COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Reference: Teacher education

WEDNESDAY, 6 JULY 2005

BRISBANE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Wednesday, 6 July 2005

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

Members in attendance: Ms Bird, Ms Corcoran, Mr Michael Ferguson, Mr Hartsuyker, Mr Henry, 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 9.01 am

BARNES, Mr Gary John, Assistant Director-General, Strategic Human Resources and Learning, Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland

CRANSTON, Ms Jenny Margaret, Deputy Director-General, Education Queensland, Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland

ENGLERT, Ms Lesley, Assistant Director-General, Curriculum, Education Queensland, Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland

SMITH, Mr Kenneth John, Director-General, Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland

CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)—I declare open the public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training's inquiry into teacher education. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I advise you that the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. Would you like to make any corrections or amendments to your submission?

Mr Barnes—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some opening remarks.

Mr Smith—We want to make a few remarks in support of our submission. Obviously, it is important, not only for Queensland but for Australia, that we have world-class education services, because education will provide the skill base for our future economy, its productivity and social stability. There is ample evidence in the literature of the importance of teaching and teachers to improved educational outcomes. More than issues such as class size and socioeconomic difference, good pedagogy—good teaching—can make a substantive difference. The research we have conducted in Queensland as well as international research confirms that.

I would like to emphasise the importance of the Queensland context. We are looking to reform of the school based education system, as are many other jurisdictions in Australia. Many of those reforms centre on what needs to occur in the early phase, the middle phase and the senior phase of learning. Broadly, we define the early phases of learning as: P to 3, which is from the beginning of school to year 3; 4 to 9, which is the middle phase of learning; and 10 to 12, which is the senior phase of learning. Many jurisdictions throughout Australia have been involved in some major reforms in the senior phases, which in particular are about the transitions and pathways to further education, employment and training and are vitally important in that phase of learning.

The other important issue in the Queensland context is that Queensland is a growth state. Even though we share the ageing of the population that is occurring generally in Australia, we have real increases in our enrolments and therefore in our staffing requirements for schools in the state, Catholic and independent sectors. So there are real increases in enrolments and real

demand for an increased work force, and there will be significant activity and construction of schools across all sectors.

I also want to emphasise the importance of partnerships with preservice providers. I know the committee had the opportunity yesterday to look at Central Queensland University's Bachelor of Learning Management. That is a very innovative program, with greater coordination between employers—in this case, Education Queensland—and the university, and integration of practicum work for preservice teachers to make sure that the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching are integrated much more effectively. One of the issues that I know has been highlighted in submissions to the committee is the issues around practicums—the appropriateness of practicums and the need to ensure that the theoretical aspects within the university system are matched with solid practice experiences for preservice teachers in the classroom.

You have seen the Bachelor of Learning Management and how that is developing. One of the issues that underpins the BLM is a far greater involvement of school staff and senior school staff with the university. There are joint appointments of staff involved in lecturing and support activities between the school and the university. A second area of importance is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Those students now make up six per cent of our student population and exceed the population share of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally in Queensland.

Another innovative program, which I will mention briefly, is RATEP—Remote Area Teacher Education Program—which operates out of James Cook University. The program operates to take teacher aids employed within our schooling system through a TAFE course and then through a university course so we can increase the number of four-year trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers within our schools. A couple of months ago, the 100th four-year trained teacher graduated from that program. Because those people are being trained within their communities, around 80 of those people are still within our system—within schools and within isolated areas of the cape and the Torres Strait islands. The importance of that is that those people have a portable qualification that is recognised throughout Australia and throughout the world. The issues around the work force profiles and increasing the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the teaching profession are vitally important for improvements in education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The shortage of supply of scholarships in maths, science, ICTs and languages other than English require more flexible approaches to ensure that we attract individuals to the profession who can then, with content expertise, gain access to education expertise and can enter the teaching profession by graduating in another area or, alternatively, mature age students who take up a teaching qualification.

Rural and remote issues are obviously important within Queensland. Given the regionalised nature of our population, it is really important that we work with universities to provide greater opportunities for internships and for people from rural and remote areas to take up those opportunities. It could be modelled on the Remote Area Teacher Education Program, where there is heavy use of ICTs, but that also provides live-in arrangements for people who want to gain those qualifications.

We mentioned in our submission that there has been a major review of our Board of Teacher Registration, which was conducted by the Pro Vice Chancellor of Griffith University, Professor Marilyn McMeniman. We are moving to a five-year renewal cycle of registration for teachers, with a clearer definition of the professional standards that are required, and to ensuring that the requirements for entry or re-entry into the profession and issues around continual professional learning and re-entry arrangements are quite clear. Queensland has brought its system into line with other states. Fundamentally, postgraduate qualifications would be one year and not two years as they were to enable us to attract people in a three-plus-one-plus-one arrangement or a four-plus-one arrangement, with 'one' being the pre-registration year within the work force. We are looking at content being, for example, a three-year degree; a one-year education postgraduate diploma and then one-year practice prior to registration; or four years of an education degree and one-year practice prior to registration.

In terms of work force planning and supply and demand, the primary enrolment trends have evened out, if not slightly declined, and there has been an increase demographically in enrolments of secondary students. Some of the demand areas are in the secondary area—in areas such as science and mathematics—for high-quality teachers in rural and remote areas. Our statistics on the pool of applicants for positions indicate that, although there is not an oversupply, more people who are primary trained and early childhood trained are attempting to enter into employment in the system, whereas much of the demand is at the secondary end and in particular subject areas.

We believe that MCEETYA—the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs—is the appropriate body to take these issues forward, given its responsibilities at a jurisdiction level and at a system level for managing employers of teachers, to ensure that those links between the universities and the employing authorities are close so that the practice arrangements with teachers can meet their requirements.

In summary, we are very supportive of approaches to achieve greater national consistency. We believe that those approaches should be based on high level outcomes that are achieved consistently across the nation. Obviously there would then be work with jurisdictions and sectors to ensure that delivery can be achieved in a non-prescriptive manner, but those outcomes should be performance based rather than prescriptive. We support the continued quarantining of the HECS fees and places for teacher education to ensure a supply of high quality students into teacher education courses.

A major area of need is for far greater integration of the theoretical courses in universities and the arrangements that can be provided within practicums—within a classroom setting—to make sure that those practicums are not simply an add-on after the theory but ensure that, in a variety of areas, the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and behaviour management support in inclusive education are not simply the theoretical aspects underpinning those issues but flow through to solid teaching skills and attributes that can actually make a difference within the classroom.

CHAIR—I am interested in your views on the Bachelor of Learning Management. It is a very innovative program and highlights a theme that has come through in the evidence we have received on the need for partnership between schools and teacher education institutions. It certainly takes that to the next step. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of that course?

Mr Smith—Small numbers of students have graduated from the course at this stage, and there has been an evaluation by ACER of the course. Conceptually, though, the far greater integration between school teachers and senior teachers within the schooling system and the university provides a greater degree of confidence that the course will be relevant to teaching practice. A number of Jenny Cranston's staff in the state schooling system are engaged formally as tutors and lecturers within CQU. Having long-term academics who have been within a university system totally separate from those teachers, senior teachers and practitioners in the classroom gives a lot of confidence that far better practical teaching practice can be delivered through those activities. That is far better than an arrangement whereby a university simply sends a student out to a practicum for a classroom teacher that then has very little contact back with the university to link the theoretical and practice aspects together.

Ms CORCORAN—I wanted to ask that question too, so thank you for that. Linked to that, you made comment about how RATEP has given the people who go through that process qualifications that transfer across Australia and across the world. Would you mind going into a bit more detail about that program? Is its training a lot different from the more traditional BEd stuff that you are used to seeing? Could it be another Bachelor of Learning Management?

Mr Smith—Interestingly enough, that program is conducted within schools. This is important for Aboriginal communities. A large part of our work force are teacher aides rather than teachers. Increasingly, teacher aides are becoming paraprofessionals in support of teachers, and they are integral to the operations of the classroom and the schools. The value for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is that they are staff and teacher aides who work in schools. The model involves our providing a generalist tutor within communities to provide tutorial support for those who are studying but who are, at the same time, working within the classrooms. What is important for these people is that they have a source of income, that they are working as teacher aides, that their study has a practical orientation because they are in the classrooms, that they are supported by tutors who we employ and that they are able to develop their skills. This is a long-term commitment. This program has been running since 1993. It can take six to eight years for someone to move from being an unqualified teacher aide through to a certificate through the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and then articulating to a degree. It is a long-term commitment, but the pay-off of that long-term commitment is a transportable skill—a qualification that is recognised anywhere.

Ms CORCORAN—At the end of the day, are they trained teachers?

Mr Smith—At the end of the day, if they proceed, they are teachers. So they are progressing a TAFE qualification that then articulates.

Ms BIRD—Which TAFE qualification do they undertake? What degree do they undertake?

Mr Barnes—It is certificate III. I would need to get you the exact title of the qualification but, in some cases, they graduate with a Bachelor of Education. The newer graduates receive a Bachelor of Education—people who graduated pre 1996 may have graduated with a Diploma of Teaching. We then move to a four-year preservice qualification. Some of those that graduated with the equivalent of the former Diploma of Teaching went back and did a Bachelor of Education to complete their four years, but the new graduates graduate with a Bachelor of Teaching, which is a four-year qualification. As Ken pointed out, the qualification is exactly the

same in orientation, course content and curriculum for anyone who enters into that degree course. The unique aspect is that, because these people study in situ for the vast majority of their undergraduate course, there are innovative and quite unique digital materials that have been developed to support them through their distance learning.

Ms CORCORAN—That is my next question. Is it all by distance learning?

Mr Smith—It is a mixture of distance learning and residentials, where they have the opportunity to come in and study on the JCU campus. What is critical—and this is not cheap—is that it is a long-term investment. However, without that long-term investment, we would not have got the 100 four-year trained graduates. I do think there are possibilities—given the sophistication of online learning and digital materials, backed up by tutorial support and residentials—for that model to be considered generally to engage people in rural and remote areas into the teaching profession who have links to their communities. It has the capability to build up a work force that has a commitment to staying in those areas.

Ms CORCORAN—I have just two more questions on this subject. I am interested in whether or not the principles of this will translate into more suburban areas. I wonder whether this is a model whereby people who are already in the work force and who already have financial commitments in terms of kids, mortgages and that sort of stuff could work, train and have an income at the same time. Secondly, one of the things that we are interested in is attrition rates. Do you know whether people drop out at a greater or lesser rate than would normally be experienced elsewhere?

Mr Smith—On the first issue, it does have some implications, particularly as other adults in Queensland who are paraprofessional—we call them teacher aides—would have the opportunity—subject to what is happening in their lives, the age of their children et cetera—to progress to further study and to mix it with the capacity for part-time work that is necessary to survive economically in an environment where people have made a commitment to education, often through their work over a long period of time. So I do think there is great potential there to look to giving the opportunity to people who are very committed to education and have the capability to proceed to achieve an undergraduate qualification. Obviously it is simpler in a metropolitan area because of the access to university courses within those communities.

Ms CORCORAN—If we go onto the second part of my question, do you see that as a way for people from other professions—say, 30- or 40-year-olds—to come into teaching? They have been an accountant or whatever, and they have suddenly seen the light and want to teach but cannot give up their income?

Mr Smith—In fact what we have implemented, the Queensland government have approved, for the change to the Board of Teacher Registration, is that a part of the registration aspect will be called ‘permission to teach’, so that people from another professional background who would add value in an educative sense could be assessed as being given permission to teach, would not be registered fully as a teacher until they became qualified but could get permission to teach on a cyclical basis. So people from ICTs, from vocational education and training areas et cetera could be given permission to teach, enter and go through the necessary safety checks et cetera to be part of the school environment and, if they wished, could then proceed to a postgraduate qualification that would then enable them to register. I think we would advocate the need for that

degree of flexibility. Obviously, the core of the work force will be qualified professional teachers, but there does need to be some ability now, in the environment in which we are operating, to have a greater degree of flexibility. So I think that arrangement gives us the capacity for schools to employ someone in a particular area who can demonstrate they have the capability but may not have the qualifications—much more outcome based in terms of what is required.

Mr Barnes—Ann, I will briefly answer that question on attrition. There are two aspects. The first is that RATEP students stay in the course and drop out less than other students who are studying via distance. Significantly, attrition is less than for other Indigenous students who are studying via distance; it is even less than for those who study on campus and are supported through scholarships, whether those scholarships come from the state or the Commonwealth. The one thing that we have learned over the last 13 years with RATEP is that the nature of supported learning—someone who is there in their community brokering with their preservice provider and making sure that those impediments and hurdles that come along as a student undertakes that work and tries to juggle family life at the same time are eased—has really made a difference. It has certainly taught us a lot about a scholarship mentality, where we thought that if we awarded inputs people would necessarily go through and complete their training. The attrition rate is one of the very strong points for the RATEP model.

Mr Smith—It is obviously a big issue for us to build up our work force profile of Indigenous staff to match our student profile. We would commend the Australian government’s moving into scholarships, particularly for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. They are often demand driven. We advocate a need for a balance between some supply driven scholarships and incentives. For example, in these communities it requires a large degree of developmental work to improve people’s literacy, numeracy and confidence to the extent where they can participate in post secondary education. Many of these people were lucky to complete year 8 let alone year 12. It really requires long-term sustained commitment. It is not cheap but, if you do not do it, you will not get any product at all; you will not get the people through.

On the attrition rates generally, we have not done any research in a more general sense to see whether the attrition rates of the teaching profession are any greater than in any other profession. Obviously it is a large professional grouping, and large numbers can sometimes present such that there is greater attrition and greater morale problems than in other occupational groups. The answer is that we simply do not know. It would be really valuable to find out whether there is greater attrition in this area compared with other areas of activity, although there are large numbers of people in this work force.

Ms BIRD—I have a question in relation to the curriculum. When we looked at the Bachelor of Learning Management, it was emphasised to us that there were two components. One was work force readiness, and I think you touched on an issue we have seen in a lot of the submissions: the importance of integrating the theory and practice more successfully than has been done. The other half relates to a future-proofing idea of generating teachers who have a capacity and focus on self-development to deal with the fact that the world changes, the life experiences of kids change and that pedagogy will need to continually change to address that. Do the more traditional courses provide that and is there access to ongoing professional development for existing staff in order to encourage them?

Ms Englert—I would like to answer your question in a couple of ways. The first thing is that it is about partnerships and relevance. From a curriculum point of view as well as from a practicum point of view we have found that not only Central Queensland University but Griffith University, particularly, and QUT are looking to share information in a two-way capacity. We are regularly asked as executive directors of schools, principals and principals of middle-phase schools—there are various people—to give a series of lectures at universities—for example, at Griffith University and at QUT. In a curriculum sense we make sure that, when we do that, we talk about our specific curriculum initiatives. For example, we have an initiative in Queensland called the New Basics Project. It is not necessarily part of any preservice education course but it is a huge initiative from which we have had a lot of learning and a lot of research has been done. All the universities have made sure that we integrate some of that into the courses, so it is not just about the research but also about some of the latest curriculum initiatives. It is not just Central Queensland University.

The second thing is in relation to a Gold Coast university. Griffith University Gold Coast have set up a client group of teachers and principals, and when they develop their courses they run them past this client group to make sure that the client group is saying: ‘Yes, that’s what our teachers need. That’s what we mean.’ So it is very much a two-way partnership in which people in the field give lectures about the latest curriculum initiatives, about futures thinking and about the development and delivery of curricula in a range of schools. But it is also about the client group having input into the teacher education courses, with those foci that we have been talking about.

Ms BIRD—Could you expand a bit more. There is a bit of ossification in the capacity of schools to deal with the modern world of young people. Part of that reflects that teachers are trained in a particular type of pedagogy and it can be difficult to adjust. Kids live on the internet and access information in different ways. Could you address the professional development of existing staff, particularly how some of the good things happening at universities can be offered to existing staff and how they can support them in accessing those things? Are there examples of that?

Ms Cranston—You are quite right in that the cohort, the kids, and the world in which we live have changed. My sense is that the pedagogy, the fundamentals of great teaching, is more or less the same and that it has stood us for a long time. Good teachers always took notice of individual kids, the world they were coming from and the sorts of lives they were leading, and they catered to individual difference in the classroom. So I think some of those concepts in pedagogy have not changed. What has changed, of course, is the kids and their world. That is the thing a lot of people are struggling with.

Gary can probably elaborate, but we spend a lot of time and dollars on professional development. One of the big initiatives at the moment is around professional development for that middle phase of students, recognising that that is the period when kids have the greatest social, emotional, intellectual and physical sorts of changes occurring. It is doing a lot of work around how they think and respond as adolescents and pre-adolescents, and understanding some of those things has been a big thrust in the last few years. As you say, there is the internet and the ‘click and go’ generation, as they are referred to, and there is a lot of professional development at the moment on understanding the cohort and how kids are motivated. We have spent a lot of time and money on that particular initiative. I think it is less about the fundamentals of pedagogy

and the basic concepts than it is about understanding the different worlds that the kids are coming from.

