cherednichenko—Again, we started small a long time ago. We used to interview every single applicant. I came to the university in 1994 and for a number of years we still interviewed hundreds every December. We interviewed them in a very laborious process, really. We now interview the people in the marginal category, I suppose, whom we want to know more about. We do not interview everyone. We cannot interview 2,800 applicants—it is just not possible. But we resist very strongly giving that process up because it tells us so much about the richness that people bring.

Our value is that teachers are not trained, they are educated, and they are educated people. They come from many walks of life and many diverse backgrounds. There is no one way to decide who is going to be appropriate to be a teacher. I am sure we get it right and we get it wrong. But at least with this strategy we have some sense of knowing the person a bit before we select them. They are not judged on the basis of one measure of their ability, which is one way of doing it. We have resisted that. We hope to be able to continue to resist that, although it is a very time consuming, expensive process, I have to say, but it is a commitment.

Mr SAWFORD—Congratulations for that. Thank you for putting forward that point of view about valuing difference. I think good teachers too have an edge to them. I think you have gone a longer way than other people to finding that out.

Prof. Kruger—There are four ways in which we select—four pathways into the course. One is the typical year 12 exit. The university also has a partnership portfolio program, which is a relationship the university as a whole has with schools in the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne. There is an agreement that the university will take up to 15 per cent of a year 12 cohort in a school, if you like, on the condition of their passing the VCE. They will be selected to enter a particular course. That is an institutional arrangement the university has with schools. Our programs are part of that. We then have pathways from TAFE and higher education into the Bachelor of Education. The pathways are emphasised in our university, so that really contributes to diversity. Finally, there are the special categories in the normal VTAC entry, including mature age and things like that. I think that process guarantees a diversity in the student population in the university.

Mr BARTLETT—I also want to pursue the issue of the selection of teachers for training. Presumably, because of this selection process, you have quite a wide range of ENTER scores or TERs for those entering teaching. For instance, what would be the lowest ENTER score you would have, chosen on the basis of the strength of those other criteria? Equally, at the other end, would you have many potential students or aspiring students with very high ENTER scores whom you reject?

Dr Cherednichenko—If they have not put an application in—

Mr BARTLETT—Assuming the application is in.

Dr Cherednichenko—we reject them outright. We do have a number who do not put applications in, with all kinds of ENTER scores including very high ones, that we do not consider.

Mr BARTLETT—Why?

Dr Cherednichenko—Because they have not put an application in.

Mr BARTLETT—I am sorry, yes. And of those who have?

Dr Cherednichenko—We have a reasonable span. I do not have statistics on that but from my knowledge of the selection process, because I work in it, we have people from 50 and above, 55 and above. We say: it is not who you take into the university, it is whom you graduate because that is the quality of the teacher. You have four years in a four-year program to graduate a skilled, quality, educated person. We are particularly committed not to the ENTER score entry point only, though it is something we would look at, because we think people learn about different things in different ways. If we are serious about understanding how young people learn in schools and making sure that we can respond to the various ways and experiences of young people in schools, we have to be those kind of learners ourselves. If we are all learners who have been successful in schooling, we can be quite sure that the type of schooling that works is the type of schooling we have had and we have been successful at.

As we know, only 10 per cent of our students get an ENTER score over 90. The other 90 per cent do not. So we think we want teachers who can actually work with those things as well. That is not the reason we do it, but that is an important part of how it works out in play when you are in schools. You have a range of people who have often come through a TAFE program and all kinds of pathways. You have to actually understand that pathway success is not just through a university degree. There is more than one way to create a career and work.

Mr BARTLETT—And are there any comparative figures to show the success of your approach, for example, in terms of reduced attrition rates post training or in the completion of the course—graduation rates—et cetera compared to those universities such as Melbourne, whose intake is based solely on ENTER scores?

Dr Cherednichenko—We do not have comparative data across universities. I can talk about the data that our university keeps on people who come through special entry pathways—other kinds of pathways—and the open access pathways, where often the people come with low ENTER scores. The data from that seems to demonstrate that there is no pattern. Some are very successful, some are not. Equally, some who come with high ENTER scores do very well in university studies and others do not. A lot happens to people, especially young people, in those first years of university. An ENTER score does not guarantee that you are not going to be influenced by relationship break-up, drugs, unemployment, poverty or whatever. Those things happen to people. Our program prides itself on the pastoral care we do with our students, particularly knowing that most of them are the first in their family to go to university. So their experience of it is very fresh and very new. I think that is the sort of work that we think helps them get through.

Dr Cacciattolo—I think the success is not just about the assessments or the academic success in terms of how well our students perform. Our preservice teachers spend a great deal of time in schools so it is also about how we as a team of academics work well with schools and support schools through our university colleagues, through working with mentor teachers, in a way that is also going to enrich their time in the program. I think we need to look at all the various factors that make a program successful. To just solely base it on life at university I think is far too narrow.

Mr BARTLETT—I have one last question before I hand over to Kirsten. Brenda, you said that the majority of your students come from families that have not been to university before. Are you aware of any comparison between the education faculty at your university and other faculties?

Dr Cherednichenko—I do not have statistics, but my work in the university would tell me that that is a fairly common practice. Large numbers of our students come as the first in their family.

Mr BARTLETT—So it is not just that education or teaching is the path out of the working class et cetera.

Dr Cherednichenko—The western suburbs.

Ms LIVERMORE—A lot of my questions have actually been asked and answered. This one is not strictly on the terms of reference. I am curious that you have these really strong partnerships obviously between your preservice teachers and the schools in your area. Are you getting much feedback about the effect of those student teachers being in those schools, not just from their contribution to the academic life of those students but just in terms of being role models and opening the students' eyes to possibilities in higher education generally?

Dr Cherednichenko—We have a teacher education reference group. We meet with our representatives from all our schools, or many of them, a couple of times a year. We get very clear feedback, and our review did too. Would someone else like to talk?

Dr Eckersley—In our Melbourne campus, we have a Bachelor of Education with majors in either physical education or outdoor education. There is a higher percentage of males doing those particular majors. When they go out into primary schools, many of them are excellent role models in terms of literacy and numeracy for some of our young students at schools who are struggling in those areas. Often our schools will identify projects that they would like preservice teachers to contribute to that are related to that. There are role models, boys in schools programs and reading programs. That certainly enhances our preservice contributions to the learning of the kids in the schools. It also provides them with learning.

I think communication is the critical feature of all of this, particularly between the preservice teacher and the mentor. We make sure that there are processes and procedures to ensure that there is effective communication between the two. It is vital to their success. The feedback that the mentor is providing to the preservice teacher needs to be what they think is being provided. The university colleague we were referring to—

Dr Cherednichenko—That is us.

Dr Eckersley—who regularly visits, we try to organise it so that they go at least once every three weeks into a school to facilitate the communication process and troubleshoot, if necessary. Certainly it is to provide support both for the preservice teacher and the mentor teacher and facilitate those applied curriculum projects that are so successful.

Ms LIVERMORE—I have one last question. It seems that the experience you are describing—the close collaboration with schools and the way that you are able to organise your student teachers being out in the schools—is much easier than other universities have described it to us. Are any other universities coming to find out? Are other people keen to see what you are doing? Is it dramatically different from what other universities are doing?

Dr Cherednichenko—We think so.

Ms LIVERMORE—It sounds like it.

Dr Cherednichenko—There are a number of universities who do a range of things that are various shapes of teacher education. One cautionary note I would want to leave with the panel is that the essence of this work is about relationships and communication and our priorities and our institution—the priority for our school and the things we decide to spend money on. We have biggish classes, and lots of sessional people work with us, whom we value greatly and who are invaluable in our program. But that building of relationships amongst the university team and with the schools and with our preservice teachers as they go and those teams is probably not something that you can make happen. It is something that would go much better if we had a lot more resources; let me say that one more time. But it is something that I think everyone needs to see the point of and see the value of. It needs to come to the table.

Perhaps ‘fortunate’ is a bad word. We enjoy schools and school colleagues who put their hand up and say, ‘Can we please have a team of preservice teachers to work with us?’ We could put another 30 or 40 preservice teachers into a school now, but we do not have any because they are all in schools from the start of the year. There are schools wanting to do more work with us. We grew from a small thing into something quite large. We have worked very hard at building those relationships. I think it is not something you can make schools do. Everyone has to see the point and the value in it.

Prof. Kruger—You should mention Edith Cowan, Brenda, because we have worked there.

Dr Cherednichenko—Yes. Edith Cowan is one university that we have worked with extensively over the last five years, actually, on this work. They have a very large program which is much larger than ours. They have built their new programs over the last four or five years on partnerships. They are doing some terrific things. Bill and I hopefully are going off to do some more work with them later in the year and steal some of their ideas back. It has been a great relationship.

Mr SAWFORD—I have two questions. You are given unfettered control of education in Australia immediately. What are you going to do tomorrow morning?

Prof. Kruger—I will speak as a teacher educator and somebody who is in a university. That is kind of laying down the scheme of life in education. I think the participation of teacher education in the life of schools—and that is in the life of teachers and students in schools and the participation of schools and teachers and school students in the life of university—is the key to the improvement of teacher education. I think I would resource that. If we had more money, I do not think it would go into plusher offices for teacher educators or more overseas trips. It would go into resourcing the creation of knowledge in schools about teaching and learning so that it is

interpretable at university, and the kind of research and knowledge creation at university would be transformed into forms that our colleagues in schools value. I think that is the key question for us at the School of Education at Victoria University.

Mr SAWFORD—I do not want to put you on the spot.

Dr Cherednichenko—I am happy. I would stop telling teachers what to do and how to do it and I would listen. That is what I would want to do. I would want to listen and put them together and let them use the knowledge they have. There is enormous knowledge out there that is undervalued. Our program has a strong research base to it because we work our research in the same way. We do what we call collaborative practitioner research where we work with colleagues—teachers—around questions of interest to them. We generate the outcomes and the findings with them. We listen to them, not go in, look at what they are doing, come back, think about it, write a paper and tell them what they are doing. It is the same thing: I would want to do collaborative practitioner learning with colleagues to change the face of teacher education.

Dr Eckersley—Following on from what Brenda was just saying, we would like the opportunity to engage more with the teachers in more traditional programs. Documentation is sent out in the mail explaining what the preservice teachers are required to do and what the expectations of the mentors are. We find that typically mentors, as Tony alluded to before, run the program the way they experienced it in their initial training. We would like opportunities to engage more with them in local areas. We have these reference group meetings about four times a year. Many of them travel some distances to come to these meetings. I think we would get better attendance and more of the mentors who are actually doing this work if we were able to create more opportunities for localised meetings with us engaging in those conversations about how we can make the project partnership process a more successful one for them and us and the students.

Mr SAWFORD—Where would you get some advice for us on that? If you were us, where would you begin?

Mr Moore—I will explain briefly. I have been working on the Career Change Program, which is a Victorian Department of Education and Training sponsored program that is putting teachers in hard-to-staff areas, which are mainly rural, teaching subjects where they have difficulty recruiting people. So we have people who are former automotive workers or who have been working in textiles or upholstery or been in catering. Some IT teachers are in demand. Maths and science teachers are in demand and LOTE teachers and music teachers. They are in schools four days a week. They are being paid, I guess, a base salary by the department. They have one day off a week which is for their study. They attend the university for five weeks of the year where we work with them intensively. I travel around Victoria visiting them. It is in its initial stages.

Where does it work well and where does it not work in this model? There are all sorts of factors that impinge on it—school size, leadership, mentor and space and time. We talk about the mentor relationship. Some mentors will meet regularly with the trainee teacher. Some will just pass them in the corridor. There are some things I probably ought not say. If you are asking about some aspects of the program, the way it is organised and run, you need to talk to the department because I would not like to speak on their behalf. They are areas where I would be critical. I do not think I can properly voice them here on the public record.

In general, it has been very successful. Where it does work well is where the school has the capacity to induct the trainee teacher in a gradual way. Rather than sort of putting them on to a full allotment and thrusting them in front of students, they allow them time to observe and to watch what it is that teachers do in order to manage the students and engage them. They then find their own feet in a gradual way before taking on a full load. These people are exhausted, obviously. So I have had to modify some of the time lines we work with in terms of them getting their academic work in.

You talk about selection processes. Of the 25 we started with, two have dropped out. They found that their personalities were not suited to it. They were not assertive. You have to have a bit of a nasty streak in you. You are faced with—

Dr Cherednichenko—Determined.

Mr Moore—25 young people and you do need to raise your voice and issue cautions and so on. One in particular was placed in a no-win situation. You are dealing in some ways with what are seen as trade related subjects. This is the place where you put all your difficult kids because you think they will be better off if they are involved with something hands-on, but it does not alter their behaviour. You might want to ask me more questions before I rave on any more.

Prof. Kruger—Can I answer that question. Brenda alluded to the site based teacher education report. That enabled us to do a bit of imagining about teacher education having a closer relationship with teaching. Teacher educators, preservice teachers and teachers in schools were going to be working closely together in the interests of school students. We ran a speculation in the site based report. It said: 'What if all of teacher education in Australia was focused on improving the learning of school students, especially those in the most disadvantaged schools and those for whom being at school and succeeding at school is a real struggle? What if we turned the whole of the education community on to that question?' How many teacher education students are there in Australia? There must be 20,000 in Victoria. There would be 20,000 teacher education students in Victoria in situations where they were contributing to the learning of students, and especially those students who were, if you like, at risk in the education system. The institution of teacher education and the institution of schooling would be focused on that question.

Mr SAWFORD—Then we would define professionalism and service in a whole different way.

Dr Cherednichenko—I would like to have a bash at it too and suggest that the first thing I would want to do is go back to my listening comment. If I were on this inquiry, I would develop a partnership relationship with teacher education in schools rather than become involved in what is often seen as government adversarial sorts of things. I would want to turn the relationship around so that we were all running in the same direction and almost holding hands with the same goals in mind. I think we have the same goals in mind. I am not sure that we know each other's work well enough to be able to be in any kind of partnership. I do not think the listening is as fine-tuned as it could be.

Mr SAWFORD—They are hearing different messages.

CHAIR—Thank you for your very interesting presentation to the committee today. We may contact you in the future if we require further information. Thank you again.

Dr Cherednichenko—Thank you. We would be happy to let you see some of it in action at some point if you are interested.