Mr Barnes—I would add two things to that. Firstly, from an Education Queensland perspective, we have worked hard over the last three to five years on developing a set of well-recognised and well-accepted professional standards for teachers which pick up on aspects of the craft of teaching as well as important sets of knowledge and skills that sit alongside them. Having a set of standards that teachers can use as a reference point to identify those aspects of their own professional learning that they either want to get better at or close gaps in, I think, is fundamental and essential. We certainly use that as a driver for making key decisions around how to expend dollars to support the various cohorts of staff that we have.

Secondly, something happened about four years ago—and you will hear from the Board of Teacher Registration this afternoon—whereby our universities moved away from a model of inputs with respect to having their preservice courses approved to the use of outcomes or professional standards. All of the universities now have to demonstrate how their curriculum addresses those standards. The last of the standards, for example, guarantees that graduating students 'will be committed to reflective practice and ongoing professional renewal'.

So what we will see happening in all of the universities—and the BLM is one attempt to respond to the introduction of those professional standards that we now use with all of our preservice providers—is attempts to build into their core structures, and some do it better than others, the need for graduating students to have a set of skills, knowledge, understandings—

Ms BIRD—And attitudes.

Mr Barnes—and attitudes that will make them ready to go. One of the things that we recognise and absolutely want put on the table is that a student's or a teacher's learning does not finish when they exit from their preservice provider or when in the future they have done their first year of practical on-the-ground experience through an internship. There is an ongoing need for employers to support and become a part of that ongoing process.

Mr Smith—There are a couple of things that are vitally important. One is a greater understanding of the differences in the cohort groups, and those changes have been mentioned. Some of that has been driven through a greater analysis of, rather than primary and secondary, the early, middle and senior phases of learning, and through greater understanding of the developmental requirements of children at those various points and therefore of what offerings need to be made in terms of curriculum to meet those needs.

Over time it is really difficult, and difficult for this committee, not to deal with preservice in isolation from the whole. Fundamentally, the pillars are around the cohorts and the needs of the cohorts; the curriculum underpinnings—that is, the standards and outcomes Australian governments want from their significant investment in education systems; what the pedagogical underpinnings are that will deliver on those outcomes for individual children at various stages of their learning; what the assessment approaches are that will enable you and systems to work out whether or not those outcomes have been achieved and parents to understand what has happened for their children; and reporting. We are saying there are a range of pillars underpinning these

arrangements that have to be seen as a whole. It is hard to see pedagogy in isolation from all of those other activities.

The really positive thing, particularly in the senior phases of learning, is that you see a greater degree of differentiation. The high proportion of young people doing school based apprenticeships and taking part in traineeship arrangements and the high number of linkages between industries and senior schools underpin a lot of what is happening in schools. The school gates have been opening up, particularly to industry and community interlinkages. There have been some amazing case studies where that opening up has meant a change, by necessity, to pedagogical practices because people relate to the real world, whether it is the aviation industry, the light metals industry or the mining industry et cetera. That is where we are seeing some major changes in the way that schools interrelate with their communities in those local areas.

Mr SAWFORD—It does not matter how long I have been participating in these inquiries, it always amazes me how polarised education is in Australia. We are at the very beginning of this inquiry. We have only basically been to Victoria and here. Eventually we will get all around Australia and we will get around to most regional areas. I am not sure how to describe what has already come to our attention: is it a traditional view, a progressive view, a modern view, an established view or is it polarised? I have come to the conclusion that it is polarised. My first question is: why do you think that is so? Maybe it is a strength; maybe it is a weakness. My second question is in reference to Central Queensland University, which appeared yesterday. When one of the universities in Victoria presented their submission and spoke to us, you could identify immediately, without having any knowledge of language, a rationale, a process, an outcome, a framework—you might want to give it a different name. It was able to be understood, it was logical and it had commonsense. You felt with them as you read their submission and heard their presentation.

That is also the view I got at Central Queensland University yesterday. We did not have the advantage of reading the material beforehand so we were just going along with it. But, right up-front, there was rationale—they called it content and delivery. So you were with the framework straightaway. It just seemed like such commonsense. In fact it seemed like a teacher education degree in commonsense, in many ways. At the end of the day, we had graduate students talk to us. In fact one student had just graduated and it was her first day of teaching. The impressive thing about those young women—there were a couple of mature age women in there as well; one did not want to give her age, so we will call her young as well—was that they were relaxed, calm and confident. They easily took very probing questions about a whole range of issues in schools. There was no defence. There was no concern about what the question was. It was very impressive. There was one university in Victoria that had a similar program. I got the feeling that the program at Central Queensland is not going to be expanded. I think that will be a great pity, if that is the case, because they might have something. Yet when I read a lot of other submissions, including your own, I see a defensive introduction and concern about whether we call it 'teacher training' or 'teacher education'—some of those old paradigms that I heard not once yesterday, including from the Victorian university. They never talked about any of that. They talked about here and now, readiness and doing it. Central Queensland University use the word 'guarantee', Gary.

So my question is this: does the Queensland government have a role in supporting and expanding a successful program? Why is the education community so polarised? Why is there

such concern with the periphery? Who cares whether you call it ‘teacher training’ or ‘teacher education’? There have been many inquiries over the last 25 years that have not been acted upon. Maybe the question ought to be: why aren’t they acted upon? One of the things our secretariat decided yesterday is that we are going to have to get all those recommendations and put them together. We have to find out the ones which have been acted upon and those that have not and the reason for that. There is a whole range of questions there. Who would like to address them?

Mr Smith—There is an issue about CQU’s involvement in the market on the Sunshine Coast. There is another university that serves that area, the University of the Sunshine Coast, which has established an education faculty. There is no question about our support for the BLM. There is an issue that obviously needs to be worked through between the Queensland government and the Commonwealth government minister about the appropriate use of publicly funded places in terms of where the university operates from. That is a difficult issue and it will need to be resolved between the University of the Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland University. There is no question about CQU delivering and expanding that course within its primary catchment, which is in Central Queensland. That is an issue that will need to be resolved between the providers.

Mr SAWFORD—Are you confident it will be resolved?

Mr Smith—There has been communication between Minister Bligh and Minister Nelson about the product. Both ministers support the product but, as you can imagine, it goes to a broader issue of national public policy.

Mr SAWFORD—Does the Commonwealth need to play a stronger role in this?

Mr Smith—It will need to be resolved. It is about the appropriate number of places and the role and responsibility of the two universities. USC is just starting its education faculty and provision within the catchment. I think CQU are now using 300 publicly funded places within the Noosa area. I do not want to sound too bureaucratic, but it is an issue that will need to be carefully negotiated. It would be like, for example, the University of Sydney deciding that they are going to come to Brisbane and bring 2,000 publicly funded places into Brisbane. The issues about the distribution of publicly funded places by the Australian government is determined based on what they see as the need of their catchments, so they allocate on the basis of the catchment. That does not stop the University of Sydney coming to Brisbane and offering for full fee-for-service places. That is the public policy environment in which we are working.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to pursue that a bit further. I am not quite sure what you are saying. Should the Commonwealth have a role in this?

Mr Smith—Yes, because in the end they allocate the publicly funded places. They need to, if you like, approve the use of those publicly funded places in certain areas. Obviously, the states have an interest in this. The state, given its responsibilities for the statute which creates universities, has an advisory role in the allocation, if you like, of publicly funded places between different faculties. The fundamental issue is about scope and coverage at a regional level and the reasonable expectations of a provider in a particular area. It is a complex issue and I understand that they have raised that.

In terms of polarisation, obviously, this is a big sector; it is a big employer. In Queensland alone, our own department employs more than 65,000 FTE staff, so there are large organisations involved with great differences of opinion about how to go forward. We have found, in doing a lot of work not only within the state in public policy around education but also nationally, that it is important to move beyond the prescription and saying, ‘This is the right way to do it,’ to fundamental principles and saying, ‘What is it that we are trying to achieve?’

There is a lot of jargon, and I apologise for the discussion of particular words, but Gary and I were very heavily involved in the development of the national curriculum outcome statements. You are aware that we have eight states and territories, each with their own syllabuses and approaches to curriculum, in a very small nation. Queensland has led a process of trying to get greater curriculum consistency across Australia in English, maths, science, civics and ICT. That is no easy task: people believe that a national curriculum is okay as long as it is theirs, because theirs is the best. If you were to talk to anyone in Australia you would get the same response. I believe some of the polarisation can be dealt with by going back to fundamental principles and asking what it is we are trying to achieve and what the best way of achieving that is and then engaging people in that debate.

Our experience in Queensland of the green paper and white paper around education reforms has shown us that there was a lot of difference when we started those debates. For example, making senior schooling more appropriate to 100 per cent of the cohort rather than just the 30 per cent of the cohort that moves straight to university raised huge issues about whether we were dumbing down the senior years and whether we were dumbing down the curriculum by creating a range of opportunities for senior students. Having gone through that debate, there is far greater acceptance of the fact that there is a range of pathways and that those pathways are valid. It is valid now for schools to move from an environment such as that which existed when I went to school, which meant that very few kids went to year 11 and year 12 and you only thought about going to year 11 and year 12 if you were going to go to university. The reality is that we need to get retention rates up so that most young people complete 12 years of schooling and then move into further education, training and employment opportunities. That debate had to occur. It was a polarised debate when it occurred but, as we have moved through it, there has been far greater acceptance that this is really important and far greater acknowledgment of the evidence that, for example, completion of 12 years of schooling is the major variable as to whether people go forward in life.

Mr SAWFORD—Why the defensive beginning? There is a pattern on one side of the education divide of being very defensive towards this inquiry, while another group takes it as an opportunity. I am not trying to be critical just for the sake of being critical; I just want to understand why that is so.

Mr Smith—We are taking this as an opportunity. I might ask Jenny to comment on this. One of the issues that is present at a school level is a sense of bombardment from a range of areas. There is a lot of what I call static coming from a range of parties about the future of education. One of the fundamental issues is what we expect of our schooling system and what we expect of our teachers. There is one view—I will not mention some of the parties that pursue this view—that schools are going to create peace in our time, solve poverty and resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine and that that is the role of schools. Others believe that the role of schools is to ensure literacy and numeracy standards and to focus on what schools can do. I would not

underestimate the pressure on school environments to pick up on issues, whether they are consumer and financial literacy, problem gambling, sex education, literacy and numeracy or whatever. There is a feeling that there is too much occurring and a question as to whether that is focused and there is enough follow through on the directions that were previously pursued. That might be interpreted as being defensive, but it is more that there are significant issues being raised in this sector and significant change occurring in the sector. It is about how you engage and take forward a very large grouping of people, all with sometimes preconceived views about where things should be heading overall.

Mr Barnes—Having said that, when any of the reports come through—and Kwong Lee Dow's was the latest one into teacher education, which had a specific focus on maths, science and technology—we have not been backward in making a lot of those recommendations happen within our jurisdiction. In fact, as you indicated, we went through and did a rough audit of the 60-odd recommendations to see which ones we had moved forward on. I have to say that well in excess of half of those are already embedded as part of the landscape within Queensland education. We have a massive commitment currently to information communication technologies and science and we are just about to head into a very significant time for mathematics. It is not that there is a reticence to pay attention to these things; rather, it is about the way in which we introduce them to our work force so that they make sense in people's day-to-day work.

Ms BIRD—Gary, you can answer this or you can pass it to Ken—or you can both choose not to answer it. Are you saying that you think the federal government has dropped the ball on its range of recommendations from some reports and that there is more we could be doing at the federal level?

Mr Barnes—No comment from me!

Ms BIRD—It is on the record.

Mr Smith—I think there clearly are issues that need to be taken up jointly by ministers. The position in Australia is that, with our creative federalism, like it or lump it, we have a system of joint responsibility. Constitutionally, states and territories are responsible for education systems, for the curriculum underpinnings, the systems accreditation of schools and the registration of teachers—all of those functions. So it needs to be a joint undertaking. There are significant reforms occurring within the system. The latest quadrennium, and the regulations underpinning that quadrennium that we have been heavily involved in, really goes to the core of assessment practices within our schooling system and reporting back to not only governments but also parents on how the system is performing.

Regarding the issues within the system and some of the skills base, we believe that many of the people who are coming through teacher education have very strong pedagogical understandings. Most of them have strong content understandings and curriculum understandings and can develop that within the workplace. There are gaps, and one of those gaps in Australia is in the assessment area. If you look at the draft regulations and the focus of the Commonwealth's quadrennium legislation, you see that much of the activity is being focused on the area of building an assessment culture, a feedback culture and an evidence based culture. As we look to teacher education, it is those functions and the capacity to evaluate and feed back

which are really important functions of the teaching profession as well. In many ways those sorts of areas require a great degree of attention.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. The secretariat will contact you if they have any further questions. A copy of your evidence will be posted on the web site and a copy will be provided to you for proofing purposes. Thank you very much.

Mr Barnes—Thank you.

[10.03 am]

HALL, Dr Graeme, Principal Adviser, Board of Teacher Registration Review Implementation, Queensland Board of Teacher Registration

MANITZKY, Mrs Jill Margaret, Senior Education Officer, Professional Education and Review, Queensland Board of Teacher Registration

SHAW, Mrs Leonie Mary, Acting Director, Queensland Board of Teacher Registration

CHAIR—Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Dr Hall—I am the Director of the Board of Teacher Registration and I am currently seconded to the department of education to do some other work.

CHAIR—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 contempt of the parliament. Are there any corrections you would like to make to your submission?

Mrs Shaw—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Mrs Shaw—I would like to tender an apology from the chair of the board, John Dwyer, who unfortunately cannot be here today. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss these issues with you. We have long-established practices and processes here in Queensland regarding the relationship between the universities, the other stakeholders and the board in looking at teacher education and the approval of preservice teacher education courses for teachers to become registered. The board has been around for over 30 years. Those processes have not been in place for those 30 years but they have been in place for quite a long time and they are continuously under review with our stakeholders.

The board collaborates with all of the employers. That is not just the Catholic system, the state system and the independent system; it includes child care, the creche and kindergarten areas, people who employ registered teachers, universities, parents and the wider community. So that conferring and collaborating around the processes is undertaken with those groups of people. We also liaise now, and have done for a number of years, with places like South Australia and New Zealand, which have had registering authorities. Now that most other states and territories have registration or accreditation authorities, in the last few years the board has worked with them to establish their processes as well. That is ongoing and we regularly meet and discuss.

The board’s current standards and guidelines were referred to in the submission. A copy of them can be left with the committee if they are needed. Along with other things, as I said, they are constantly under review by the stakeholders.

In our submission, we referred to a number of the terms of reference, but we believe that terms of reference 5 and 7 are most pertinent to the board's activities. The reason that term of reference 7 was not included in the submission is that whenever you start listing things you wonder what you do in a list. Is it definitive or not? One thing that stands out from the work that has been going on in the board in the last couple of years is Indigenous issues—it is very pertinent to the work that has been around registration in Queensland—and how universities in their teacher education courses look at them. But there are other things. That list, I believe, needs to be a little bit more flexible to take in the challenges and issues that arise day by day.

In finishing, I would like to alert you to the fact that the current Board of Teacher Registration is going through a process where there will be a new act next year. It will become the Queensland college of teachers, and the powers and functions will be increased from what they currently are. There are some changes. But the bill is only in draft form at the moment. I believe it will have its first reading in parliament in August. So there will be some increased things.

One thing that most probably will gain a greater focus—and it is part of the terms of references but is something we cannot comment a lot on now—is the continued professional learning of teachers once they are in the profession. It is going to become a major role under the new Queensland college of teachers. For teachers to renew their registration, every five years they will have to provide evidence of their continued professional learning. That is happening in other states and territories as they bring their registration accreditation authorities on board. That is all I would like to say. Graeme might like to add something.

Dr Hall—First of all, the project that resulted from Professor McMeniman's report of 2004 into the powers and functions of the Board of Teacher Registration has led to the development of the new bill, which is in the form of a consultation draft at the moment and will go to parliament next month. That is the project that I have been working on this year. In terms of teacher education, it will not make big changes to the roles and functions of the registering authority in the state but it will perhaps move the emphasis onto using professional standards as part of the teacher education program endorsement process. It puts a greater emphasis on that.

I endorse Leonie's remarks about the national scene and Queensland's part in that. We are active participants and our board is an active member of the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities. The members are the registering authorities in the different states and territories. They are very aware of the need for national consistency in the way we do the kind of work we are talking about today. I think some of the features of that commitment are the work towards developing nationally consistent professional standards for entry to the profession and for continuation in the profession across the states and also the development of nationally consistent professional learning frameworks for teachers.

Finally, I think an important feature of the Board of Teacher Registration relationship with teacher education is the collaborative nature of it. It is managed for the board and through the board by one of the board's committees—namely, the Professional Education Committee. It is a very large committee and very representative across the education community. The dean of education or head of the school of education, or whatever the equivalent in each university in Queensland that provides teacher education is, is a member of that committee. There are 10 of those universities providing teacher education in this state now. So nearly half or about one-third of the committee members are the deans of education.

The process of accreditation or acceptance of the teacher education programs involves close work between subcommittees of that Professional Education Committee and the universities. One subcommittee of about five to six members is appointed to work with each university. Each subcommittee is chaired by the dean of education from one of the universities—obviously, they will be from a different university from the one to which they are appointed—and generally contains at least one other dean of education as well as other members of the education community.

When we talk to people from the education faculties of other states about that process, they sometimes find it quite hard to believe, I think, that there is that level of participation. In this collaborative process it is not always a matter where everyone agrees and it goes along easy-peasy and very nicely. There is often a lot of concerted debate. Not all universities would agree, I am sure, that the process is one that is helpful to them. They sometimes may see it as an imposition. But everybody participates in it and I think that is a really strong feature of what has developed here certainly over the last 20 years.

CHAIR—What is the actual process of the approval of a teacher education program? You mentioned the committees, but how does it actually happen? What do you consider?

Dr Hall—Mrs Manitzky does not have much voice today, but she is the officer who manages that process so it is probably good for her to tell you.

Mrs Manitzky—It starts with our guidelines. The universities have to respond to these. They use these in developing a submission. In the process of developing a submission they actually work with the board. We have a number of preliminary meetings, starting perhaps from when they have a concept proposal for a new program. We have a meeting of that small subcommittee with representatives of the university. There may be a couple of meetings. When they get a draft framework for the program together there will be a meeting to look at that. Then they develop their final submission, which is the formal part of the approval. The process is actually outlined in a diagram which is part of these guidelines.

The submission includes the rationale and philosophy underpinning the program, the framework, the structure of the program and all of the unit outlines. It has to demonstrate how the content and approaches of the program will ensure that all graduates meet our standards. So there will be some sort of mapping process to show which units or components of the program are addressing which standards. When a submission comes to the board, a number of board officers go through it in very fine detail checking our standards and the guidelines' components to see what matches clearly, where possibly there is a little bit of a grey area that will need to be negotiated between board representatives and the university and areas that are perhaps missing. There may be missing areas in the first submission. The university is then invited to fill the gaps. There are a number of meetings held. The small committee may visit the university, depending on what stage it is at. In a four- to five-year cycle the committee would always visit a university campus at least once and probably twice. It will look at facilities, meet with a larger range of staff and engage in discussions with students, school personnel and supervising teachers.

Following that in-depth look at the submission by board staff, and then meetings with the subcommittee and the university, some points of difference are negotiated. It is sometimes not clear how part of the program is meeting the standards, and it becomes clear during that process

of negotiation. The committee may recommend changes or more information, and the university normally will make those changes in order to gain acceptance. Sometimes there are a number of meetings where these things are worked through, finally leading to a recommendation to the board for acceptance of the program. It does not end there: there is a requirement for an annual report on the progress of the program. Once the program is developed in written form and starts to be implemented, some changes to progression and so on are often necessary. For a four-year program, after four years when there are new graduates we have what we call phase 2 of the process, where we can look at the outcomes of the program more clearly, by interviewing principals and supervising teachers of schools on their views of the graduates.

Ms CORCORAN—In your submission you talk about professionalism of teachers over the last 25 years. I think you stated that there is still a need for teaching to be accepted as a profession. I am interested in that because I have always thought of teaching as a profession; obviously you have a different view. I do not know how you measure what makes a person a professional or an occupation a profession.

Dr Hall—I think it is probably a personal view rather than a board view. Our views about professionalism and what makes a profession are probably changing quite a lot and have almost become redundant as a way of thinking about professions, but I think things like having a succinct and explicit body of knowledge and persons being responsible for their own learning and expertise and for the development of their own body of knowledge are among the issues about professionalism. I think that many of the comments in the submission probably relate to how in previous years we went to a place called a teacher training college and there was an apprenticeship model, I suppose. There are different kinds of knowledge—some theoretical knowledge and some practical knowledge—and they were not seen to be very similar. I think we can move beyond that and have different kinds of knowledge that are neither theoretical nor practical but are a hybrid of those and have relevance both to the practice and to people knowing why those things happen as a result of the practice.

So I think there was just a general discussion in the submission about professionalism. You could have that discussion about any of the professions or occupations and say, ‘Does it tend to be what you might call a profession or not call a profession?’ But I do think we are probably moving beyond that sort of discussion. It is a bit pedantic, really, to talk about what is a profession and what is not a profession now. It is a personal view.

Ms CORCORAN—I raised it because of the point you made in your submission. I took it that it is actually an important issue for teachers to be regarded as professionals. I was a little surprised that they felt that they were not regarded as professionals. If they feel that way, what has to happen to make them feel as though they are being regarded as professionals, if in fact that is an important point?

Dr Hall—I think the board was probably responding in this case to the terminology of training versus education. It is something that has been in the teacher education field, I suppose, for some time now. Medical education and legal education tend to be more of a professional way of talking about people’s learning, whereas training is more functional, less theoretical, less reflective and so on. I think that the use of the terminology tends to perhaps give teachers a view that they are not being seen as a profession. That is an important thing to teachers themselves.

Ms BIRD—Is it correct that for registration they are required to provide 100 hours of practicum in a course?

Mrs Shaw—That is 100 days.

Ms BIRD—I am interested in the fact that you have gone for an input focused measure there. I come out of a high school environment, but with eight years in TAFE, and there has been a huge push to measure incompetency and not input hours. When you are talking about the review, are you looking at changing some of that? We have just heard the Department of Education and the Arts tell us that they are a bit interested in IT specialists in the work force who might have workplace training qualifications and the potential to register—and I cannot remember what they called it, but a provisional licence—with the board to address some of the shortages. It would seem to me that some of that would be facilitated by having a more outcomes focused assessment.

Mrs Shaw—It is interesting that you raise that, because at the June meeting of the committee that involves the deans that Graeme was referring to before, the Professional Education Committee, that issue was raised in light of the new college next year—and, yes, if that was just an input measure. They have drafted a paper that they are coming back with, because they realise—

Ms BIRD—This is the deans of the universities talking about outcomes measures?

Mrs Shaw—Yes.

Ms BIRD—That is a nice progression.

Dr Hall—Don't be too shocked.

Mrs Shaw—Would I be correct in saying that most of them have been through the process with these standards by now?

Mrs Manitzky—Yes. They have really had to move to an outcomes focus to respond to our standards.

Mrs Shaw—And they have raised the number of 100 days in light of changes that will occur with the college. There will not be just graduate standards in future; there will also be standards for full registration. Graduates will get provisional registration and then there will be other standards for full registration. The deans have raised this and are preparing a paper at the moment with examples of how they see it being more flexible and changing from an input model.

Dr Hall—This 2002 iteration of the standards and guidelines was a significant move towards an outcomes based approach from very much an entirely input based one. I think the emphasis is on outputs, even though sometimes the question is: what kinds of inputs will the university be providing to provide some assurance that these outcomes are going to be achieved? So there are still some inputs there, but they are in those sorts of terms. In the consultation process and in the acceptance process the question is: how will your inputs move towards the achievement of those

outcomes? But I have noticed over the last couple of years in the consideration of programs that the questions that are being the most vigorously asked, debated and considered are: how will the university know and be able to assure the board that its students are achieving the board's professional standards, what sort of evidence are you going to collect from your students and how will you then judge that evidence? It is about the assessment of the achievement of the outcomes. Some of that is about what sorts of things you are going to do with the students during the program, but most of it is about how you will know.

I think that leads to an opportunity for universities to be able to put a case that not all students need the same inputs to achieve the same outcomes. The people you are talking about may well then be able to say, 'We have a cohort of students in this program who have certain prior experiences, and they might need this sort of professional experience in school but they will not need that sort.' I am sure that is the sort of discussion that is going to happen in the Queensland College of Teachers next year when it develops its new professional standards for entry to the profession and its new guidelines for teacher education programs, which it is going to be required to do under the terms of the act that has already been written.

Ms BIRD—It sounds promising. Have you ever knocked back someone for registration? If you are bringing in five-year registrations, what if I am a full-time teacher employed in the public education system or in the Catholic education system and you knock back my renewal of registration? What are the implications in terms of people's employment—or is it not that specific?

Mrs Manitzky—We are not talking about an individual's registration. I think your question is in two parts. First of all, you are talking about a new application and whether we have ever knocked back an application for registration—obviously, yes, quite a number. We have the files that have 'rejected' stamped across them. The second part of your question relates to renewal of registration, which is quite a different matter.

Ms BIRD—Before we go to the second part, on what basis do you generally knock back someone?

Mrs Shaw—There can be two: one is their qualifications, meaning what is required by the act; and the other is their good character, which involves their criminal history.

Ms BIRD—If it is about their qualifications, would there be Queensland based trained people in that, or are you talking about overseas qualifications?

Mrs Manitzky—No.

Dr Hall—All graduates of a program that has been approved by the board for teacher registration purposes are taken to have met the qualification requirements. So no-one would be knocked back on that basis.

Ms BIRD—That is why registering the provider is so important to your system?

Dr Hall—That is right.

Ms BIRD—You are going towards this five-year system. How will that work? Obviously, you are talking about doing some of your own assessment?

Dr Hall—Of people's ongoing professional learning, yes. The college will have to develop policies about that, but the intention is certainly that if a person has not undertaken professional learning that maintains their competence—and the way in which that will be measured is going to be up to the college to determine—then they will no longer be suitable to be registered as a teacher in Queensland. That is the reason it is there and that is the government's reason for putting it there.

Ms BIRD—That has significant implications for employers.

Dr Hall—The employers cannot employ those people anymore if they are not registered—that is right.

Ms BIRD—It is a bit difficult if you have already given them a permanent placement.

Dr Hall—They may have to give them a permanent job doing something else, but they would not be able to employ them as a teacher.

Ms BIRD—But they will then have to provide the subsequent training and upskilling to get that person qualified?

Dr Hall—That would be helpful, yes. That would be good.

Mrs Shaw—That is the concept, yes.

Ms BIRD—It sounds very interesting. I will be fascinated to see how it rolls out.

Mr HENRY—I would like to explore with you the issue of attrition and graduate teachers. We have had previous evidence suggesting that 30 per cent of graduates have dropped out of the profession after six years. I would be interested in your experience on that issue. You indicate in your submission that 50 per cent of mature age or career change entrants are having an impact on the way programs are taught. I also am interested in whether there is any change in attrition rates with that mature-age cohort?

Mrs Shaw—Can I answer the attrition question first. There is attrition at two levels. There is attrition while the person is doing the course. That would not always be viewed as a bad thing because, when you listen to what the universities and the potential employers say, it is better for somebody to know earlier in their course than to get to the end of the course and realise that they are not suitable.

Before the board, I was with the department, with the group who were talking to you before, so I can come to the issue of the attrition rate from that perspective. A lot of work that I did was looking at why we lose people. In Queensland people will often get a qualification which is internationally recognised—because the qualification is looked at as something that is very high-quality, it is internationally recognised. A lot of young people will finish their degree and may even start teaching here or not start teaching here and will disappear overseas. Partly this applies

to mature age people, but it is more so with younger people. Some of them start here and do a year and then decide that there is a bigger world out there. This is changing with the culture of young people nowadays—they are more willing to go and do those sorts of things. You do lose those people, and it shows in the attrition rate, but you also pick them back up years later when they have done their bit overseas and come back.

I have talked to other professions about it, having been involved from the departmental perspective, and apparently it is very similar across other professions as well. When you are in a particular area you tend to focus on that and think it is terrible that there is this high attrition rate, but apparently other areas experience the same sort of thing. I do not know that there has been very much research done yet looking at whether there is a high attrition rate with mature age people. Anecdotally it is said that there is a lower attrition rate. I believe the universities are saying that the median age is now around 28, whereas ten years ago it would have been in the lower 20s. People are even coming in in their 50s. James Cook University data shows people in their 50s coming in in all areas. Anecdotally those people will say that they have experience in other things—whether it is other professions or doing other things—and are more prepared to stay in it. Some of them will still leave, but a lot of them have made the conscious decision that, ‘This is where I want to be. I have done these other things now. I believe I have got to give something back through education.’

Mr HENRY—Certainly that is an interesting perspective about the international opportunities taking away graduates.

Dr Hall—Most of them do come back.

Mr HENRY—It was suggested in the previous evidence that a lot of it had to do with a lack of practical classroom training and classroom management. Would you like to comment on that aspect?

Dr Hall—I am happy to comment about that quickly, but I will talk about mature age attrition for a moment. It is interesting that most of the people who are mature age students coming into teacher education are coming from another profession, so they are part of the attrition of some other profession as well. It is not something that is only for teaching.

Our minister recently wanted to write a letter to all school principals inviting them to make sure that they had strong programs of induction for new teachers in their schools. I drafted that letter and it had a little paragraph that said something like, ‘There is strong evidence to indicate that the levels of attrition are lower when there is strong support for teachers in the earlier one or two years of their profession.’ Of course, the minister did not want to sign a letter that said that without knowing whether it was a true statement or not, so she asked me to provide a paper. I did a bit of a review of the literature about that over a couple of days. There is a wide literature of research from this country and other countries, particularly from North America, that makes comparisons between attrition rates, resignation rates, the length of time people stay in teaching and the kinds of support they receive in that first year or two of their teaching. It is very compelling evidence. I am happy to make any of that available to anybody who asks for it.

Mr HENRY—Does that support relate to classroom management issues or a range of issues?

Dr Hall—Generally it relates to the day-to-day issues that teachers face in school, but it is about what happens after they are actually employed in particular teaching positions. A lot of the support that is needed is related to a particular context. They will probably find that when they go to a particular context to teach any amount of preparation for some of that work in their preservice education is no longer relevant, so the school has to start again. It is probably good to put that in its context.

Mrs Manitzky—Can I just add something to that notion of induction. The board has done quite a lot of work and had various projects on induction, and we had a major evaluation of one induction project, which involved mentoring beginning teachers. That was very successful. It goes back to what areas teachers need support in when they start teaching—you mentioned behaviour management, for example. The board has always had the view that teacher education is a continuum—there is preservice, induction and ongoing professional learning—and not everything can be done in preservice. A lot of things do need to be developed once they are teaching and in a particular context, as Graeme said.

Mr HENRY—I notice under your response to reference 7 that a range of those issues listed there were integrated in practicum. Do you want to comment on that in terms of the time spent in the practicum and how that all comes together?

Mrs Manitzky—Some universities are doing some really interesting work, and one thing the board has always encouraged is diversity across universities to allow a bit of innovation and new approaches and so on. One way of addressing a number of areas—like special needs, Indigenous studies and behaviour management—is to have an academic component integrated with practical experience. They would be working both at university, to get some theory in the area, and then they would be having their practical experience. There might be a unit that comes under the nomenclature of special needs that would have a practical component, and they may be doing a school based project, while they are on their practicum, related to a special needs issue, for example. What was the other part of your question? The length of time you are getting for the amount of practice?

Mr HENRY—Yes. How much is there in a typical course?

Mrs Manitzky—The board's guidelines—this goes back to the previous question—for many years have required a minimum of 100 days of practical experience, of which 80 days have to take place in schools. The idea of quoting a minimum was to allow universities, where required, to have a longer time. With the introduction of internships in recent years, we require those 80 days in schools to be completed prior to an internship, and some demonstration of competence usually occurs. Some students may actually need longer than 80 days before they are confident enough to do an internship—or to graduate for that matter. There has always been that flexibility because we have quoted a minimum, but more may be necessary.

Mr HENRY—Is there an assessment of that practicum?

Mrs Manitzky—Yes.

Mr HENRY—By the school or by your board?

Mrs Manitzky—By the school. We often see, as part of a portfolio of a student, some examples of the supervising teacher's evaluation reports. We see a sampling of those. Some universities have a triangulated approach, where they will use somebody from the university—perhaps a mentor teacher, perhaps another person from the school—so it is not just one person always.

Ms LIVERMORE—Could you answer from your experience: what motivates universities to set up a teacher education course? If they are coming to you to accredit a program, what has usually prompted that in the first place? What motivates the university to go and set up a teacher education program?

Dr Hall—Do you mean a university that has not had a teacher education program before?

Ms LIVERMORE—Yes.

Dr Hall—I suspect that one of the motivations is to attract some more students and therefore some more funds to the university. Perhaps another is to place themselves in their community. The most recent universities that have started teacher education for the first time have been the more newly established universities. The ones that have been established a long time tend to have always had teacher education programs, but Bond University started a couple of years ago and University of the Sunshine Coast started this year. So the newer universities are moving into the area and it is a part of their development and their growth. They do see it, I think, as a way of expanding in the local community and increasing the number of students and therefore the funding base for the university. They are the only two new ones that have done it for the first time, so it is not a question you could answer broadly. A lot of work that the board does in assessing programs is not really for new universities; it is for universities introducing new programs or making substantial changes to existing programs. I do not know if that is a very good answer to your question.