[3.44 pm]

BAXTER, Mr Nicholas , Student, University of Melbourne

CRINALL, Ms Sarah, Student, University of Melbourne

HENRY, Miss Tobey, Student, University of Melbourne

JONES, Miss Sarah, Student, University of Melbourne

LEA, Ms Kimberly, Student, University of Melbourne

MERCOVICH, Mr Charles, Student, University of Melbourne

NORMAN, Mr Matthew, Student, University of Melbourne

RADCLIFFE, Ms Michelle, Student, University of Melbourne

SPENCER, Miss Laura, Student, University of Melbourne

DRIES, Ms Shanta, Student, Victoria University

FREE, Mr Andrew, Student, Victoria University

HANNETT, Mr Jonathon, Student, Victoria University

LAWRIE, Ms Megan, Student, Victoria University

PANAYIOTOU, Mrs Julie, Student, Victoria University

SACCO, Mr Benjamin, Student, Victoria University

ZAFAR, Miss Zahra, Student, Victoria University

CHAIR—Thank you for coming along and participating in this student forum at our public hearing today. There are just a few formalities that I need to go through with you before we start. The proceedings of this forum are a formal part of the public hearing. Although the committee—this sounds a bit heavy, but it is not quite that bad—does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should 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 will be regarded as a contempt of the parliament.

Again, thank you for coming along. We really appreciate the time you have taken and your input. Your study workloads are indeed heavy and, combined with whatever part-time work you may or may not do, it certainly makes it a busy life for students. As the chair, I will ask the first question. I think I might put to you a similar question to the one I asked the previous forum or

panel and that is: what do you like about the training that you are receiving, and what do you think could be better?

Mr Free—I am from the VUT. I am doing third year. I am doing the accelerated program, which will give me both primary and secondary qualifications. What I enjoy about the partnership program is that I will follow a group of students right through the year, so I will actually get to see their progress. I am getting a lot of good feedback from the school that I am with. When you learn at university, you hear a lot of theories and all that type of stuff. But I actually get to take them to the classroom then and there. So with the questions I have about the stuff I am learning, I am taking them straight back to the universities and asking about what we have done. So we all reflect on our experiences. I think that is very valuable.

With things like the communication with students, we learn how to do that theoretically but we actually get to take it back to the school. We are actually dealing with it. I go every Tuesday to my school. In the next few weeks, I will have a block placement of three weeks. I know the students already. I know the projects they are working on. You build up that rapport, and I think that is important.

CHAIR—Would anyone like to comment on something that they think could be better in their training?

Mr Hannett—I am doing a four-year Bachelor of Education at Footscray Park. As Andrew said, our university is partnership focused so we are actively engaged with the students at the schools we are at. We can also come back to our classes—our lecturers—and talk about things we see. We have a really strong relationship with our mentor teachers. We have a good relationship with the school. This year is my fourth year. I will assume full control of the class at some stage. Because I am there every week, I can see where the kids are at, where they are going and what the focus of the school is, rather than just walking in and doing a three-week block, where it is, ‘Hello, goodbye’ without actually seeing the kids develop and grow. We become part of the school.

We do a project which we nominate that benefits the school. We are giving something back to the schools. We also have really good mentors. The school often places you with a really good, experienced teacher. My teacher is a leading teacher. You can learn the most valuable skills at university, all the theory and all the content they want, but in practice it may not work. The fact that we can put our skills into practice is what sets our course apart from other courses.

Mr SAWFORD—Why did you choose to go to Victoria?

Mr Hannett—I think because it offered the P to 12, so it gave us a choice. At that stage I was not sure whether I wanted to teach primary or secondary. The partnership focus was a real bonus for me. I wanted to actively get involved in schools. It also offers a lot of extra curricula. I went to a Northern Territory program, a program called SWIRL. We taught in the middle of the Northern Territory. It showed me a different aspect of teaching—with schools that were under-funded, with communities that had very little. It sort of opened my eyes to more than just the average Victorian school.

Mr SAWFORD—What sort of information did you have about Victoria University before you actually began?

Mr Hannett—When I decided I wanted to become a teacher, I had a look at all the courses. Basically it was the P to 12 and the partnership focus that interested me. When I rang the university, they were really positive. All the information was there. I thought it was the best program for me.

Ms Lawrie—I am from VU as well. Just with regard to the question about improvements within the school, I think we are lucky, as we have already mentioned, with our partnerships. But there obviously are improvements with regard to that. Part of it is about educating ourselves and the school. A lot of schools do not realise what we do in the partnerships. Sometimes—I have had this happen—it is about educating the teachers about what we are there for. We are not just there to watch them. We are there to be active members of the class and engage with them and the students. Sometimes that does not happen. We are there to do a fabulous project to help the school and to help us, but sometimes that does not really get across. So it is about educating them on what we are there for as well so we can get all these fantastic things from it.

Not everyone's experience of that is positive. Making sure that is perfect is a reflection of the school's and the university's communication. I have had a great experience and I have had a not-so-good experience. But they have both been positive and had positive outcomes. But the main improvement is just making sure that the knowledge is there of what is going on—and understanding that and taking all those things back to uni to put them into a practical place and vice versa. They need to be working together with each other so we are not just going to lectures that are insignificant with regard to what we are doing in school and vice versa. I think that is one of the main improvements we can make within the education system for university students.

Mr SAWFORD—Would anyone else like to make a comment?

Mr Sacco—I am from the P to 12 campus of Victoria University as well. On the question of what made Jonathon select the campus, I graduated from year 12 in 2001. I was at that age where you really have this thing coming from parents, teachers and the whole society about what you want to do with your life. Once you get to year 12, you have to work out what you want to do, whether it is uni, TAFE or full-time work. For me, I knew I wanted to go into some sort of uni course in teaching, but I had to work out what I wanted to do—primary, secondary or motivational speaking for educational schools. Like Jonathon, looking through the VTAC guides and speaking to counsellors at school, the thing that struck me was that Victoria University offered P to 12. It allowed me to go into a course where I had no idea, to be honest, of whether I wanted to teach in primary or secondary, although I knew I wanted to teach in one of those areas. Victoria University allowed me to learn, from the primary components in the first two years, about why we teach kids and how we teach them through the partnerships. In the third year we go into secondary school. It allowed me to then get the concept of what secondary schools are about.

So just in answering that question about what made me go into the course, I think Victoria University offered me the prospect of getting qualified in teaching, which is what I wanted—that was the philosophy behind it—and it allowed me to work out for myself where I wanted to go, because at that stage I did not have that direction for myself. So the course has been good at that.

I am now a fourth-year student and I sort of understand that I want to go into primary and secondary. I am at the crossroads. I want to do both, which is pretty funny considering where I was when I was 18 years old. That is pretty much why I chose the course and where the benefit is in it.

Miss Zafar—I am at VUT as well. I am in the fourth year of a bachelor's degree. I went into it for the same reason as Ben and Jonathon—it was P to 12. With your question about what we could improve to make it a better course, I live in the eastern suburbs and Victoria uni is primarily in the western suburbs. I think it is a great course and I think you could spread it to the eastern suburbs as well. For me, it is quite a hike to get to uni every morning and back. If the partnership schools could be closer to home, that would be great. I think a lot of eastern suburbs kids would be really interested in it if it were not so far away.

Mr SAWFORD—Why did you choose the course?

Miss Zafar—I chose it because I knew I definitely wanted to be a teacher. But I was actually choosing between psychology and teaching year 12. I looked at all the courses. I went to open days, meetings and all of those sorts of things. When I realised that I definitely wanted to be a teacher, I was not sure which one I wanted to do—primary or secondary. I looked into this one and saw that I would be able to maintain or sustain long relationships with schools. Apart from the job opportunity at the end of it, having four years with a mentor teacher and watching students develop and stuff meant that by the end of it I would be so experienced that I would walk out of there being a confident teacher.

I can compare it to other universities that I have looked at. My sister is at a different university and she is also doing education. She has looked at me over the last four years and gone, 'You are so much more confident when you walk into a classroom.' I communicate with my preps' parents. I am doing parent-teacher interviews and those sorts of things. A lot of other students do not get that opportunity.

Ms Lea—I am doing a DipEd at Melbourne uni. Changing the focus just a little bit, I commend the fantastic preparation that these VU students seem to have, but as someone who has come into the profession as a second career I certainly cannot afford to spend four years doing a whole new education degree. With regard to the DipEd year, I think 12 months is sufficient but we do not get 12 months. We get 28 weeks, which is a little bit over six months. I think extending either end of the course just a little bit would give us more opportunity to reflect on and learn from the material we are being presented with.

I think the Melbourne uni course is fantastic. It is based on a lot of research. I feel like I am given the opportunity to get an awful lot out of it. I feel like I am limited because of the short time period. Related to my second point, I think some kind of income support for that DipEd year would do a lot for relieving the financial pressures and the kind of balance you have to try to achieve while still maintaining your life and getting as much as you can out of that DipEd year. I am really enjoying it. I feel like I am burning the candle at both ends for weeks on end. I am certainly looking forward to the break. Thank you for this opportunity to present my two points, which are, firstly, that the DipEd needs to be taught over a longer year and, secondly, that more income support is needed, please.

Mr SAWFORD—I appreciate it. I think it is a great disincentive to people in your situation coming from a career.

Ms Lea—You cannot get Austudy if you have a partner, for example.

Mr SAWFORD—What if someone put to you the proposition that they paid you a salary to do that but on condition that you were bonded for a period of time? If that were put to you, would it be acceptable, or is that off-putting? It may be a question to you as well.

Mr Baxter—Yes. I am in a similar situation. I have had a career, or two careers, elsewhere. I picked Melbourne uni because it was one year and that is all I could afford. I am funding this myself and I am supporting people as well. Yes, being bonded is much like the old teachers' college system used to be in Victoria 25 years ago. That would not upset me. But I have a family and other responsibilities, so being forced to spend three years working in Swan Hill to fill a vacancy up there would not necessarily suit.

Ms Lea—It might be acceptable—not brilliant or ideal, but maybe acceptable.

Mr Baxter—One of the other points that I see about the focus at Melbourne university is that they seem to be equipping us with lots of great academic theory. When I first stood in front of those kids in the classroom for the first round, the stuff that I had been taught was of no value to me whatsoever. The stuff that had been taught would have been good for developing programs and for developing units of work and advancing the curriculum and looking at different teaching techniques. But when it came to actually standing in front of the classroom with an unruly group of year 10s, what stood me in good stead was my size, my age, my powerful voice and the fact that I had taught adults before. Nothing at Melbourne uni helped me with that.

Mr BARTLETT—I can still remember my DipEd year was the same, but I did not have the size to help me.

Mr Baxter—The other aspect is the value that the schools place on this. The standard of the supervising teachers varied extraordinarily. My supervising teacher was dedicated and had a pretty rigid traditional teaching style but they worked hard with me at helping me through that. But other students that were at the same school as me did not have it anywhere near as good. One of their supervising teachers just said, 'Oh, well, you're worth $100 a week to me. I'll see if I can get the money with the smallest amount of work.' From talking to other people, I think that is repeated around the place.

Ms Dries—I am a DipEd student at VU so I am doing the one-year course. I want to follow up on your question about the financial incentive—being bonded to a school. I looked into that because I have come from another career and I have been without funds for nine months. I thought it would be a bit scary, and it is. Most of the opportunity seemed to be in remote areas so for me it was a disincentive. It was not the fact that I would be bonded to a school. It was more where they were.

I want to follow up on your comments about the first time you go to teach in school. One advantage of the partnership program is not just working on the partnership. You are in school every Tuesday. From 1 March I have been in schools. Typically in a day I just go to as many

different classes as I can and observe them, even those that are outside of my subject area. I am doing maths and science, so I go to RE or any subject, including PE. So I see many different teachers' classroom management techniques. That has been really helpful, because I did my rounds in April. It was still quite scary the first time I stood up in front of a class, but I had observed a lot of different teachers and a lot of different classes and seen how they had managed different classes. That helped a lot that first time.

Mr BARTLETT—Does anyone else want to comment on that?

Mrs Panayiotou—I am also from Victoria University and I am doing a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education. With respect to the initial question of what we do well, what we do not do well and what can be improved, I know it was mentioned, but I think the most important thing is basically that the partnership program builds relationships with the school and the teachers. I know quite a lot of students who have gained employment through it. The school gets to see these people day in and day out. Over a whole year you get to know that person rather better than through a three-week stint. So I think that is fantastic.

One thing that might be done better is the education of the mentor teachers at schools. A lot of them do not know what is required. As this gentleman said, sometimes the feedback is such that they do not spend enough time with you. Some do. I think the quality varies, going from one end to the other.

Mr BARTLETT—Can I take it back a step. I am interested in why you decided to become teachers. Of those of you who just left school and went straight into education courses, had you always wanted to be a teacher? What other careers did you think of? Was this the only course you could get into et cetera? For those of you who have been in other careers, what made you change? Did you have to take a pay cut? What are the disincentives related to pay? Why don't we have more men going into teaching, although you are certainly above the average here. Approximately 20.8 per cent primary teachers across the country are men. You are a bit above average here. Of those of you who are guys, were you worried about any aspects of it? Why did your peers decide not to become teachers? I am interested in your feedback on those sorts of areas.

Miss Jones—I am from the University of Melbourne. I am one of the science people as well. I did my Bachelor of Science and then I did my honours year and I found that I did not like doing research and I liked communicating with people all the time, people of my own age and older—I am only 23—and younger people. I think that I have a lot to offer someone who is enthusiastic and passionate about what I have been learning. I felt that that would be something I could communicate to others. That is why I decided to be a teacher.

I have to say that I think I have made a really great decision in going to Melbourne university because I am learning so much from the different people I have met. It is only a Diploma of Education but that is okay. Like Kim said, we just need a bit more time. Rod Fawns runs the science and biology part. That is one of the reasons why I chose Melbourne university; it is one of the only universities in Melbourne that offers biology as a method. VUT does not and neither does ACU. They only offer science. So I have had to do science and biology because they are the only ones that I am qualified for.

We have a thing where we go out into schools for about four weeks. We do one morning a week doing special small group activity work. It is not quite like what VUT has, but we are getting a lot of valuable things out of it. But that is part of the science curriculum only, not the other departments, so it needs to be extended.

Miss Spencer—I am also doing a DipEd at Melbourne university. Just regarding your question to do with pay, I do not think many people pick teaching because of the pay.

Mr BARTLETT—My question is more to do with whether people do not pick it because of the pay. Is it considered a disincentive?

Miss Spencer—I do not think it is a disincentive. Maybe for some people who are more money focused. But my partner was an engineer and, after five years of doing engineering, he decided that he was sick of going to a chemical plant every day and needed to interact with kids. That is something he loves, so he took a pay cut of more than half. He loves it. That is one of the things that inspired me to do it. I was thinking about it. But the fact is that the money is not so important, really. If it is a job that you enjoy and you are helping people, I think that is a good thing. You still need to have the incentive.

From my first teaching round, I have realised that it is quite a challenging job. You sometimes are putting in extra hours. Everyone thinks teaching is 8.30 until 3.30 and you go home and it is so easy, but you have extra marking. He is in a private school and you have extra sport Saturday mornings and after school. There are quite a few extra activities that people sometimes take for granted. There needs to be adequate pay for teachers to keep people interested. It just depends whether you are trying to get people who are more money focused into it or people who really want to do it, I think.