Ms LIVERMORE—We had some evidence earlier in the inquiry from one of our witnesses, suggesting that there should not necessarily be an assumption that every university should have a teacher education program. Could you give your views on that evidence?

Dr Hall—It has certainly been the case in the past that there have been universities that do not have teacher education programs. I would not think it would be an assumption that every university has to have that, just as it would not be an assumption that every student has to have a law school or a medical faculty or dentistry or something like that.

Mrs Manitzky—I think it is important, though, that regional universities do offer teacher education, so that students from local areas can go to that university and, hopefully, then teach in regional areas.

Mr SAWFORD—I am fascinated with this argument about teacher education and teacher training. Every GP I have ever asked has always answered the question by saying, 'I was trained,' never by saying, 'I was educated.' Every GP I have ever met has always said that. I have actually tried it out with my local GPs in my local area over the last month. Not one of them said, 'I was educated at Adelaide,' or Melbourne or whatever; they all said, 'I was trained.' I just make that point. I just wonder whether we are making too much of the fuss about—

Mrs Manitzky—It may be a sensitivity of teachers, and a reflection of the low status that they have had in the past.

Dr Hall—I am sure you would get the same answer if you asked most teachers too. It is probably more the leaders of their organisations and so on—but I won’t go there.

Mr SAWFORD—On the same sort of tack: we are in the early stages of this inquiry. We have mainly been to Victoria, and now we have come to Queensland. But already, in the submissions that have been presented to us and at public hearings, the views have been pretty polarised—which I suppose is a traditional thing in education, and which may be a good thing, or not a bad thing. In your submission you say:

> We do not expect that findings from this Inquiry will vary significantly from information about teacher education which has already been collected.

That is a pretty negative view. Our secretariat, about a month ago, began to address this question, because a lot of submissions have made that point that you have made: that we need to map all those recommendations—what has been enacted and what has not been enacted. So we take that point on board. But it is a defensive sort of statement. Why do you think that has happened? This is the first time, by the way, that the House of Representatives has actually addressed the issue of teacher education. That has been welcomed by some and not so welcomed by others. Maybe you would like to address that too. I will ask a couple of specific questions which go to your submission in a moment.

Mrs Shaw—Most probably one of the reasons that that is there is that, when the terms of reference were taken to the Professional Education Committee, which is the one with the deans, the employers and everybody, I suppose a lot of people said: ‘Oh, yet another one. What has happened out of all of the others?’ It was believed that that should be reflected, and a couple of the board members who put it together could pull out of their bottom drawer one particular person who had done research for their doctorate in this area, who could say, ‘Here’s the evidence I gathered as part of my doctorate research, which shows that there have been a number of things done in the past and what the outcomes were.’ We just could not let it go, I am afraid.

Mr SAWFORD—Why aren’t these things enacted? Is there too much vested interest? Is there too much tradition? Is there too much history?

Dr Hall—I do not think it is very difficult. If someone makes a set of recommendations—and you might make five, 20 or 100—there will be some recommendations in there that are fairly universally acceptable and people will all agree with them. There will be others that are problematic in that some people will agree with and others will say: ‘No. That is not really the right thing to do; I don’t know why they recommended that.’ In the end, somebody decides which ones to recommend and which ones not to. They are not going to recommend the ones that they will not agree with. I do not think you will very often get all the recommendations from anything implemented, except in the case of the McMeniman report from last year, in which there were 84 recommendations and the cabinet said, ‘Go forth and implement the whole 84.’

Mrs Manitzky—I can comment from my perspective of responding to a number of these reviews and then following up the recommendations. The most recent one was the teacher ed

review into science and maths. We itemised the recommendations and asked all our universities to respond to them, because we took them fairly seriously. We asked, 'How are you addressing these recommendations in your programs?' They then had to respond to us, which they pointed out took a lot of time. We then have to follow up how we are seeing that enacted in their program submissions. A lot of it is time, and it seems to be that, after one wave of recommendations comes out, we are still following those up when there is another review and another set of recommendations. It is time and money for universities. It comes down to personnel and money for them to change.

Mr SAWFORD—I am interested in what you said about the low status of teachers and that maybe they are feeling very sensitive and always under attack. When the literacy and numeracy inquiry was conducted by this committee, a number of people said that this was an attack on teachers. It was never an attack, and you will never find anything in that report that attacks teachers. In fact, it does the opposite. The inquiry into boys' education was another one. People saw it as an attack on female teachers. There is not one statement in there that attacks female teachers at all. Reference No. 3 of this inquiry, to examine the attrition rates, is straightforward, but you respond:

> There appears to be an underlying assumption here that it is undesirable for students to withdraw from teacher preparation programs.

Where did you get that from? Can you see how defensive that is? That is not stated. I think it is probably highly desirable that there be attrition rates of unsatisfactory students or unsatisfactory people. What I am trying to get at is that there is an attitude there. Reference No. 5 is about the underpinning educational philosophy; it is not singular.

Dr Hall—I do not think that is aimed at the inquiry, though.

Mr SAWFORD—No, but it says, 'implies the existence of a single philosophy'. There is no indication of that whatsoever. That is you reading into that. We were at Central Queensland University yesterday. They did not mention anything about any of this. They were quite happy to put forward on the program. They were very lucid. You understood immediately what the rationale, the content and the delivery was. You could follow it. There was a framework. Some of us come from education backgrounds and some do not, but everyone could follow it. There was no argument about teacher training or teacher education—they could not care less about that. There was no defence; it was just what they were doing. When we had the graduate teachers talk to us at the end—one actually graduated on the day—we saw that you would have to be pretty proud of those young people and the couple of mature age people. They were relaxed, calm and confident. They had very probing questions put to them, which they handled with aplomb. They were an absolute credit to Queensland.

Mrs Manitzky—I think it is the case that you will find those kinds of graduates from all teacher education programs at all universities in Queensland.

Dr Hall—One of the important things is that people have to tell them that. Teachers do feel that they are under the microscope all the time, being looked at not necessarily by inquiries but by the whole community. Being under the microscope is threatening but, if people get the feedback saying, 'We've had a good look at you and we think you are doing really well,' that

makes a big difference. If they are under the microscope and then hear nothing, they do not get a good feeling.

Mr SAWFORD—If you defend yourself when you are not being attacked, that also shows an attitude, and it is not a good look. That is all I am saying.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. The secretariat may contact you if we need further information. They will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence. A transcript will also be placed on our web site.

Proceedings suspended from 10.45 am to 10.56 am

WALLACE, Ms Carmel Elizabeth, Acting Manager, Employee Development, Brisbane Catholic Education

DICKIE, Mr Paul, Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools of Queensland

ANDERSON, Mrs Mandy, Executive Officer, Education, Queensland Catholic Education Commission

EVERETT, Mr Garry Joseph, Assistant Director, Education, Queensland Catholic Education Commission

REARDON, Mrs Dianne, Executive Officer, Education, Queensland Catholic Education Commission

CHAIR—Welcome. Do any of you have anything to say about the capacity in which you appear?

Mrs Anderson—I am here as a representative of QCEC but my previous history is as a secondary school principal, so much of my thinking comes from that direction.

Mrs Reardon—I work for the Queensland Catholic Education Commission in the area of research and review. I have also had a long association with the Board of Teacher Registration, representing the commission on various committees there.

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

Mr Everett—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Mr Everett—The Catholic Education Commission in Queensland has approximately 300 schools distributed from the cape right through to the coast and out as far as the far west in Quilpie and Charleville and those areas. There are approximately 200 primary and 100 secondary schools. We have been established in Queensland for more than 150 years and our supply of teachers, with respect to this inquiry, comes largely from the Australian Catholic University, as one might imagine for Catholic schools, but we do take a considerable proportion of students who graduate from other universities not only in Queensland but in other states of Australia.

Mr Dickie—As a representative of Catholic school parents, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before the inquiry. I would like to put the parents' point of view in relation to the teacher

and the changing nature of parents' roles in schools. I see the role of parents as being in four critical areas. The first is to be seen as the primary educator of their child and what that means for the relationship with schooling. The second is to be seen as a lifelong learner in a community sense. The third is to be seen as a supporter of schools at various levels and, the final one, which is becoming more important, is to be seen as an advocate of the education system. Those are the four areas I would like to concentrate on. When we look at those areas, there is very much a partnership arrangement between schools and the home. The government is looking at that whole partnership area at the present time, but I do not think it is reflected with anywhere near the importance it should be in teacher education and I fear that it is not reflected in school relationships either.

I find it a bit difficult to come to terms with when in a school situation, though teachers are very much supported by the parent community, it may not be the other way round. I think that there is a general perception of negativity towards parents. Teachers probably only remember the bad ones and probably forget the enormous amount of input that parents have into schools. I think that we have to break down that negative situation towards parents and capitalise on that very positive relationship that parents have with teachers in schools.

CHAIR—Do you see that attitude of teachers towards parents as something that should be addressed in teacher training?

Mr Dickie—Certainly. There is absolutely no training given concerning relationships between family and school within teacher education courses. I go to the ACU and I talk to fourth year students for a couple of hours—I am invited to do that and I have done that for a number of years. I think that is the only situation where teachers get the opportunity to listen to what parents are thinking about schools. We very much need to have that input in developing those partnerships. Those partnerships exist on a number of levels. Obviously there is that direct partnership between the parent and the teacher within the classroom, but there is another dimension of the parent in relation to the class and the parent in relation to the school and what contribution they make to the school. Then there is the parent relationship to the whole education community particularly in Catholic education but also the wider education community.

Now, as you know, governments are calling on parents to participate very much in those decision-making processes within education. You cannot pull a parent out of midair who does not know what the education situation is within the school in the wider area and expect them to perform on very important committees or boards or authorities. We apply to get on those authorities and I think that in the last count we were on something like 55. You need an enormous repository of parents who are educated or have particular preferences for certain areas to know what is happening in the school and have a wider perception and to be able to contribute positively in those areas. That is where the development of the partnership in decision-making within schools is critically important for us.

CHAIR—Yesterday we attended Central Queensland University's Bachelor of Learning Management. Are you familiar with that course and do you have a view on its effectiveness?

Mrs Reardon—I am familiar with the course and I have had a brief look through the draft report that has just been released. I know the evaluation of the course was positive. I certainly like the notion that the course focuses on pedagogy, perhaps more so than other courses in terms

of content—it puts the pedagogy first. I have not read the total evaluation but it is certainly looking very positive that that course is a model of teacher training.

Ms CORCORAN—I was interested in your comment about the need in your view that all universities should prepare graduates for teaching religion. You make a comment that, apart from the graduates coming from the Australian Catholic University, other graduates have to go through religious training in addition. Would you like to expand on that for me?

Mr Everett—We could expand on it in a couple of ways, I guess. We are in partnerships with a number of the universities that allow us and our Catholic Education Office staff to teach in the university and to teach religious education as a subject. So in addition to their ordinary curriculum in, say, Central Queensland, they would also have the opportunity to study the Catholic religious education program.

That is a good partnership that works there, but it does not work in every university in Queensland. If you graduate from other universities and you apply to get a job in a Catholic school—and you may be the most suitable candidate—we would say, 'Yes, we would be happy to employ you; however, you will have to agree to undertake additional studies, because religious education is a core component of the curriculum.' In primary schools it is taught by every teacher. So, if you were teaching in a primary school it would be an expectation, as part of your role, that you would teach the RE program; therefore, you need some preparation to teach that—some qualification. So it is a kind of an impost on a young graduate who has just been prepared in a secular university, who comes to get employment at our school when we say, 'Yes, you are a great candidate, we would like to take you, but you would have to do some extra work.' Much to our delight, it has not proved a large disincentive. But we are conscious that we are asking them to do extra work and they seem to take it on and it has been reasonably successful.

Ms CORCORAN—Are you aware that other religious schools with different religions have the same concerns as you?

Mr Everett—I would not be surprised if they did.

Ms CORCORAN—How would those concerns be addressed? Do you see the university providing subjects in all religions?

Mr Everett—It is interesting that in this state we have a senior year's course called The Study of Religion, which is not about a particular faith like Catholicism, Anglicanism or Lutheranism, or any of those, but is a broad course that deals with the concepts of religion, what it means to be a religious person and how religion affects one life etc. That is a good foundation course, in a sense. In answer to your question I suspect that, in discussions with universities, it may well be possible to develop a broad base course that would prepare candidates to teach in an Anglican School, as well as in a Catholic school or in any other faith based school. That possibility has never been explored, but I suspect the answer lies somewhere down that track. We would then, in our continual professional development of those teachers, help them to acquire a greater understanding of the Catholic faith.

Mrs Anderson—From a secondary school perspective, frequently we would employ people from universities other than the Australian Catholic University, simply because of the need for skills areas, for discipline areas beyond that which the ACU would provide and, as Garry has said, one of the impost things is that those young teachers must undertake further education in some religious studies. For young teachers who are newly graduated—or sometimes for older but newly graduated teachers—it is a significant impost on them to then undertake appropriate religious studies, as well as their day-to-day teaching load and keeping up with their subject area in all the other new areas that they encounter once they are full time in a school. Garry made the point about them having the opportunity to do that as part of their course and, from our point of view, it would certainly ease the burden and increase their employability skills.

Mr Everett—I add one other dimension which the committee may not be aware of. In the Catholic schools in Queensland we have an accreditation process, which requires all teachers and all teachers of religious education to undertake ongoing professional development. It is a mandatory requirement. So teachers who teach religion must, over four years, undertake 40 hours of professional development in teaching RE. Those who do not teach religion but teach in a Catholic school are required to undertake 20 hours. There is a continual requirement to steep oneself in the ethos of the tradition of the Catholic sector. That is after you graduate. There are still further mandatory requirements on teachers. They have been successfully negotiated with the teachers and most of them have seen that as a positive thing. It is a thing they like to do anyway. They think it is an important professional thing to be well qualified in those areas to teach in a church school.

Mr Dickie—Perhaps on a wider perspective of the whole values situation, it is interesting that a couple of years ago, education was supposed to be values free. Now, it has mandated values. I wonder why or how those values are inculcated into the system. We are fortunate in a Catholic system, because we come out of a faith tradition. If we are saying that these are the values that we teach, I wonder from where do we get those values? Whose values are they and should they be very much a part of the whole curriculum within all schools? If you look now in state schools you will see there are a large number of chaplains—there is that whole yearning of young people for some sort of spirituality and some depthing of their nature. Perhaps we should be looking at that.

Mr SAWFORD—That is a dangerous game, isn't it?

Mr Dickie—Yes, indeed.

Mr SAWFORD—That is a very dangerous game because the Catholic Church does not come from a democratic tradition in the sense that we understand it, in some ways. By saying what you are saying, you can open up a can of worms that goes much further than you would want it to go. You would reject that and I think we would all reject that as well. You need to be very careful in terms of what you are asking for there.

Mr Dickie—I am just saying that the situation seems a bit interesting at the present time.

Mr SAWFORD—I think you are right.

Ms BIRD—You made the point—which is common, I think, to the Catholic school system and the public school system experience—about the difficulty of taking on board practicum placements. This is a common message we are hearing from 'employing bodies', if you like: that staff feel that they get very little out of it. You made the point that that is not just monetary; it is also about the pressures. I would be interested to hear you, if you could, pinpoint what exactly the issues are for schools and staff in managing practicum placements and examples you may have seen where it actually works much more effectively. If we are going to push an agenda that says there needs to be more practical components to all training, then we need to make sure we are not creating an unachievable position, because schools will then say, 'Well, don't send them to us!'

Mrs Anderson—From my experience—and I am speaking about a metropolitan school; obviously there are far higher demands to place students in a school in a metropolitan area, and the fact that we are a girls' school also makes it very attractive to many young teachers or older teachers in training in education—often we have large volumes of students, as well as the universities, contacting us and seeking to place students. On occasions, there have been interstate students who seek to do their practicum. Where you have the experience of wonderful associate teachers, the teaching staff who oversee, work with and mentor them are highly encouraged to take on further associate teachers down the track. You only need one experience of really hard work with a difficult associate teacher to make teachers wary.

Teachers are aware, particularly in the senior sections of school, that if a group of students miss two or three periods of lessons it takes a long time to catch up. Teachers are protective of their classes and ensuring that they get through the work that they must get through, so they are a little bit reserved about that. They are conscious of the time load of having associate teachers. They are also conscious of the great boon that can come from a wonderful associate teacher. So there is a balance. When I have asked teachers, they have frequently been unaware of the remuneration they receive after it has been through the multiple channels. The time factor is frequently the most significant to them. Having said that, if you try to amend a teacher's timetable in some way to allow recognition of that extra time you jeopardise the students in their classes unless that is done way back at the beginning. There is a real catch-22 situation in facilitating both the needs of the students in the school, who are your core business and your first priority, and facilitating the needs of associate teachers, who very genuinely need exposure to practicum placements.