Ms Radcliffe—I am a bachelor of education student from Melbourne university. I have a couple of points to make about that. I think most teachers definitely do not go into the profession for the money; I would agree with that entirely. But, that said, I think that as a result we need to feel that society respects us more than perhaps they do at the moment. That is a difficult issue because some parents have a lot of respect for teachers and some have almost none. It tends to be either end of the spectrum. Primary teaching students, which is the background I come from, often feel inferior to secondary teachers because they do not have an area of specialisation in the same way that most secondary teachers do. I think that that might be something that schools could look into in the future—having primary teachers with a specialisation. A lot of schools are already doing that. All the grade 3s will break up and one teacher will take them for maths and another teacher will take them for reading recovery and that kind of thing. Maybe if they had more specialised areas, that would improve people’s opinions of teachers and make teachers feel more confident about their own abilities.

In my own situation doing primary teaching, I ended up doing two diplomas as well so my course is out for an extra year. But I have that ability to maybe go into secondary teaching at some stage if I want to do that. I also just know that I have something specific that I am doing other than generalist teaching, although I am not putting that down in any way.

Just in reference to the comments about financial assistance, I know a great range of people. I think the hardest time is when they are on placement, regardless of whether they are receiving

youth allowance or are single parents, married or supported. The hardest time is on placement. I think that even though our supervising teachers do a great job looking after us, the fact that they get paid and we have to give up our part-time jobs or work evenings until really late at night and then come to school early the next morning is a really difficult thing for a lot of students. That is by far the highest time of pressure for everyone. Perhaps even if it came out of our future HECS payments, receiving some greater financial assistance at that time would be a really positive thing.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a question about the reverse side of that. When you have to do some part-time work, it is not fun. At the time I hated it—cleaning toilets, working in hotels and pumping petrol and then doing all that other stuff—but, in hindsight, it made me a better teacher.

Ms Radcliffe—Even though you had to work after working a full day as a teacher? I do not disagree that it is fine to work during your time as a student because you are not working as a student full time the way you would be working in a job. But when you are on placement, you are expected to get there at 8.30. You often do not get away until 4.30. Then you have to start a shift at five that goes until 10 or 11 and then do your preparation for the next day. That is the hardest time.

Mr Mercovich—I am doing the DipEd at Melbourne university. One of the differences with a lot of people who are going back to university to study teaching is a lot of them have come from other careers and made career trajectories so a lot of them are not in the same position as a high school student who is working part time for the first time while studying. I think definitely a program which recognised the amount of work that trainee teachers or studying teachers actually do during that three weeks or nine weeks of the year—depending on the requirements there—would actually help, as well as having a mentor program in place where what exactly the responsibilities of the mentor are was recognised—and where the work of the trainee teacher was actually recognised in that respect. There is a lot of studying and preparation that the university sets the groundwork for so that when they do go out on placements they are not just being thrown in the deep end. The trainee teachers actually do have a grounding of some kind, even though it is not perhaps at the same level of experience as their mentors' might be. Certainly it is an area which could be developed.

Ms Lawrie—I have some comments with regard to comments made about the specialists. I know that, from where we are, I actually do have three specialties that I can teach in secondary school. Therefore, that carries over into primary school. So there are options for students to become specialists in different areas, not just be generalist primary school teachers. With regard to earlier questions about getting into uni and choosing unis and whatnot, I came straight out of year 12 knowing that I wanted to be a teacher and I did not get into any teaching courses. I was a bit shocked and a bit stunned. I was going, 'I don't know what I'm going to do.' I developed myself and did other things within the teaching field—working with disadvantaged children on camps, swim teaching and things like that. I decided four years later that I did still want to be a teacher and that everything I had worked around was with younger children. I went to all the open days and looked at all the universities, which I did not do when I was in year 12 because I just went: 'I'm going to get in. Like, who's not going to take me?' I was not thinking very clearly.

The reason I did choose Victoria uni is that they did not look at my TER. My TER was average. It was not great. They did not look at it. I was happy to have an interview. I was happy to write an application piece on why I wanted to be a teacher because it was something I was passionate about and it was something that I could show the panel that I could do. They could look at the experience I had had working with kids and take me on my merit as a person, not on my score of what I did in high school. I do not know whether it was because I did not work hard enough; that may have been the reason. They could look at my merits as a person and my passion for wanting to be a teacher. I think that is an important thing. Just because you can get into a teaching course does not mean you are going to be a great teacher.

Mr SAWFORD—What do other people think about the point that has just been made about entry into teacher education? You are alluding to a multifaceted approach—an interview, application and TER score. VU is using another criteria which just escapes me for the moment. It might have to do with disadvantage or geographical area or whatever. It is more widespread, yet with Melbourne university it is the TER and nothing else. Do you have some comments on that?

Mr Free—I have one quick comment. I will give you an example. When I went to school, I thought I was a pretty hopeless student. That is why I wanted to be a teacher. Communication is the essence. We had two teachers, teachers A and B. I was pretty horrible at year 8 maths. We had a teacher who was brilliant. He knew his maths. He would have got a perfect TER score if he had been in the system. But he could not communicate. So he did all this stuff on the board—all this algebra and everything—but it meant nothing because he could not communicate.

TER scores are not the only answer. You have to have a people person, someone who can get to the kids' level to communicate with them. I am dealing with literacy kids at the moment in year 8. These kids are very shy. They think they are stupid because they cannot read or write. I felt the same way. I was taught later on that English, reading and writing, is only a tool. It is nothing to be afraid of. Before, when I went, it was very much, 'Well, you're expected to do this and that.' The details and the foundations were not there. These kids will obviously decide if they have a low opinion of themselves It reflects what they want to do with their lives. It reflects what they do after school. They think, 'Well, I won't bother doing homework because I'm no good at it so I'll go out on the streets and do all sorts of things.'

I think communication is a big step. To get good teachers, it is not just about the scores. It is about how you relate to other people and what they have done outside university or outside their school curriculum. I was involved with Apex, which is a service club. We dealt with youth things and community things. That is another aspect. You are dealing with people within the community.

Mr Norman—I am doing a Diploma of Education. I guess it all comes down to the question of whether you think teachers are born or made. If you are born, you are a great communicator and you know how to do it from day one. If you are made, you go to university and you learn how to do it. I think there is a little bit of both. I think that after doing a university course for four years you do become more confident in speaking. You may be at a disadvantage, but you can still after a lot of practice become a good teacher. I think the TER is definitely not the most important thing. But if you get a good TER and you are not a confident person, you can still become a good teacher over time. That is just my point.

Miss Jones—We had a discussion about it yesterday. We were all taken into our course on our grade point averages for the Diploma of Education. They have told us they have reservations about us filling out the supplementary forms telling them why you want to be a teacher. They think you might be disadvantaged if you cannot write it better than somebody else. They were suggesting that, like doctors have a UMAC test, there should be a standard one for all teachers where we sit it and you can tell what our personalities are a little bit like. You would use that as part of the process of selection not just for one university but for all universities so you have some standardisation for the selection criteria, not just having different ones for different universities.

Ms Dries—If you had a standard selection criteria, the philosophy of education in the different universities might not necessarily come through. Some universities might—not putting any university up or down—be more interested in creating academic excellence and others might be interested in fostering an inquiring mind in their education students. I do not know that you could standardise it unless you standardise the philosophy of all the education departments.

Mrs Panayiotou—I want to make a comment on the TER scores. I know the application process for VU was extensive. It took me two evenings to fill it out. It was the only university that had those requirements. But you can see on those forms the dedication of the people who have thought it out and really want to teach. It just comes through.