Ms BIRD—We are also trying to find things that work to address problems.

Mrs Reardon—Just following up on the BLM, where you obviously looked at a model of teacher education, Bond University also has a model that you might like to look at, called 'Master of Teaching', where they are in partnership with a set number of schools—most of them independent. The university and the schools actually work very closely together, and the teachers in those schools who work in the education of these young teachers are part of the university. It is mutually arranged.

I have forgotten the actual term the university gives to them, but it might be associate lecturers—they have a definite term. They spend a lot of time at the university before they take the teachers on and, working through the course, they play a part in the assessment. These are all graduates; they are not as a rule young people. They have often had other careers and they

certainly have other degrees. So they are of a different profile from students of most other universities.

The number of students is very small. It is down to 10 or 12 in some years—it is about 20-something this year. But it is a model you might like to look at; it definitely is a new model and it almost makes practicum obsolete, because the students are so much in the schools.

Mr Everett—And so much part of the university. Dianne is right; part of their success is due to their small numbers. For example the students are mostly assessed orally in a roundtable situation like this. The assessors are both the university staff and the practicum teachers. So, when they are assessing an academic aspect of the students' work, the prac teachers from the schools can say, 'Well, that's not demonstrated very strongly when you come out into the classroom.' There is a dialogue between the practitioners and the theoreticians and the students are the beneficiaries of that; they get some really good feedback. It is an unusual and exciting model, but I believe its success—

Ms BIRD—With 200 students?

Mr Everett—With 200 students, there is just no way. You could not do it.

Mrs Reardon—I want to follow up what Mandy said about some of the problems in the classroom. One of the problems is that teachers feel some pressure when it comes to assessing those students—you have worked with a student for perhaps six weeks and all of a sudden you become an assessor. And the Bond University model takes that pressure off the classroom teacher or the person in the school, because they are then working very closely with the lecturers. The teacher becomes a team member in the assessing and it gets rid of that problem.

Mr Everett—In this state, which is very geographically diverse, placing teachers for practicums in rural and remote areas is quite problematic. Not that there are not teachers out there—although sometimes you have only a one- or two-teacher school, so that kind of unique experience presents a bit of a problem. But sometimes there are just sheer practicalities like accommodation. Where does a young graduate stay out in a rural area? There is no teachers' flat; there is no accommodation. Unless somebody billets them they are stuck for a place, so you cut off the opportunity to have a practicum in rural areas. I think that is sad, because we need as many teachers as we can get to staff our rural schools.

Mrs Reardon—The profile of people going into teacher education courses has changed dramatically. Many are now mature age students. They have family commitments and most of them have jobs, so to send them away from their jobs for a practicum is not practical; they cannot do it. They are virtually relying on that income to survive. This is another issue with practicum and we really have to come to terms with it. Also, in terms of funding, the teachers are paid a very small amount. I would agree with Mandy that most of them do not even know what it is by the time it gets to them. So to them is not a big issue. But through my commitment to the board, where I work with the Professional Education Committee where the universities are all represented, I constantly hear about the universities' problems in funding a practicum. I do not know the details of that but it seems that funding is—

Ms BIRD—We are hearing them!

Mrs Reardon—You are hearing them; good.

Mr Everett—Have you heard that it is now an industrial issue, or looming as an industrial issue?

Ms BIRD—In some places.

Mr Everett—In Queensland it certainly will be.

Mr Dickie—Can I take up the rural and remote issues and the area of teacher education and bringing people to the city. Surely we must be looking at people who are residing in the country, because it is very difficult to attract people to rural and remote areas—as soon as they get there they want to get out of the place, basically. There are repositories of permanent residents there, I think, who are very experienced people and we should be able to mobilise those people to do things by distance education and to be actually in the schools. And there you have a permanent group of people—

Ms BIRD—Who are more likely to stay there.

Mr Dickie—who are integral to that community. Whereas some people fly in and fly out, and are not really integral to the community. As you know, in some communities in the west you have to live there for 45 years before you are accepted. I think we have not done enough to look at the flexibility of getting people there. I also find it interesting that we talk to our secondary students about becoming a teacher virtually for life yet we also give them the advice that they are going to change their job four or five times in their careers. How are we accommodating the situation where we might have a teacher for six to 10 years and give them the training and ability to enter and exit flexibly?

Ms BIRD—Good point.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I am very interested in the remarks in your submission regarding the status of teaching and the attractiveness of teaching as a profession. I just have a couple of questions. Could you let me know what is, in your view, the situation in the Catholic sector? Does it have any peculiarities? Is it seen as more or less attractive than some other sectors, and what does that say about your retention and recruitment?

Mr Everett—I will invite Carmel to say a few words as a representative of the major employer. However, in the Brisbane area, for example, we have long waiting lists of teachers wanting to teach in Catholic schools, so there is not an undersupply in the metropolitan area. Once you go to the provincial and rural areas the supply starts to diminish and finding the right people for rural schools can be difficult. I think it is true to say that Catholic schools in Queensland are generally held in high regard by the public. They see the schools as reputable, with long histories of tradition, success and contributing to the community. I suspect that most people would say that it would be a good thing to teach at a Catholic school. The salaries are no different from those in the public sector and the industrial conditions are all fairly similar. They are all governed by enterprise bargaining arrangements and so on.

In general, the image of teaching in Catholic schools is attractive and healthy. I think it also has to do with a possible myth—I am not sure if it is a myth—that somehow Catholic schools are free of problems such as drugs, lack of discipline and all of those kinds of things. There is a kind of myth that that is true, and that tends to create a drift from the public sector into the private sector. I assume that you know the statistics that around nine per cent of teachers in this state go from the public sector to the private. Part of it is to do with all those notions of better behaved students in those schools because they have better discipline and are free of drugs. I think that it is a pretty good image that the teaching profession has in Catholic schools but it has not solved all of our problems either.

Ms Wallace—We have an overabundance in the number of primary teachers who are coming out of universities in the south-east corner of Queensland and who, for various reasons, would like to stay in the metropolitan area. There are far more than we can actually employ. Going back to the issue of whether they have taken religious education subjects and so on, there would still be an overabundance of the people we can employ. We are one of the highest growth areas in Queensland, so there are also experienced teachers coming to the area. We have various databases with data that can support that. In the country areas we have more difficulty placing teachers. We know that people like to stay in those central capital city areas. The movement that occurs is often related to spousal employment.

We still have some of the issues that all schools have, particularly secondary schools, with certain subject areas. We are still looking at maths and science. We have a number of people applying for our positions but we always look at the issue of quality. With ICT we often lose teachers to other industries. Some males in secondary schools particularly, because of pay levels, may often go into other industry related areas with the experience they have gained through working in education. So the choices are out there for people. We do not have the same employment issues as some schools do; we are more of an employer of choice.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—What you have just said leads quite well into my next question. Your submission highlights your view that the status of the teaching profession is not as high as it could or should be. Now you have highlighted the issues of attracting male teachers and attracting the right specialist teachers. What are you doing about that in your sector here in Queensland? More broadly, what do you think are some points that we could take on board in helping to address that?

Mrs Reardon—I will link that back to remuneration—not to how much teachers are paid but to the pattern in which they are paid. They reach a plateau very early in a career. Perhaps we should look at another way of organising the pattern of remuneration. We could look at other countries. In Singapore, for instance, they continue their pay rises well into the 10th, 12th and even 14th year of experience in teaching. We need to look at that in terms of remuneration.

Sometimes teachers are their own worst PR people. You will hear many teachers say, ‘No child of mine is going to teach.’ It is a very hard job with long hours. Anybody who has been a teacher or lived with a teacher—and many people have, because they say every teacher breeds a teacher who goes on to breed a teacher—knows those sorts of hours.

As we said in our submission, it is true that this supply and demand thing is a bit of a problem in taking people into teacher education. Reading the OPs going into some of the regional

universities—when you, as a teacher, understand what that OP actually means—it is sometimes quite frightening to think that those people are going on to do teaching. I heard in the last session a gentleman make a comment about people dropping out of teacher education. I would not have a problem with it, either, because many of the people who go into it should definitely drop out of it, and I hope the system helps that along. We need to look at remuneration in terms of the pattern of remuneration for those teachers. With regard to status, perhaps we need to do something very positive in the PR area to raise that. There was a whole inquiry into the status of teaching. I have a big file on it at work but I really do not know what happened about it.

Mr Everett—I will add a brief comment. We are in partnership with the University of Central Queensland in a research project called 'the mates project'. That involves male teachers mentoring younger people considering teaching as a profession or starting out in the university course. These experienced teachers work with them to encourage these males to select and stay in teaching. We have those kinds of partnerships on research projects. We are trying to find ways to get more male teachers into our system. We share that problem.

Ann, I wanted to come back to your first question, which is related to Michael's. The Australian Catholic University here is in partnership with the Lutheran church. Their students going into teaching are taught at the Catholic University with some of the program being provided exclusively by the Lutheran church. They have their own staff members there. They do the history of the Lutheran church and the important aspects of that. The rest of the education is Christian and Catholic. That has been quite successful in turning out Lutheran teachers for Lutheran schools and Catholic teachers for Catholic schools. That helps to enhance the status of teaching as well, because people see one university preparing good quality people for different places.

Mr Dickie—The public perception of the teaching profession—and I have given examples before where parents are generally very supportive of teachers—is that it is very much an industrialised profession and that within it there is a concentration on that whole industrial relations exercise.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—A public service image?

Mr Dickie—No: that it is an employer versus employee situation and that that tends to dominate. There is a lot of publicity about strike action and things like that. Parents get very upset. The perception is that teachers go on strike. They do not. But the perception is there that they are very militant, and the vast majority are not. Going back to the point of getting a partnership going between the teaching profession and the parents, most of the problems that we have with parents and teachers is out of ignorance. They do not know what the situation is. Once a situation is explained, or if they take part in a decision, then they accept responsibility for it. So I think we should concentrate on those positives. You have got a very supportive group of parents out there.

Mrs Reardon—Could I add, on remuneration, that in Queensland—I cannot speak for other states, because I do not know—there is no reward now for going on and getting a higher degree. Once you are in there, after your four-year training, you are in there. We now have the situation where there is virtually a barrier to proceeding to any higher pay—in terms of both qualification and experience. Everybody reaches the eight-year mark and that is it.

Ms BIRD—Could I follow up briefly on that. There is an issue which we raised with the previous panel that concerns me. I am increasingly coming to the view that I have very little concern about new graduates. What we are seeing is that by and large they are enthusiastic, full of new ideas and dying to get out there in the classroom. I live in what is a high attraction area for teaching staff, which means that most of the teachers at the local high school where my sons go were there when I was there; there has not been much rejuvenation at all. Exactly as you say, the teachers reach the top of their pay scale and they can go into the classroom, shut the door and do the same thing day after day, year after year. The outcome of that is that I battle with two sons to keep them going to school. So I am interested to hear what you are saying about mechanisms to keep ongoing professional development—the last criterion in our inquiry. It is partly about remuneration, but have you given some thought to other ways to stop that ossification happening?

Ms Wallace—Certainly ongoing professional learning is really important for our teachers. I think it needs to have significance and be able to be translated into the realities of a classroom. Most of the professional learning that is available covers the particular areas of priorities. Schools need to make decisions in regard to that. Some of the wonderful programs that we have done, and through the Quality Teacher Program funding, look at those teachers who need rejuvenation. Some of the feedback that has come through has been very positive. It is not specifically curriculum based. It goes to what we are actually on about and breathing new life into those people and recognising those who have moved into middle management areas and may not choose to go into senior management for family or other reasons—giving them that breath of life back into what they are doing.

Ms BIRD—Would you be able to provide some information on the ongoing development so that we could have a more in-depth look at it?

Mr Everett—One feature of some of the programs that Carmel mentioned is that they take the ossified teachers out for a period of time—not a day or a half-day but a week or two weeks or something. The teachers see it as a kind of recognition and a reward. They get two weeks away from school and they get to stay at the place for the residential program. They see it as recognition in some way, and it enhances their own status. Then through the program, as Carmel said, they begin to realise that this is a very reflective time. It is not about acquiring new IT skills or something else but it is about really reflecting on what it means to be a teacher and those kinds of things. The feedback has been very good. Carmel could give you plenty of information.

Ms BIRD—We would love some information on that.

Mr SAWFORD—Do employing authorities like the Catholic Education Commission, the Queensland government and the teacher registration board contribute unwittingly to the low status of teachers? There is this silly argument about teacher training. If you ask a medical doctor, they will say they were trained. They never say that they went to Adelaide, Melbourne or whatever. In a lot of the submissions there is a big fuss made of teacher training. It is as if teachers are under attack all the time and you have got to defend them. What is the difference between teacher training and teacher education?

Mrs Reardon—One thing I am going to do is go back and check with my GP, just like you did.

Mr SAWFORD—The answer will be that he or she was trained.

Mrs Reardon—I will see.

Mr SAWFORD—I assure you they do.

Mr Everett—We have not made a big issue of it here. We mentioned the fact that we would prefer not to talk about teacher training but rather to talk about teacher professional learning or teacher professional development. It is something that we have been encouraging in the profession for a number of years, trying to use a less mechanistic kind of notion that might be associated with training as opposed to continuing professional learning. It is not a big thing. We certainly encourage the teachers in our system to use the latter kind of language—continuing professional learning—rather than training. It is part of the language which is part of the culture of understanding of what it means to be a teacher. It puts some emphasis on things that might enhance the status of teaching rather than keeping it held back somewhere else. We have not made a big deal of it.

Ms BIRD—Given that tradespeople earn twice what teachers earn, we might be going the wrong way.

Mr Everett—I understand that, and that is part of the public perception of what a teacher is worth. They are not worth what a plumber is worth because a plumber can unplug the pipe straightaway but a teacher cannot teach my kid to read straightaway. All those things operate on this notion of status. We are using a kind of linguistic and cultural approach that tries to keep raising the profession's vision to a different level.

Mr SAWFORD—Does Catholic Education encourage a diversity of educational philosophies and, if so, what are they?

Mr Everett—You would have read in our submission that we are conscious of the fact that staff will come from different philosophies of education. There is an anthropology element in the Catholic philosophy of education that is critical, but we also expect our students to be aware of other philosophies of education, such as Paolo Freire's stuff on liberation and all those kinds of things. Why did Paolo Freire develop that kind of philosophy of education? What does it mean to be critical of society and its norms and so on? That kind of broad understanding of philosophies of education is part and parcel of our course. There are core elements like the anthropological one: why was a person created and what is the purpose of life? We have some specific answers in our philosophy of education that you might not find in other universities.

Mr SAWFORD—What is the gender balance like in Catholic primary and secondary schools?

Mrs Anderson—It is very poor.

Mr Everett—It is probably the same as everywhere else. It is a very feminised profession at the primary level.

Mrs Anderson—We struggle to get male teachers.

Mr SAWFORD—You mentioned in your submission—and Michael has canvassed some of the reasons as well—that males are not attracted because of career prospects. Maybe that will change in the foreseeable future because of the age profile—you would think that there will be enormous career prospects down the track. The salaries are not attractive, and I take the point that Dianne mentioned about their plateauing out. In your submission you mentioned child safety regulations, which I think are a real fear for young men.

Mr Everett—That is a problem, yes.

Mr SAWFORD—There are also a couple of other problems. In a previous inquiry young men actually told us, point-blank, that the profession is too feminised and too old.

Mrs Anderson—Both are true.

Mr Everett—Yes, both of those statements are true. We know young men who say, 'I don't want to be a teacher because it's a woman's job.' There is largely a feminised view of the teaching profession. Some say, 'I don't want to go into teaching because—

Mr SAWFORD—Which is very sad.

Mr Everett—Yes, it is very sad. We have to work really hard to try to get male teachers.

Mr SAWFORD—What sorts of things do you do to try to change that?

Mrs Reardon—As Garry mentioned, a part of the problem with the 'mates program' that is being implemented is to match up not only young teachers who are already in university but also those who are first or second year out with an experienced male teacher as a mentor. You are quite right: frequently they will find themselves the only male in the staffroom, with perhaps 20 women on staff. Part of that program—it is not the whole of the program—is a mentoring program that is deliberately trying to put males with males so that they get a perspective from a male teacher's point of view. Because there are not that many male mentors out there, I am not sure how that will work yet. But it is an attempt to try to overcome some of that isolation that male teachers feel in a very feminised situation.

Mrs Anderson—Within individual schools, many principals would work on the theory, 'If I employ one young male, I will appoint a second young male at the same time, if I possibly can,' because, as you said, who wants to dump them into a group of middle-aged women, which is often the make-up of the staffroom. You can do things at the school level on occasions to address that. It is not a large-scale response.

Ms Wallace—I believe we are not being proactive enough at a much earlier stage. As Dianne was saying before, we are our own worst enemy. We need, particularly in secondary schools and in primary schools, to be promoting it as a profession and saying that it is a career path that students can follow. I know even just from personal experience that when some of our single-sex secondary schools have their vocations week, or whatever you want to call it, education is not featured. They do not have someone visiting from that area. I have done that with some of the secondary schools, but I think we need to go out there. That is what makes people look at enrolling in teaching. There are an increasing number of males in their late twenties who went

into other areas and then with a little bit of maturity made a distinct decision to go into primary teaching. I think that is a very positive change. That is purely anecdotal.

Mr SAWFORD—When you mention feminisation and the age profile of the profession, some people interpret that as an attack on female teachers and older teachers. It is not, and should not be. It is understanding that there is a problem in the gender balance in our schools and the teaching styles that are available to our children. Often the profession gets into a catch-22—they make an observation and then the observation gets turned around on top of them, so people start to withdraw from the debate. How do you overcome that?

Mr Dickie—I think it is teachers who talk about feminisation. The critical thing for parents is who is in the front of the class and who can best teach their child. It does not matter whether it is a female or a male. I do not know whether it is a self-perception of teachers. I do not hear many parents complaining. What they want is good teachers; that is the important thing. As Carm was saying, we might be looking much more at that flexibility of encouraging those people who are mature age to come in. A large number of teachers are now coming up to retirement age. We might encourage people who have retired to be more involved in schools—to come back into schools to mentor and relate to kids better so there is more of a balance.

Mr SAWFORD—I think that ignores the proven fact that men and women teach differently—one gender is more analytical and the other is more synthesised. One is not necessarily superior to the other, but they give a balance. In this country 25 years ago we had 100,000 tertiary students—our future thinkers, engineers and builders—doing pure mathematics, philosophy and logic. That figure has plummeted to less than 16,000. That is a huge national problem that we have not addressed. How people teach does have implications. Women teach in a more synthetic way. I do not mean an artificial way; they teach by synthesis in the main because that is the way many women learn. Harvard University have proven that this is how their brains work, and that men teach more analytically. One is not superior to the other, but together they give children a broader education.

I do not take your point; I do hear parents saying, ‘My child has never had a male teacher,’ and they are worrying. They shift their children to where male teachers are. I have schools in my electorate, both public and private, that have a gender balance, through some freakish organisation. They have waiting lists. Do not tell me parents do not know what they are looking for; they know exactly what they are looking for. They see a balanced education as desirable. I think one of the great strengths of Catholic education is balance. They see that there is a more balanced education within that sphere. Sometimes there is a balance in public education, and you market it very well. But I think men and women have a different way of teaching and I think kids need the benefit of both. I put that to you.

Ms LIVERMORE—I have a question, and I am not sure how specific this should be. I am putting together your answers to terms of reference Nos 5 and 7. You talk about the diversity of education philosophies that are taught, coupled with the breadth of specialised areas that are also trying to be incorporated into teacher education programs. As employers, do you still think there is coherence in education programs? When graduates come into your schools, what do you see? Are they arriving at your schools with a clear idea of what it means to be a teacher, what their role is, what they should be doing in front of a class and what they are bringing to their students? Is there that coherence and clarity as to their role?

Mrs Anderson—In my experience, new teachers, as with all teachers, are as varied as students. Some excellent young teachers arrive. They have a very clear vision of who they are and what they want to be. Sometimes it has been moulded and affected by those who have most influenced them, whether they be their own teachers, their parents or the associate teachers who worked with them in their courses and so on. I do not think you could classify teachers as all being clear minded about what they are doing. I think we would find as many varieties as we would find in any other walk of life. Sometimes that variety is a beauty. If teachers do have very different ways of teaching, whether they are men or women, their personalities come so much into the teaching faculty that there are going to be myriad ways of doing things and getting to the same end. I do not know that there is one answer from my point of view to that question.

Mrs Reardon—Can I answer that from a different point of view. I chair the standards and guidelines committee of the board of teacher registration. We are constantly getting requests to add things into the curriculum of teacher education. It is absolutely constant. We never get a request to take anything out. So I really do think we have to be careful about what we say we can put into teacher education when they come out of four years of training. In Queensland we are now going to one-year postgraduate training, and we may do that for primary teachers. There are eight KLAs alone. If you try to do in one year eight KLAs plus put in practicum in what really comes down too little more than 26 weeks by the time you look at a university—

Ms BIRD—Are you talking about a DipEd. type of course?

Mrs Reardon—Yes. It is just like with our school curriculum. We really do have to be careful as to what we keep pushing in at the edges of the teacher education curriculum as well.

Mr Everett—The view of the majority of employers in Catholic education with whom I work would be that they are very happy with the quality of most graduates that they take into their schools. At the same time they notice diversity of strengths and weaknesses, so some are extra good at curriculum planning and all that sort of thing, some are very good at behavioural management and some are not so good at this, that or whatever. It tends to reflect a little bit the emphasis given in the universities who provide the graduates. The general impression that I have gained over many years is that our employers find the quality of graduates of a reasonably good standard. Yes, there is some coherence about how they approach that, then they go through the induction program and the continuing professional development program, which build upon those strengths. There are checks and balances.

Mrs Anderson—We are in the privileged position of being able to choose our staff. We do not simply have teachers land on our doorstep because ours was the school that the education department sent them to. We have the opportunity to employ according to our needs and our backgrounds, which is a great advantage to us.

Mr HENRY—In your submission you mention that some Asian countries have succeeded in improving the status and cultural value of teaching. Do you know how they may have addressed in their programs the issue of practical teacher training?

Mr Everett—We probably do not have a close enough working knowledge of the actual university education programs. A lot of the impressions I have on this were gained from working with Barry McGaw from OECD, who has done an analysis of some of these Asian countries—

and we made reference to that in our submission. Part of it is cultural. Teachers are highly regarded in some Asian countries, and people show great deference to teachers as authority figures. So it is a cultural thing in one sense. In this country teachers are not always seen with the same regard.

Mr HENRY—Did we use to?

Mr Everett—I suspect in some sort of mythical golden age there may have been a time when teachers were looked up to and highly respected, speaking as an old teacher myself. However, I think it is largely a cultural factor, and I am not sure to what extent the training or academic institutions there actually provide that image and so on.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you in the future if we need further information. We have asked you to get back to us with some material. Please do so as quickly as possible. The secretariat will send you a proof copy of today's transcript of your evidence, and a copy of the transcript will be placed upon the web site.

Mr Everett—Thank you for the opportunity to be here. We wish you well with the outcome of your inquiry and the changes that we look forward to seeing.

[11.53 am]

BELL, Ms Amanda Anita, Principal, Brisbane Girls Grammar School

MACPHERSON, Dr Ian, Director, Academic Programs, Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology

McLEAN, Professor Sandra Vianne, Dean of Education, Queensland University of Technology

PATTON, Professor Wendy, Head of School, Learning and Professional Studies, Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology

CHAIR—Welcome. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Ms Bell—Brisbane Girls Grammar School has a partnership arrangement with QUT.

CHAIR—Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I 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 you would like to make to your submission?

Prof. McLean—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some opening remarks.

Prof. McLean—We have brought with us today a new submission for members of the inquiry. I will make a brief introduction to the faculty of education. By most accounts we are the largest faculty of education in Australia, with around 6,000 students and 200 full-time staff. Most of our work is in preservice teacher education, but we do have quite a range of postgraduate education options and one of the largest educational doctorate programs in the country. In all, we have over 200 students enrolled with us in doctoral programs in education.

We are also a very strong research based faculty. By some indicators at least, we are in the top five in the nation in terms of our productivity in educational research. Our particular strengths are in mathematics education, early childhood education and also career education. As a faculty our history has been in preservice teacher education, but at this point in time our aspiration is really to seek out new roles for education with a much broader scope. So we are looking beyond teaching and schooling at this point. We are looking for new ways to develop learning expertise in other parts of the community, the corporate sector and industry. We are particularly interested in looking for new minors in education in other degrees. We are progressing several of those at the moment.

One of the comments I would like to make is about student quality. We do not have significant concerns with student quality at QUT. For the most part the quality of our intake is high. We find our students are well able to handle the intellectual demands of a bachelor degree program. You might like to look at page 5 of the submission I have handed over today. Table 2 gives you some comparisons of QUT entry scores, just to give you a sense of where the education degrees are sitting. It is also interesting to note the characteristics of our students at QUT. You will find those in appendices A and B of the submission. They do suggest that education students are older and more experienced in tertiary study. I think that does challenge the notion that students enter teacher preparation programs after finishing high school. It is a very interesting comparison, I think you will agree, to look at education compared to other faculties. In terms of the proportionality of our students, the faculty we most resemble is actually the law faculty. So I think that really puts to bed some of the assumptions people make about preservice education students.

I have mentioned our commitment to leading innovation and learning. You will see that reflected in our new vision statement. I could give several examples of the innovations we have currently in place. One of those is with Brisbane Girls Grammar School. Ms Bell, the principal, is here with us and I hope she will have the opportunity to tell you a little about the partnership program we have around both teacher development and preservice practice teaching at Brisbane Girls Grammar School.

In our submission we do list a number of challenges. I will not go into them here because of the time, but we acknowledge that the scale of our programs makes innovation quite a challenge. We typically have around 1,300 students coming into first year. That is not the easiest cohort to be doing innovative things with. That is one of the major challenges we face. The funding level is certainly a major concern for us, particularly in terms of field based learning and the practicum. That is exceedingly difficult for us to manage at this point in time. Of course, one of the other challenges that all Queensland universities are facing at the moment is the recent change in requirement that has dropped graduate entry preservice teacher education programs from two years to one year in length. We are certainly struggling to make that happen at the moment.

In conclusion, I would like to make a couple of comments about the future for the faculty. We are committed to the notion of educators needing powerful intellects. We see teaching as becoming increasingly complex, not less complex. We are certainly committed to the notion of a research based teacher education program at QUT. We also argue in the last section of our submission that we have given you today that educators should be encouraged to keep their career options as wide open as possible. We see nothing wrong with the current pattern of educators either coming into the field mid-career or leaving the field and doing other things. We see that as a strengthening factor for the future. These are what we call ‘in again, out again’ careers and we see that positively. I should mention that Professor Patton is an expert in career development and career development theories, so she may wish to comment on that later. Lastly, the partnerships that we have with educational organisations we see as absolutely critical to our future. That is one reason why we have asked Ms Bell to come along as part of our group today to tell you a little about that partnership.

CHAIR—I will start by saying that, from my brief reading of it, this seems to be a far more positive document than the one we already had. I note that regarding term of reference 2 you had

referred to lofty ideals that would never be reached, which I thought was a statement drowning in its own negativity; I was pleased to see that the revised document concentrates on the positive elements.

Mr HENRY—One of the earlier submissions indicated a feeling that the practicum should be included in the learning process earlier, preferably within the first semester of year 1. Do you have any comments on that? Other evidence that we have taken from previous submissions is that there has been a very high attrition rate of graduates of up to 30 per cent in the first six years of years of them entering the profession. To a large extent it was thought that that was due to the challenges of classroom management. Would you like to respond to those issues?

Prof. McLean—The issue of practicum is a vexed one for us. We have a program called the cluster school model which tries to take every one of those students entering first year and get them out in schools in first semester. We group them according to geography so that they can get into a cluster of schools in an area close to where they live, but with a very large program it has proved to be almost insurmountable to try to make that happen in the first semester. It was not for them to do a regular practicum program, it was not to do a given number of days of practice teaching. It put them into schools for other purposes: things such as discussion groups run by teachers, school principals and deputy principals; it was to with observational tasks; it was to do with assignments that were related to their on-campus work but that would be enhanced by some time in schools. So it was not for standard practicum purposes. Our program is still doing those things but it is a challenge to make them happen, not only because of the largeness of our program but also because of the financial implications involved, where we are obligated to pay for even those days in schools. Wendy might like to pick up on the issue about attrition rates.

Prof. Patton—The attrition rate is not confined to just teacher education graduates. One of the things we know in the career development field is that people change careers or jobs more. That is not necessarily a negative thing. In fact, as we were talking about this morning, encouraging people to come with different experiences and knowledge to contribute to different sectors is something that we and a number of industries are now favouring. We have problematised it in the past but I think we do not need to as much now, because it is about taking learning into new areas. That is not necessarily a negative.

Mr HENRY—What about the issue of classroom management and the ability to impart knowledge in that sort of environment? The example that you just gave of the clusters for placement in a work environments, I think, is an important part of the process of people understanding the environment that they are going into once they graduate. Surely the issue of classroom management is an important one in terms of preparing graduates for their future. If it is an issue in terms of attrition, how do we manage it?

Prof. Patton—The issue of classroom management, again, is not something that is confined to schools. Behaviour management generally is something that is vexing police forces and all sorts of people. Certainly, in terms of our program, we spend a lot of time from year 1 on preparing students on classroom management issues. In terms of ongoing changes in adolescent bodies, yes, those challenges are going to be continuing. Part of that are some of the challenges we are facing in terms of pedagogy: how can we teach differently, how can we engage students differently in classrooms? That is a very large focus of some of the developments we have undertaken in our new undergraduate education degree and in our new graduate diploma.

Mr HENRY—The engagement of students is obviously a critical aspect of that. What sort of practical opportunity do students have to engage in those programs?

Dr Macpherson—In our new four-year program we have what is called a set of applied curriculum tasks which seek to match the campus based experience with the experiences that they have in the field. Those tasks range from focusing on the particular needs of students to issues of classroom management. The focus of an on-campus component of field studies might deal with classroom management issues. The practicum placement would then focus very much on those issues in day-to-day practice, and the applied curriculum task would give the capacity for students to link theory with practice in terms of reflecting on that and building their capacity.

Ms LIVERMORE—I want to get a bit of clarification of point 6 of your supplementary submission about the funding situation. Could you go through that for us? I have had a quick read through. Has the change come from the funding that you received from the federal government or has it come from within the management of QUT?

Prof. McLean—It is a little bit of both, I think. Funding of education has always been a challenge, but the sheer scale of our program makes it a very large amount of money that we are paying, for the practicum particularly. As you will see on page 13, we make around $1.8 million a year in payments to individual teachers and it costs us around another half a million dollars to run the practicum placement office. So that is a significant investment that we are obligated to make. One of the difficulties all faculties of education have in terms of balancing their budgets is that we have so few degrees of freedom in how we can do this. It is an obligation to pay and the number of days is currently fixed by the Board of Teacher Registration, so it gives us very little room to move.

The way that this worked at QUT for a number of years was that the vice-chancellor made an off-the-top allocation from the university budget which met the cost of those payments to teachers. After that, the allocation to the faculty was formulaic. That shifted, interestingly enough, immediately after the new cluster weightings were announced. QUT moved to use those cluster weightings to develop a new formula for allocation. At that point they stopped making an off-the-top allocation to cover the payments to teachers, which had a disastrous effect on our budget in 2004. The new cluster weightings alone, as manifested in the QUT internal funding formula, left us with insufficient funds to run the faculty last year and for the first time in many years we operated with a significant deficit. The internal funding formula of the university has been adjusted this year to go back to making a manual adjustment to that formula that helps us defray the costs of student teaching. So this year the budget is a better one than last year, but we will still operate at a deficit. It is exceedingly challenging to try to provide a high quality education program on the funding levels that we receive, so I think it is a combination of both the dollars the university receives and the university’s own strategies. We are not complaining about this year’s budget, because it has been a healthier one for us than previous ones.

Mr SAWFORD—Should the employing authority have some role to pay and play in the supervision of teachers? Have you thought of other ways in which this could be done, rather than just being a payment responsibility of the teacher education institution?

Prof. McLean—Yes, and in the submission you have received today there is a section that talks about the Queensland situation at the moment. I am not sure how long you have been in

Queensland or what other institutions you have met with, so I do not know if others have talked to you about this issue.

Mr SAWFORD—We are at the beginning of this inquiry. We have been to Victoria and this is our second day in Queensland. This is an inquiry that I assume will go for the next 18 months, and we are at the very beginning stages.

Prof. McLean—Let me tell you a little about the industrial situation around the practicum as it exists in Queensland at the moment. Our payments to teachers are covered by an industrial agreement. It is a state based industrial agreement and there are several versions of it: one with Education Queensland unions, one with independent school unions and so on. There are several different versions but it is basically the same agreement. Currently the Queensland industrial commission has opened that agreement and is considering whether to move it towards an industrial award. If it does that the likelihood is that payments will at least double, and perhaps triple, for Queensland universities, because there is a built-in assumption that cost-of-living increases will have to be built into that payment schedule. From the universities' perspective it is simply not sustainable for us to have to find that figure. At an individual teacher level you quite understand that individual teachers are not paid a lot of money for working with students, but for a large faculty such as ours it is a large amount of money.