Mr Mercovich—I want to add to what Shanta was saying about standardising the philosophy. One of the things that attracted me to the teaching profession is that there is not a standard philosophy you can apply. It is sort of dependent on various social and cultural factors. By its very nature, teaching encourages a difference in attitudes and opinions which is healthy in any society. I come from a background of English and studying English and related cultural studies at university so it was good to do a DipEd that was only for a year after that. With an academic background of several years, it is nice to have something that fits into the one year. Hopefully, more could be fitted into that one year. But it is good to have a course in place which does recognise that, especially one that encourages the open discussion of ideas and encourages the focus of teaching to be on philosophy as well, which I think it should be, especially given the responsibility of the teacher is to open up the minds of students.

Mr Baxter—I would like to say why I came to teaching. I have a son in primary school. He was struggling. His exuberance and possibly ADD or whatever—

CHAIR—What did you do before?

Mr Baxter—I was a winemaker. Originally I was a metallurgist, then I became a winemaker. I saw my son having trouble. I was spending time at his school and just noticed there were no men around the place. There were not many people who knew much about science. Even the science teachers did not know much about science. I did not think it was very good. Rather than jump up and down and say the system should change, I had a look in the mirror and said, 'If it is that important, why don't I do it?' That is why I have come to it. I think it is important, certainly with kids, that they see there are men in the classrooms and that teaching is not unmanly. I think it comes back to lots of broader philosophical questions. But that is certainly why I have come to it; it is important.

Ms Dries—From the opposite side, in my past life I was a geologist. I came to it after doing geology for 10 years and wanting a change. I think there was a need in schools for female students to see that there are more career options for women in science. I felt that I had a lot to offer and a lot to give and a lot to show other students that different career opportunities are there for women as well as for men.

Mr Hannett—Getting back to the entry score for teaching courses, I think if you base it solely on entry scores, you undermine what a teacher really is. I have all the knowledge in the world. If I cannot put that into practice, it will not matter how much knowledge I have because they will not get it. I think you also have to look at the role of the teacher. He is a facilitator of learning. I am not teaching my knowledge to the kids. I am teaching the kids how to think and how to participate in this world and the skills necessary for life after school, be it university or a job. You have to have a variety of skills, not just book marks, to be a good teacher.

Mr Free—I would like to make one more comment regarding male and female teachers. At the primary school I am working at on Mondays, there are no male teachers except for the principal. We have a group of about 20 students there working on a major project so they have had an influx of about eight male preservice teachers. We get a lot of positive comments from parents. There are a lot of single mums who find that they are getting a good response from having a male role model, especially for young boys, who kind of tend to want to run around and do all sorts of things. I do not know whether it is a cultural thing. I am not too sure. I know a lot of the teachers currently there are saying, ‘So are you going to come back and teach here?’ So it is really positive. There seems to be a really big need for, I know in the primary school I am at, for a male teacher.

There are some scary things. There are the issues of dealing with kids. You have to be very careful. I suppose that is one thing that universities may need to look at—how to deal with situations where things could be read into them. I was in a situation at a primary school where the kids were in grades 1 and 2. They do not understand. They come up and pull your arm and put their arm on your shoulder. I had a young girl come and put her arms around my shoulder and I thought, ‘Oh, God, what am I going to do?’ I looked at the teacher. The teacher came. I said, ‘Oh, that’s good.’ But I had a talk with her. That was the valuable information she gave. She said, ‘You just tap them on the back so it’s okay and then you take your arms off.’ But they are the situations that, when it comes to primary school, for male teachers especially—I know some female teachers feel the same—you have to be careful. I think there needs to be a bit more clarity maybe from the universities to deal with situations like that. I know that has put a lot of people off teaching as a career, especially primary school teachers.

Mr Sacco—I want to make a comment on the issue of entrance scores. Your ears are probably a bit sore. From my experience coming out of year 12 four years ago, regardless of whatever uni I am at now, the idea that we are going to judge who can go into a uni based on the ENTER score detracts from what teachers are now telling us and what our mentors are now saying as developing teachers. We are there to teach students. We are there to take their already existing knowledge and build on that. That is one thing I have learnt to do. I have learnt in four years to go from a student to a teacher. That is the scary thing, in a way, but it is actually a privilege.

I do not really know how you guys feel about it, but to get into any course is to learn about why we teach kids and what benefit we get as people, not as teachers. I think you could argue as

a side topic that to be a doctor you have to get an ENTER score. Therefore, teachers should get an ENTER score, obviously. It is a career. Doctors are saving lives. Teachers to an extent save lives. One thing I have learnt is that teaching is about being human. It is me helping my colleague Zahra. That is teaching. I do not think you can put an ENTER score on that. To put an ENTER score on that for me was absurd when I was in year 12.

So I think things need to be looked at in terms of how we are going to work out who is best for the job. On that note, if we say who is best for the job, I think that is an insult to us in this room. It is not a job. Teaching is not a job. I am young. I am naïve; I will admit that. I do not think it is a job. I think it is a privilege. I think that if we build that assumption, I think we can go somewhere with it.

Ms Radcliffe—As a Melbourne uni undergraduate, I was a bit surprised that the entry into the course was based entirely on my police check and my year 12 score. I think there is definitely more to look at in that. Probably interviews or some sort of UMAC test, as was suggested, might be a really good way to do that. I would like to add that I do not think the issue of ENTER scores is completely black and white. I think there are some people who do not necessarily have good year 12 scores who make excellent teachers and their contributions are absolutely invaluable. They have a different perspective on life and learning. But I think we also need to have some high achievers within schools as well who really did know how to work the school system because there are a lot of kids who will need high ENTER scores for their professions or want to do really well academically as well as socially. I think it is important to have teachers who can model ways of learning and achieving in that way as well. We need a mix of both systems, not just one or the other.

Ms Crinall—I am from the University of Melbourne doing a graduate diploma for one year. I was going to make the same point. I have noticed in this room we are talking about different courses with different criteria for selection. That is an important thing because I think there are lots of people out there who are going to be wonderful teachers from many different backgrounds with many different skills. What seems to be available is different universities that provide for those different groups of people.

I was able to select five universities to apply to. I got into Melbourne university, obviously. I was surprised to find that out as well. My TER was adequate to get into that university and I was able to do that. But if that was not my strength, there are other universities where perhaps my attributes or something else would have been judged for me to get into that course. So I think it is important that we have different institutions with different criteria.

Miss Zafar—The reason why I went into teaching from the start was because of my experiences as a child. Being a Muslim and growing up in England and here, I had a lot of racism growing up. My TER score was quite good. It was adequate to get into any of the universities. But I think it was my experiences that I actually went through as a kid and as a high school student that actually developed me into the person that I am and made me into a better teacher. I do not think taking people on their TER scores actually means a lot. I think Victoria University has a really good strategy of getting to know the people before they actually take them in and give them a place.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a question perhaps to all of you. Can any of you remember or do you identify with being exposed to an outstanding teacher or an outstanding principal or someone in teacher education that actually has gobsmacked you in terms of what is going on? It seems that many successful teachers have an experience of that sort. Has that happened to any people here? Does anyone want to talk about that and who that individual was, not necessarily the name but some of the qualities of that individual?

Ms Henry—I am at Melbourne uni doing a DipEd as well. One of the reasons why I chose to be a teacher was because I was passionate about what I was learning with biology and science. It was also because a few teachers I have had have inspired me to be teachers through my schooling and through some of my university education. I am not sure if you were referring to that. Seeing someone have so much impact on a classroom and have so much ability to facilitate learning and to encourage students that would not otherwise be encouraged to learn at all I found really inspiring. That is one of the reasons why I wanted to be a teacher.