Around the edges of this current situation in the industrial commission other conversations are taking place, and at least one of those is suggesting that the employing authorities might take a larger part in this. The question for the universities is whether the employing authorities are in a position to deliver the placements we need. Every semester we struggle to find enough placements for our students.

Ms BIRD—It will be solved if the pay goes up.

Prof. McLean—We would really welcome a different approach to this problem, but you will appreciate that it is the highest stakes issue that we face because if we cannot provide placements for our students we cannot graduate them. I guess we can graduate them but they will not get registration as teachers.

Mr SAWFORD—Are there other attributes that we should be looking at, such as status, time or some other thing that you have considered?

Prof. McLean—As distinct from?

Mr SAWFORD—As distinct from remuneration. The remuneration is minuscule—by the time the tax comes out of it and the super comes out of it there is probably not much left anyway. We have heard that teachers do like the status of having young and even mature age training teachers in their rooms. We have all heard of the pressures on teachers in terms of their time. If you gave a choice to teachers as to whether they would prefer time, money or status many would go for time, if they were to be allowed some time off for their own professional development.

Prof. McLean—Yes. I think we have some evidence of that in our internship program. Currently at QUT some of our final year students undertake internships where they are authorised to teach by the Board of Teacher Registration, even though they have not quite

completed the program. They are unpaid but they are able to teach 50 per cent time, so it has the effect of freeing up the teacher of that classroom for 50 per cent time. Teachers love that program, and they love to have interns in their program because it does give them time. So I think that is some evidence that backs up the point you are making.

Next year our fourth-year program will involve internships for every student. We have costed what that will mean for the education employers, and it will be about $1.4 million of unpaid leave that will go into the system by QUT interns next year. I think the figure for this year is something like $235,000, and that is included in the submission so you can read that later.

Mr SAWFORD—Amanda, how would you describe your partnership with QUT in terms of rationale, strategy, process and outcomes?

Ms Bell—When Brisbane Girls Grammar redid its strategic design we particularly looked not only at our obligations but also at our wish to contribute back to the profession. We were witnessing institutions as well as QUT that desperately needed to place student teachers in schools where they knew that the mentor teacher would want to have them in the room and want to develop their skills et cetera. So we built that into our five-year plan. We went to QUT and said, ‘We want to have an arrangement with you where we will take your students and give them the best mentor teachers that we have, but we want you to help us train those teachers to be good mentors.’ And that is exactly what QUT has done.

Our teachers apply to become mentor teachers and they attend professional development workshops with the staff of QUT and so their training to become a really good trainer of teachers is increased. At the same time, I pay their fees if they wish to convert that training to credit points towards a master’s degree with QUT. So it became a very attractive proposition for my staff, and the school and the board were very keen to put money towards creating this centre and having the partnership and putting money into it. At the same time, I think QUT know that when their student teachers come to us they are going to get the best possible attention, training, mentorship and nurturing, if you like, towards being contributors to the profession.

Mr SAWFORD—How long have you been involved in the program?

Ms Bell—It formally started at the beginning of this year, but we had discussions all through last year and developed it theoretically from an idea right through to funding the joint agreement and how it was going to operate. There was quite a degree of fine detail to manoeuvre behind the scenes through both institutions. I have just employed one of the students who have come out of that system.

Mr HENRY—What is the annual capacity of that program?

Ms Bell—I started with 12 applicants from the staff this year. I think 10 took it up, which is quite substantial. I have a full-time staff of 85, so that is a big number who took it up. They are doing before-school and weekend workshops in their own time because they want to be part of this. Each year we will roll through whatever number—

Mr HENRY—Does that make it 10 students a year as well?

Ms Bell—No, we take many more students than that. We take as many as we can possibly fit, but we will keep training our own teachers.

Mr HENRY—Can you give us an example of the number?

Ms Bell—I cannot off the top of my head at the moment because it goes by semester and it is by different year levels. Interestingly, one thing that is difficult for me as a principal is the current requirement to achieve an S1 to teach in Queensland. It is a rating that Education Queensland give and you cannot teach until you have an S rating. If the student teacher or the preservice teacher finishes their practicum and their training in a state school, the principal of the state school can give them the rating. If you are the principal of an independent school, you cannot. That student teacher then has to go and sit before a panel and put forward their case to get a rating. Of course that is very difficult. Those people do not know the preterm teacher and they do not know the work that they have done. It is a really cold assessment, whereas if they finish their practicum in a state school they are assessed internally. We find that that is a bit of a drawcard. A lot of preterm teachers who come to us would like to complete their prac with us—because I employ from that as well—but they are reluctant to because they know I cannot give them their final rating.

Ms BIRD—Is it part of the Board of Teacher Registration requirements as to who gives that final rating?

Prof. McLean—No, it is a requirement for employment in Education Queensland. New graduates who wish to work in the state system need an S rating. That process by which those ratings are assigned is acting as a disincentive for students to be in an independent school in their final year.

Ms BIRD—I am particularly interested in this dilemma that the universities are clearly facing. On the one hand there is growing pressure for more practicum—and I think there has been very little disagreement with that, from what we have heard to date and from the written submissions—combined with the financial pressures around how you deliver that and make it happen. It is not new. I remember 20 years ago when I did my practicum you got stuck with the worst teacher in the place because no-one wanted to do it. It was an awful experience, to be honest with you—a good way of weeding out a lack of commitment. That dilemma does not seem to have gone away. From what you have described about universities prioritising their budgets, you have solved it this year, but it is an ongoing issue.

On the Bachelor of Learning Management, one of the interesting things I picked up was the capacity to integrate other sorts of not direct supervision of a student placement which had required financial reimbursement under the award or the agreement but a whole range of other activities in schools which, although not required to be funded, were very supported by the schools. The schools told us that that is because they felt this program really took them on as partners. Many of them had been refusing other university placements because they felt that a book arrived, a student arrived, they were there for a couple of weeks and then went again, and they really disliked that experience. Have you gone down the track of exploring some of the other modes? Is there a capacity to make placements beyond the school classroom? These days there is an awful lot of training, education and learning—as you are talking about in expanding the courses you offer—happening in a whole lot of industries, community groups and so forth,

where a quite legitimate practical experience of pedagogy can be achieved. It may not be quite so expensive; I do not know. I would be interested to know, in relation to that whole issue, what is happening with those types of opportunities.

Prof. McLean—You are absolutely right. I do not think there is a student at QUT who would argue that they want less practicum. The students are absolutely unanimous in talking about the practicum as the most valuable part of their program. But, that said, we would not be moving to a fully site based program because we also believe it is essential for educators for the future to have a strong intellectual base and to be exposed to educational researchers and to the whole intellectual life and research base of education. So, although we really value time in schools and in learning environments of all kinds, we would not anticipate moving to a 100 per cent site based model.

However, we have several other programs under way that are providing the sort of diverse school based experience that you are speaking of. One of the examples of that is the current program that is about halfway through at the moment for maths and science students. Again, you will find that described in the submission we have passed over today. That is placing students in schools for more time, and it includes the heads of departments of science or maths in the schools directly mentoring the students. That is a program with a current enrolment of, I think, 21. We took 25 students into that. It is a graduate entry program. All of them are high achievers in terms of their experience in science and maths. Most of them are in midcareer; they are not in their early twenties. I think it is a great program, and it certainly involves diverse time in schools that goes beyond standard practicum. One of the difficulties, though, with the current requirements for registration is that it does partition off practicum days. So you can put students in schools for other things.

Ms Bell—An outcomes focused requirement might be better than an input.

Prof. McLean—Absolutely. We are always looking for opportunities to do that. Our new Caboolture program—and I believe 56 students began that program this year—involves more time in schools. I think those school principals and deputy principals, particularly, are very keen to partner with us in that program. The difficulty is in trying to do it all on a grand scale. The challenge we face with such a large program is how to take these pockets of innovation and scale them up to the point where they can provide these enriched experiences for all our students. We continue to work on that challenge.

Ms CORCORAN—I have two questions. First, I notice your name is Sandra McLean. The letter we have here is signed by Vianne. Is this the same person?

Prof. McLean—It is the same person. You can blame my parents for that confusion. Sandra is my first name but I use Vi.

Ms CORCORAN—I want to ask you about your comments on selecting students. You talk about having to resort to higher education entrance scores. You make the point that it would be much better to select students on learning outcomes rather than their year 12 scores, I assume you mean. You are looking puzzled.

Prof. McLean—I am puzzled.

Ms CORCORAN—This is in the old submission.

Prof. McLean—On the terms of reference?

Ms CORCORAN—Yes. You talk about the process for selecting students. You say:

Surely the focus is better placed on learning outcomes at the conclusion of the program rather than on entry criteria.

Then you talk about having to resort to higher education entrance scores because of financial constraints. Could you explain how you would select students if you had your druthers, if there was not this constraint?

Prof. McLean—I do not have that submission with me. I had understood that to be a comment on the terms of reference rather than a particular perspective on QUT as such. So I am sorry for that; I misunderstood the purpose of that first submission. As I do not have it in front of me I cannot check the wording. But I would be very surprised if I used the word 'resort' because I think the argument that I would have been making there is that, when you bring 1,300 students a year into a program, it would be practically impossible with a program this size to be using more personalised selection strategies across the board. But I was also saying that we make no excuse for that. That is why I am doubting using the word 'resort'. I do not think it is a last resort. I think it is entirely appropriate for a university degree to be selecting on the basis of achievement levels as measured by OP scores, in Queensland, or their equivalent.

Ms CORCORAN—Maybe I have misunderstood what you have said here, but I understand what you are saying now.

Ms BIRD—Could you clarify if you have alternative modes of entry?

Prof. McLean—Yes, we do. They are done by interview. A good example of that is our Q-Step program, which is for disadvantaged students. Many of our Indigenous students, for example, come in through Q-Step entry. We do an interview process for those students. But the vast bulk of our intake comes through high school achievement scores or their equivalent. They get modified in various ways depending on what they have done since. As you see from the age profile, a very large proportion of our students come to us with either a first degree completed or at least some work already done at a university. That modifies their high school leaving score.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We will contact you if we need further information. The secretariat will provide you with a proof of the evidence you have given today and a transcript will be posted on the web site. Is it the wish of the committee that the submission from the Queensland University of Technology, together with attachments not published, be accepted as evidence and authorised for publication? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

Proceedings suspended from 12.28 pm to 1.30 pm

BARTLETT, Associate Professor Brendan John, Head of School, School of Cognition, Language and Special Education, Faculty of Education, Griffith University

DEMPSTER, Professor Neil Colin, Dean, Faculty of Education, Griffith University

MIDDLETON, Dr Howard Eric, Head, School of Vocational, Technology and Arts Education, Faculty of Education, Griffith University

SIM, Dr Cheryl, Senior Lecturer, Convenor of Secondary Graduate Entry Program for Preservice Teachers, Faculty of Education, Griffith University

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?

Prof. Dempster—No, but there is one figure in our submission that has fascinated me and other members who are here. It is the attrition rate in 2000 from our Bachelor of Education secondary program. I would like the opportunity, after having reread the submission yesterday, to check those figures and get them back to you for the record. We have had some quite humorous conjecture as to why it might be that there was a high attrition rate from that program in 2000, but is probably not appropriate to put those things forwards to the committee.

CHAIR—Okay. I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Prof. Dempster—My introductory remarks will relate to some of the facts associated with the provision of teacher education at Griffith University, to let you know what we do with what we get and some of the issues that we face. We effectively have some 3,900 full-time students. That translates into actual warm bodies of over 4,500 people. Some would be in part-time mode in the postgraduate arena, and that accounts for the fact that we have got more people than effective full-time students.

Of that student body, CGS students, that is Commonwealth funded students at the undergraduate level, are at some 75 per cent of our load—so we have a heavy undergraduate responsibility—with 25 per cent of our overall load being in the postgraduate arena. That is taken account of by our coursework postgraduate students and our research higher degree students: masters by research, professional doctoral study and PhD research. But of the 25 per cent postgraduate we have a little anomaly. Approximately half of that 25 per cent in the postgraduate area are actually in a program called the Master of Teaching. That is an international program which attracts approximately 12 per cent of that postgraduate load. I say it is an anomaly because these people are pre service in their preparation. They come to us with a degree gained in their overseas institution, then they study with us for the equivalent of two years at a preservice level and then are graduated as teachers with that postgraduate award of Master of Teaching.

We have, amongst that group of students that I have indicated to you, about 18 per cent who are full fee paying overseas students, which includes those Master of Teaching students. So we have got about six per cent of our load in other full fee paying overseas students, apart from the 12 per cent of Canadian or other nationalities learning in our Master of Teaching program. We have approximately seven per cent of our load in full fee paying coursework domestic students, that is, Australian postgraduate students paying fees.

What we then do with those students is that our faculty is quite comprehensive in its coverage. We prepare people to teach in primary, secondary, adult and vocational education; we prepare them for technology education. We have a strong commitment to a range of specialisms such as health and physical education, music, early childhood education, languages and applied linguistics, and so on. I do not think I have missed anything there in terms of the spread. So we are a very comprehensive faculty. We have a longstanding commitment to special education issues. We have an inclusive approach to what we do in the faculty. In fact, in special education we cover all areas, including significant areas of low incidence such as hearing impaired and visually impaired preparation. We are one of, I think, only two in the country that still do all of the areas that are required in special education.

Those 3,900 EFS or 4,500-odd students are taught by 86 continuing academic staff. So we have an 86 staff complement. You can start to do some sums and see where I am going with this. Over 80 per cent of those staff members have PhD qualifications—they are research trained staff. We have a small number of staff now remaining from what would have been the pre-merger days of the 1990s. You know of course that because of demography we are facing amongst baby boomers they are likely to go out in significant numbers and have started to go out in numbers and will continue to do so over the next few years. Those 86 continuing academic staff members are supported by 15 administrative staff across three campuses: Mt Gravatt, Logan and the Gold Coast. We teach across three campuses on an income of $15 million that we receive in our internal university grant—this is approximate: I am not giving you the decimal point figures here; I am rounding these out for you so you get a picture in your mind. We do it on $15 million, of which approximately $13 million is expended on salaries. Those salaries include the salaries of our continuing 86 members of staff. We spend about $2.25 million a year on sessional staff because there is no way in the world 3,900 or 4½ thousand students can be taught by 86 academics. It is just not possible at all. We spend about $2.25 million on sessional teaching staff—people coming in from the field with expertise whose qualifications we recognise and whom we pay at sessional rates. That salary bill of $13 million also includes approximately $1.75 million in payments to teachers who supervise our students in schools.

So you can see that, of the budget of $15 million, around about 87 per cent to 90 per cent of our moneys are gone in recurrent expenditures on salaries and we are left with about 10 per cent with which to try and deliver the quality that we are looking to deliver in our programs. The staff-student ratio in our faculty, when you do the very easy sums of dividing the number of continuing staff members into the number of effective full-time students, works out at about EFTS per staff member—40:1. When we add in our sessional staff numbers that we spend the $2.25 million on we reduce it to just below 30:1. The actual figure is about 27.8, so I am rounding it up to 30—it looks a little better for us. It is above the national average: the AVCC has published the national average for faculties such as ours and the national average is 23. We are teaching above the mark—we are punching above our weight. W are carrying a heavy load with our academic staff members and there is absolutely no doubt in our faculty that we could

not do it without committed teachers, who have to combine with their teaching an active research profile because of our need to perform in a university environment on research acquisition as well as research outputs. We are clearly supported by an administrative staff that wraps it all up in what I would argue is a strong sense of goodwill and commitment.

For the money that is provided to deliver the kind of service that is clearly there in our faculty, we are doing exceptionally well on not much. They are the only remarks I would like to make with respect to the nature of the faculty itself. Within that we not only have to produce graduates for acceptance and acknowledgment within the wider professional community but we have to use our staff to meet our internal benchmark performance measures that universities are judged on around the country. If you like, our staff members have two parts to their role. Clearly, they have their teaching commitments, but they also have their commitments to research and service that figure so prominently in judgments about the quality of universities in this country. I will stop there and leave it to you, Chair, from this point on.

CHAIR—Why is your staff student ratio so much higher than the national average?

Prof. Dempster—There would probably be several reasons. One of them is that, within universities, things are not even between faculties or schools. Some schools experience periods of high demand from outside while others experience periods of lower demand from outside. This is difficult to anticipate on a year by year basis. I would argue that over the last decade education faculties—particularly ours in Griffith University, but we are not alone in this—have been fortunate enough to experience a cycle of high demand, so we are able to balance out the uneven demand in other sections of the university. That is one simple reason and we have clear evidence to show that has been the case in our university and probably elsewhere. There would be other reasons that contribute to this. There is also no doubt that other faculties may have different constraints on their teaching processes. It may well be argued, for example, that in labs, because of the constraints, numbers are obviously partially controlled by the facilities and circumstances where in some large classes, for example, in undergraduate first-year courses in an education faculty, you can get by by taking much higher numbers. Those things would all be factored into the mix for budgeting purposes and we have to teach within the budget constraints that we experience.