Mr Sacco—For me it is quite simple. There was a teacher in year 9. I will not mention his name but he took my interest—which was half academic but more about music—and built upon that to get me more involved in things like maths and IT. As I said, for me it is quite simple: the influence came from a teacher looking at me and setting me apart, not saying, ‘I am better than you or you,’ but saying, ‘This is what he is good at. I’m going to work with that to get his weaknesses back up there.’ With respect to what you guys were saying, we cannot say, ‘I am sitting in this chair so I am better than the person next to me.’ It is about that person. That is what I took from my experience. That is what this teacher did in year 9. I was not a failing student. I was average. I was like most students: you get by, you do the work, you understand it and you survive. But he just took that little step forward. That is what made me get my head around what this is about now.

Ms Radcliffe—My experiences in primary school were by and large fantastic. I had a couple of teachers, apart from all the academic learning that went on, who made it a really warm social atmosphere and a really family oriented classroom. We did activities like cooking and bringing pets into class and all that sort of stuff. I want to engender that feeling as much as possible in my classroom. But I did find it very sad to learn that you are not allowed to do half of those things any more in classrooms because of the new policies and legislation that have come out about having food in classrooms and having animals in classrooms and things. So that is just a little aside.

Mr Baxter—I had one teacher at a school that had very rigid rules and tried to force square pegs into round holes. I did not really fit in. There was one crazy physics teacher, who was just like Professor Julius Sumner Miller. He stood out. He did not fit in the mould either. But he asked all the questions. When pracs did not work, he would never tell us why they did not work. He would always say, ‘You tell me’, much like the, ‘Why is it so?’ I remember that. That is 30 years ago.

CHAIR—A lot of these people probably do not know him.

Mr Baxter—It may be generational.

Mr Free—I mentioned before how when I was in year 8 I was terrible at maths. I was one of those silly kids who decided in year 11 I should still do maths, and I got an A because I had a really good teacher. He was able to give me what I needed. He was an old-fashioned teacher, by the way, too, so he demanded respect in the classroom. But he never yelled. He had such a rapport with the students, people wanted to do well not for themselves but to make him happy. We all did pretty well.

I had a university lecturer—this is before the idea of teaching came into my mind; I think he knew before I did—and I had a paper that was two days late; he was very strict and stern, and it took four days for me to get it in, because I was nervous about seeing him; he said, ‘Look, I’ll accept it on the condition, without any marks being taken off, that when you’re a teacher you remember this.’ I was thinking, ‘I don’t want to be a teacher.’ But then I thought, ‘Yes, I do. This is what I would be good at.’ It is thanks to people like that maths teacher and that lecturer that I have ended up doing what I want to do in the end.

Ms LIVERMORE—In every job there are good points and bad points. At this stage in your career and from what you have seen of teaching, what do you think is going to be the hardest thing or the thing you are going to like the least about teaching?

Mr Mercovich—A couple of things, really. One thing I was going to say is the time. There is a lot of time that teaching will take up, not just the classes but also the amount of work and preparation that I think is definitely required if you really want to get the most out of a lesson. It is worthwhile. I am looking forward to putting the time in for that. But at the same time I am not looking forward to the amount of hours that it might take up. The other thing that concerns me a little bit, I suppose, is the standardisation of curriculum. I am a little concerned about how education is going to be in the future with regard to curriculum and whether or not it will leave scope open for teachers to develop the individuality of students and let them grow and evolve naturally without sort of relying on other factors, such as tertiary education or a good position in employment, which they might get later on. I think it is necessary for there to be freedom in education. I am just a little concerned at this point in time about whether that will be the case in the future. But that remains to be seen, I suppose.

Mr Sacco—I am looking forward to being a teacher. I am looking forward to finishing uni and going in there, regardless of whether it is for preps. My course is P to year 12. I am looking forward to just getting in there and, so to speak, taking the gloves off and learning what it is all about. The thing that worries me the most is the fact of my experience. Being so young, I need to work out how the curriculum is going to work with me and work with the students. So that is what I am worried about in that case.

With the way education is going—the reforms and all that sort of stuff—I have a question for you guys. I will be the first to ask it. Is education going to change to match the modern world and how society is in modern times, or are we going to look back at what we did 30 years ago and say, ‘That worked well, the traditional approach, let’s work with that in 2006’? That is my question: are we going to change with the modern world?

CHAIR—I guess the challenge for all professions is to retain those things that are working and to change those things that no longer suit the current times. Every profession faces those challenges. We need to move with the times. We need to be progressive. Having said that, there

are a lot of things in current practice that we do for good reasons. Progress is a combination of those two things—retaining what is valuable about what we currently do and changing to meet those future needs.

Mr BARTLETT—I think you as teachers will have a big part to play in that. One of the questions that we asked some of the academics this morning was the extent to which they respond to the needs of the schools and what schools are saying their students need. If our teacher trainers are caught in the past, they are not going to be teaching courses or training teachers in a way that adapts to the needs of the classroom. What you will do in the classroom will guide what they do in terms of teaching the next generation of teachers so I think you have a critical role to play in that. What you do in the classroom and what you say about what is working in the schools and what is not working in the schools, if you say it loudly enough, ultimately will affect members of parliament, state and federal, and push what we do in one way or another.

For example, a couple of us were on an inquiry into boys education in the last parliament. We were responding to the sorts of things that parents were saying to us and the sorts of things that teachers were saying to us about the needs of boys in the classroom. It is the feedback that we get from people like you, putting pressure on us to make us respond, that really brings about change.

Mr Sacco—I am happy with that, thank you.

Mr BARTLETT—Make your voices heard.

Mr SAWFORD—Life does change. When I first went out teaching, I was 19. I had 56 year 4s. That was the class. There was no room. There were no aisles. If you wanted to get to the back of the room, you climbed over the desks. It was a very conservative time. Young women teaching with me did not get equal pay. Those battles were won. Teaching, compared to, say, the police and nurses, suddenly got a career structure. That was all fought for. There were a lot of people and a lot of arguments and a big fight.

Then in the 1970s we went into a period which some people look back and say was the golden age of Australian education, where very exciting things happened. People came from all over the world to Australian schools and universities to find out what Australia was doing. In the past, everyone was going to the UK, the USA, Canada or somewhere else. That changed. I think the current climate is very conservative, sometimes constraining, and very conformist. That will change. As Kerry said, what happens in schools fluctuates. You need to be part of that.

I was fortunate. I had the privilege of being a very young principal of a big school and having the most talented teachers you could ever have. It was regarded as the most talented staff ever in Australia. It was actually written up. They were incredibly talented people. What you can do in that circumstance is have a great deal of fun and work hard. It became a very exciting career. A lot of those people stayed in teaching. Many of them are senior operatives in education departments around Australia. Many of them are principals. Some of them have gone into the film industry. Some have done all sorts of other things. So teaching can be an exciting sort of beginning base.

One of your colleagues asked a question about racism. I remember recruiting a lot of the teachers. Often I deliberately went out to country areas and found people who came from a country base or a regional area or came from a particular ethnic background and had a bit of a kick in them or came from a disadvantaged background and had a bit of a fire in their belly. I did not overlook people who were quiet, because not all teachers are noisy or have fire in their belly; some of them are quiet and determined and have a different view. You need a mix. When you get that mix in a school, it is just wonderful stuff.

I think too often too many schools these days are single minded, single sided, and do not have the balance. I think a lot of teacher education courses have that too—too much singularity rather than a multiplicity in selection criteria. When you answer the question in a multiple way, you are almost sure you have part of that right. If you teach children as a whole group you know you are wrong. If you are teaching all the kids all the time in small groups you are wrong. If you are teaching kids all the time as individuals you are wrong. The best teachers do all of those things over a given period of time. Do they teach literacy by phonics? Yes. Do they teach with the whole word method? Yes. Do they teach by analysis? Yes. Do they teach by synthesis? Yes. That is what good teachers do. They do all of those things. They upgrade their skills.

You need to have a sense of fun. I go around to schools and when I see the very good schools there is a sense of fun there. The eyes are alight, no matter how old the teacher and the kids. There is a brightness around the place. You can sense it when you walk into the place. You know it when you go in there yourselves. You want to be in a school like that. You can make a school like that.

Ms Crinall—I do not know if this fits in there, but I want to make a point perhaps on behalf of some of the people that I study with. When I did my last teaching round, I was working with students who were from overseas—international students. I worked mainly using activities in order to teach my classes and promote a sense of fun. Some of us are in a class together at uni and we have a class that is based around having fun. We have discussions and we enjoy being together for three hours. Some other people do not have the same experience in that particular subject. Pulling it back a little bit, one of these students asked me what was in my box, which was full of lots of activities I had used in my science class. When I explained to her the way that I taught my class she did not understand where that was coming from. Her problem was that this was her first round in a school in Australia and she had been taught in a school where students sat quietly and listened to everything the teacher said.

I do not think our course at Melbourne uni—I am not sure about other courses in Victoria—addresses that enough. There is not enough difference in the way we look at the students and their background to see what they need to have taught to them. So these students were really keen to learn how is it that we have fun, how do Australian students work and how are they engaged, because obviously it is a different system. At the moment I think we are failing those international students that are studying here.

Miss Spencer—Everyone here is obviously passionate about teaching and enthusiastic about teachers. But something I want to ask is how the government or the community as a whole can increase respect for teachers. That is one of my worries. Sometimes I think we are looked upon in a negative way. I just want to know what we can do to improve that.

CHAIR—That is a good question. People look at the law and look at the parliament as if the parliament drives the country. Really, the parliament very much reflects the country. I think that all we can do as parliamentarians is communicate the good work that teachers do and provide the resources that teachers need to go about that good work. I think the teaching profession is valued. Sometimes you might not think that, but I believe it is, and it is to do with having a strong school community. All of us as parliamentarians get to go around our schools on a regular basis and we see the strong backing that so many of our schools have and the respect that the families that support those schools have for their teachers. So I would not be too pessimistic on that score.

But I do not think you can really look to government to solve that. It is something that is generated within the community. A strong school that is well led will bring with it a community support base from the families that are at the school or that have recently been at the school. I think that is something that is built by good principals, very much in the way Rod mentioned earlier. The power of a dedicated staff and a strong principal is huge. A lot of people say that a school is the bricks and the mortar, but to me that is not true at all. To me, the school is the principal, the dedicated staff and the families that support that. So I would not be too pessimistic in that regard.

Mr BARTLETT—We cannot raise the status of our own profession let alone others!

CHAIR—We are at the bottom.

Mr SAWFORD—I do not totally agree with Luke. I think you need to win the political debate. When I look back over the last 45 years I see there were times when the education community—university, school and community—came together and won the political debate. Education is not winning the political debate at the moment because it is all over the place. The same thing would apply to health professionals. The same thing would apply to the welfare lobby as well. If you go to Canberra and you look at the farming lobby or the mining lobby, you sit back in awe at just how effective they are in lobbying government. At the moment that is not true, I think, of education, health or welfare. That needs to change. That needs to change with the whole education community working together. Too often there is too much debate arguing amongst yourselves rather than arguing the issues of the day. That can change, certainly with the enthusiasm of young people like yourselves.

Ms Radcliffe—I want to make one last point. I will be very brief. I am looking forward to teaching more than I can describe, but I do have two areas that I am worried about. One is the big class sizes. I know that they have been a lot worse in the past and they have definitely improved. I know there are programs in early years that keep a lid on it. But in years like 5 and 6, I am student teaching at the moment in a class of 29 and it is a lot of big-sized bodies in a classroom. The more adults we can have in a classroom, even if we have more student teachers or assistant teachers or whatever, would be really good.

The other thing is that all forms of education are connected and some kids really do want to go on to study further and some kids do not—and that is fine. But, for those kids who do want to go on, some are actually beginning to wonder about what has happened to HECS and that sort of thing in terms of higher education. Some kids are concerned that they will not be able to go to uni because they are going to have to pay full fees or will not have access to the same kind of

programs that we have had to go into higher education. I think that is an issue that is going to come up more and more in the future. It might be worth thinking about now.

Mr SAWFORD—I am happy to talk about class sizes. This comes from a principal and a teacher. If you gave me the choice of what to do in a school, either reduce the class sizes or increase the value of the educational program that I offer the children, I would go for the latter. I had this huge fight with the staff as a young principal. I basically put on a prima donna performance. I was 31 with long hair and the whole box and dice.

CHAIR—It was a long time ago.

Mr SAWFORD—A long time ago—there is not much there now. I basically said to them: 'If you want this school to be something special, you cannot operate in the current way of one teacher and 30 kids and offer the curriculum offerings that need to be offered in mathematics, science and expressive arts and dance. We want to do the lot but we can't. So what I'm going to say to you is that I'm going to take 25 per cent of your week away in front of the class and I'm going to add two kids in each of your classes.' Out of that we produced science specialists, language specialists, dance specialists and music specialists. The vote on the staff went 32 to 28. That is how close it was. They were angry. They did not want to do this. When they all look back they say that was the best time of their lives. Their class size went up, their responsibilities went down and their areas of expertise narrowed. So those who were good at music and, say, language, did those things. They did what they were good at and what they wanted to do. We worked through that. They will all go back and say it was the happiest time and the most successful time.

Do you know what also happened? It was a school with 1,000 kids. At morning tea there would be a huge line of kids sent up for misbehaviour. After two years of this program, the discipline book got thrown out and never had another entry for four years. No-one ever got sent up because the kids had a whole range of teachers and a whole range of personalities and skills to relate to. In the main, those teachers delivered.

Ms Radcliffe—Would you recommend that as a program for all schools?

Mr SAWFORD—There is one school, the Presbyterian Girls College, headed by a former colleague that does it here in Melbourne. But that is a private school. It is very difficult if the school has under 300 students. It needs 600 kids to be able to do what I am suggesting you do, but you can do it. If you got smaller numbers, you might not have the breadth of the specialisation. Someone mentioned this: primary teachers, for goodness sake, get some specialisation. Don't just be the generalist and not have some specialist skill. If it is your interest driving the specialisation, terrific. If it is skill driving the specialisation, terrific. It does not matter what it is, whether it is interest or skill, but have a specialisation because you will have a much fuller and a more satisfying career.

CHAIR—We will have to pull it up now. We are over time. Thank you for attending today. We really value your input. I know that the committee would be as delighted as I am with your enthusiasm and your passion for what is a great profession. Certainly you are a credit to your teacher trainers. I know that teacher training is in good hands if this group is representative of the wider population. I am sure it is. Congratulations on your enthusiasm for teaching. I know it

will stand you in good stead during your working career. We really appreciate your time and effort in coming along to join us because you are actually being part of what Ben was concerned about—the evolution of teacher training and teaching. You are part of that by contributing to this inquiry today. We will be making recommendations in 12 to 18 months time which will bring, we hope, some value to the teacher training debate and provide for better teacher training into the future. All the best in your future careers and congratulations.

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

That this committee authorises publication of the transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 4.57 pm