CHAIR—We have a theme running through the evidence that has been provided with regard to partnerships with schools. Would you like to elaborate on your arrangements with regard to this?

Prof. Dempster—I might call on some of my colleagues here because it is one of the things that we know is absolutely essential to the conduct of a good teacher education program. So we spent quite a deal of time in establishing partnerships with schools both of a formal and of an informal kind. I might ask Brendan to talk about one that we are doing at the moment. We have many of these partnerships but perhaps we could use the Camp Hill Infants School for example or even the Mount Gravatt PDN alliance.

Prof. Bartlett—These two are part of the deliberate attempts that we have made to have the staff of schools, the administration of schools and the children of schools part and parcel of what we are doing at the university. Neil has mentioned the Camp Hill Infants School. This is the last surviving infants school in the state and it is not too far from the Mount Gravatt campus, where

all four of us work. A memorandum of understanding has been struck with the Queensland state government and Griffith University whereby we have our final year students doing their fourth-year work on-site at the infants school.

CHAIR—How do you define an infants school in Queensland?

Prof. Bartlett—Historically, it was part and parcel of the baby boom. After the Second World War, there were infants schools all over the place. One by one, these have disappeared because they have been integrated into primary schools. This one has survived as a bit of an anomaly, I think; however, it is currently taking students from preschool through to the end of year 2. The year 3s hop the fence and go to the primary school nearby. The memorandum we have with Camp Hill Infants School has our students on-site. They are immersed. When they are not doing their theoretical studies in the first semester of their final year, they help out in classrooms. They get lots and lots of additional experience. Teachers at the school are highly motivated to help that happen and the administration of Education Queensland and of our university sees this as a positive. Staff at the school who are helping out in return are becoming increasingly interested in using the university's award courses to do their professional development. So, as well as doing mentoring of students, they are starting to theorise about what they are doing, how to do it better and how to use this opportunity of having additional participants in the class to benefit the youngsters. So they come into our courses and there is a pay-off for us in that. The second of the partnerships that Neil mentioned is a large group of about 10 schools with the university. We have a seven o'clock meeting on a Wednesday once a month.

Prof. Dempster—In the morning.

Prof. Bartlett—And the process that we have there is to look at ways in which the university can channel into the professional development needs that individual teachers suggest. As you know, in many schools, very often teachers are told what they need to do to develop professionally. Part of the university's contribution to this partnership has been an annual survey where we invite from teachers across all the schools involved a description of what the barking dogs issues are for them—what they really need in order to feel that they are doing better with their work. That is a thumbnail sketch of how the alliances work. We have seven of these.

Prof. Dempster—And there are many others. I can speak of the professional development alliance with the approximately 150 schools that surround the university. The alliance works with our Centre for Leadership and Management in Education. It has been alive for 10 years. It comes up to its 10th annual conference this year. It provides professional development on a needs basis for those principals in each of the four terms of the year—professional development that they are not getting from their own employing authority. This is the specific reason for the existence of the PDN. What do those principals believe they and their leaders in schools—heads of department and deputy principals—need that they do not get from their employer?

It has survived on a subscription basis in association with the university for 10 years now and has been going very strongly. In fact, we have just had overtures from Education Queensland to extend state wide the model with our leadership centre. So that is a very interesting development and obviously will bring us into a stronger partnership as a university much beyond our own regional area where that particular partnership currently exists. But at the Gold Coast campus we have the Teacher Education Advisory Group, which has been in existence for 14 years with some

very strong partnerships. We have the Logan Education Alliance of 12 or so schools around our Logan campus. We are constantly trying to ensure that there are these localised links between us and our partners. Obviously there are benefits both ways, but clearly we need to be seen to be in partnership in harness with schools because our teachers in training need to have those opportunities.

Ms CORCORAN—Just before lunch the Catholic Education Office appeared at this hearing. As part of their submission, they made the point that graduates they take out of the Australian Catholic University already have religious education in their degree, but if they take graduates from other universities they have to take them aside and teach them religious education. I understood that to be religious education, not the Catholic faith, so we assume that definition of what they were trying to say. They were saying to us it would be useful if all universities had a religious education component in their courses, and I would suggest that should be not just Christian but others. I would not mind a reaction from you. You have probably heard that sort of comment before. What is your reaction to it?

Prof. Dempster—My colleagues probably do not know this: I have had discussions with our own registrar at the university when on one occasion in recent times we have been approached by another faith to have an opportunity for a major in its faith included in our degree program—that was by Lutheran Education Australia. We took it all the way through discussion to our registrar and the senior management of the university. The clear view was that we could not really start to respond to these kinds of one-off requests—it would appear as though we were playing favourites and that would get us into all sorts of trouble in the longer term.

By the same token, though, our university runs a multifaith centre—it is one of the few in the country that does. It has a range of programs that our students can access if they wish. At our university it is also complemented by the college of theology. So the university is in there, but we do not have within our teacher education programs an element that says that a religious education component is part and parcel of the mandatory requirements. Students could take some courses externally.

Dr Sim—I have found where students have been interested in being able to apply for positions that are advertised in the Catholic education system they are able to enrol cross-institutionally in a specific course that the Catholic Education Commission provides and gain credit for that within their program. There are a number of electives in programs that we can look fairly flexibly at, and that is one of those. In many cases, it is when students identify that that is their area of interest in terms of their future profession. That facility is there.

There is also often a relationship with schools in our area. At the moment, many of those schools do not have formal religious education programs. There are also issues there in terms of us providing for the needs of schools. Within Catholic education, that is clearly identified and very well known about by students. We support cross-institutional means for them to gain the necessary qualifications.

Prof. Dempster—Just to finish off on the Lutherans, our response to the request from Lutheran Education Australia was not: ‘Shut the door. Don’t come near us.’ It was, ‘There are elective opportunities.’ If students with a Lutheran intent want to study, they have courses over at the ACU for them. Our students were encouraged to move across to those locations for their

cross-institutional opportunities rather than doing them through us. We would have to staff it somehow and that would be pretty difficult for us.

Ms CORCORAN—I assume it would be technically impossible to have a subject that says, 'This is how you teach religion,' separated from a particular religion. I could not imagine how that could possibly happen.

Dr Sim—It happens in terms of the curriculum area, because there is the study of religion in the Queensland senior curriculum. It is about understanding the concept of religion, its origins and its development. It is for those particular students in the senior social sciences who are interested in knowing about that. It is mainly taught in Catholic schools, actually. However, it is not purely on one religion. That is the only place I know of where there is a specific opportunity, if you like, to study religion within the secondary preservice program. It is within a curriculum area.

Prof. Bartlett—From that response, you are definitely aware that most teaching theory suggests that there is a general theory of pedagogy; there is a way in which you teach, regardless of what you are teaching. Then there are highly specific pedagogies that relate to such things as religion compared to mathematics and science et cetera. In terms of the general aspects of pedagogy, that is fairly well covered. Also, while this is not essentially religion, there is a strong line between the areas of moral development and ethics, which figure in our undergraduate preparation, and other areas. That reaches out for but does not quite make the religion end.

Ms BIRD—We have had a number of universities come in. All of them do what you have done very well: give us the happy and good side of the story. By and large, there are clearly tremendous things happening at universities and there is certainly a sincere effort to deal with the world changing and young people as a cohort changing and the way we pass on pedagogy and curriculum and so forth changing.

The other thing that is consistent is people from the school sector telling us that they are increasingly pulling out of providing supervision for trainee students. Part of the feedback they give is that they feel a bit abandoned by the university system. A book will arrive, a body will arrive and then they disappear again. That seems to be, despite what we are hearing from all the universities, a common experience. Part of what I hear you saying about the funding issue I suspect feeds into that dilemma. But there is clearly a growing push for an increased focus on pedagogy to deal with the challenges that modern youth in a modern culture face. I am interested in perhaps hearing from you about what the barriers are to doing what you are trying to do better. That is perhaps somewhere that we can help with. Could you give us some insight into where the real barriers are to that sort of thing?

Prof. Dempster—You would not have to go back in history too far to understand that at one time, coinciding with the effects of the Dawkins reforms in the early 90s, the average class size in CAEs fell—somewhere between 15 and 19. You have seen what ours is in round terms. Obviously that affects what can be done. CAEs were much better staffed than we are. From 1990 to 2000 this particular faculty did not appoint one person. For 10 years nobody was appointed. When people left, they left. This university was one which did not sack anybody, but it used all of the natural attrition to reduce the number of staff from approximately 140 to what we bottomed out at—63. We slowly started to appoint again from 2000. I remember the very first

appointment in 2000; it got a round of applause after 10 years. So we have been appointing because we have been growing, but certainly the staffing issue is a very significant factor in what we can provide in supervision. That said, our university—and you probably hear these kinds of stories from others—has a commitment to provide a continuing or sessional member of staff who visits the school during the practicum period. This is how tightly it had to be budgeted: we had a minimum a little while ago of two telephone calls and one visit during the practicum period.

Ms BIRD—So you got to the point where you actually had to define it to that level?

Prof. Dempster—Yes, absolutely, in order to be able to budget it. There were two telephone calls and one visit by a member of staff during the period in which a student was performing satisfactorily. If the student was not performing satisfactorily, it required a minimum of at least one further visit. My colleagues will bear me out on this: in a sense we have largely stuck to that at our university, but in order to make sure that there is good interaction between students and their lecturers we actually have a commitment to meet with them in what are called the 'lead-up days' to practicum. Perhaps Dr Sim could add to that.

Dr Sim—We are still trying to maintain that policy. I look after the secondary practicum and that is the process that we have. I have 12 groups with 20 students in each—it used to be 15; it is growing—and one tutor, who tutors the same group for nine weeks leading in, contacts the schools that those students will be in, keeps links with those schools and visits those schools so that students also know who their tutor is and know the face when it arrives. Certainly we pay them on the basis of that minimum, but I know they do a lot more than that. I think the thing that is really starting to be quite a problem for us is the goodwill of the people who work with us. Many of those people are experienced teachers either on leave or retired, and they stay with me for two to three years, so they build very good relationships with those key schools that they continue to visit. That is not only the model in the secondary; that is also the model in the three major practicum components. As I say, it is more than just the practice: there is actually a full professional experience program where these people work with the students right from day one, through to and including the block prac, which, as I say, is only one component of their professional experience. That is what we want to hang on to. We do not want just the prac sitting there isolated. It is very much integral and integrated.

Ms BIRD—Is that problematic in the university situation, in that it would be quite unusual across faculties to have that demand on you? Are there other faculties that have a similar workplace demand?

Prof. Dempster—The faculty of nursing does. With some of the practicums that are run elsewhere in engineering it is a case of, 'Go and help yourself and get a report that tells us that you have helped yourself appropriately.'

Dr Sim—Our policy is that we do all the negotiations and liaison with our schools. The students are not requested or expected to go and find a placement; that is totally done through our professional practice unit. That, again, is something which we will continue to do. It is fairly important, but it is also fairly difficult.

Prof. Dempster—It is necessary logistically. We could not possibly have 2½ thousand students per semester landing on school doorsteps, saying, ‘How about me? Pick me.’ It needs to be organised much more systematically than that, given that there are other competitors in the marketplace looking for the same kinds of schools, including universities from over the border, particularly in the south-east corner. The placement issue in the south-eastern corner—from Noosa to the Gold Coast and west of the ranges—is very difficult at the present. There is a lot of demand because of the growth rate in this particular element of the corridor.

Ms BIRD—So when we went from the CAE model to the university model, do you think that we did not support it well enough? You are saying nursing is the same, and it is interesting that it is also the one area that moved from a trade based college model to a university delivered model. I think we get many benefits out of that change in the model, but is one potential drawback that we have not—and this may be a government problem—looked at funding to make that a viable option so that we do not lose the advantages that the trade nature of your job in teaching requires, in terms of work placements, professional guidance units and so forth? I hate to use the term ‘trade focus,’ but that is what I am getting at.

Prof. Dempster—It is probably, as I said, partly the product of history. Before 1990 and back to when practicums were first conducted in the old teachers college days, teachers colleges were run by state governments. State governments paid practicum expenses. When the move to the binary system occurred and CAEs were established, CAEs became and were state government instrumentalities. State governments still paid for the practicum—it was just a matter of moving it from a standard departmental expenditure to there.

Ms BIRD—The common interest.

Prof. Dempster—In the 1990s it moved across to the Commonwealth when the mergers occurred, and I am not sure that it was well understood by everybody, including universities particularly, that they would be bearing this cost for the long haul.

Mr SAWFORD—You have given us a breakdown of where the money is spent. Can you give us a breakdown of where the $15 million comes from?

Prof. Dempster— From our undergraduate course work load, we would receive approximately $10 million in round figures and, in a sense, from our postgraduate coursework load we get a share of the rest. We earn much more for the university than we receive. You can work out the numbers for yourself. If, for example, in round figures we have 500 international students—it is not quite that; it is about 470—doing a master of teaching and those 500 students are each paying, say, $16,000 for a two-year program, you soon get a view as to what we are earning just from that one program. We do not get anywhere near that, because that is not all our income capacity. We earn from postgraduate course work students in Australia, as I said, who comprise seven per cent of our load. We actually earn a little more from the university, I would argue, than we get.

Mr SAWFORD—Do you get money for research and consultancies as well?

Prof. Dempster—Yes, but it is tied money. We cannot use that money to make provision for teacher education. It is tied money and it must be spent on the purposes for which it has been secured.

Mr SAWFORD—What is the differential between the amount of money that the faculty brings to the university and the amount that you get?

Prof. Dempster—I did not do that sum, because at faculty level we are not absolutely sure what the university gets in through CGS for us—that is, for our faculty.

Mr SAWFORD—Shouldn't you have done that?

Prof. Dempster—If I had done my homework, I probably could have.

Mr SAWFORD—Can you get that information to us?

Prof. Dempster—Yes. I think we could. I am like Thomas the Tank Engine, I think I can.

Mr SAWFORD—I take your point—and other universities have made this point as well—concerning the payment for supervising teachers. It is a pretty minimal amount and you sometimes wonder whether in fact the remuneration on its own is the direction it ought to be headed or whether it ought to be a status issue or there should be time off or whether there are other factors that may need to be included to make it a successful partnership. It seems to me that there is something intrinsically wrong with an education faculty that is struggling in terms of funding. Part of that money is subsidising other courses. Is that right?

Prof. Dempster—That is one way of putting it. You can put it in another way. You can look at it from the positive side. You could argue that establishing a faculty at a university such as ours and supplying it with $15 million does not take account of all of the other wraparound or infrastructural elements that the university provides. For example, we receive essential student administrative services, there are online enrolment facilities that we do not provide and there are facilities in terms of the maintenance of common-use labs in technology education that are provided et cetera. So there are quite a significant number of other costs that the university does provide and it could quite legitimately claim that it is doing a fair job by us. It could legitimately claim that, vis-a-vis other interests in the university that have to be balanced, it is doing a fair job. We have a medical school that has just opened as well, so that has to be funded.

Mr SAWFORD—Do you think that the funding level—a lot of it is public money—ought to be more transparent?

Prof. Dempster—From our point of view, yes. I would like to see a line in our allocation that says, 'Look, we know it costs you $1,000 per student for the provision of practicum services to that student. Here is your $1,000.' I would like to see a line in our budget that says that. We do not see that, do we, Brendan?

Prof. Bartlett—No.

Mr SAWFORD—On the attrition rate—and I know Stuart will ask some questions about this—it is a pretty low attrition rate from the information that we have so far.

Prof. Dempster—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—Is there any reason for that? There is an open question for you.

Prof. Dempster—There is a really interesting example from technology education.

Dr Middleton—We have a low attrition rate because, by and large—you are not going to be surprised by this—I think we do a good job. We put quite a bit of effort into making sure that students coming into programs know what they are coming into. I think that is important. As we put in our submission, we found the reasons people gave for dropping out were often to do with things that we could do nothing about—family reasons and personal reasons that they could not anticipate. We do look after them. We probably provide a more personal service than some universities.

Mr SAWFORD—While we are on vocational training, you used the term 'new vocationalism' in your submission and 'education versus training'. Would you like to make some comment on both of those aspects? What do you mean by 'the new vocationalism'?

Prof. Dempster—Let me say something before Howard, who is much more expert in this field than I am. There is no doubt that over the last decade there has been an increasing move to understand and have represented in the school system vocational education and training opportunities for young people—particularly at the senior ends of schooling. Having that represented in a new and vigorous manner within the school system could be argued to be a part of a movement called 'new vocationalism'. That is my laypersons's view, but Howard works in this area.

Dr Middleton—I guess I would describe 'new vocationalism' as accepting that there is not quite the absolute divide between training and education—that, while people might need specific skills, they also need general education. New vocationalism really accepts that notion that there is a merging between those two areas.

Mr SAWFORD—Yours is one of the few submissions we have read thus far from universities that actually even includes the term 'vocational education'. I think that is a plus as far as your institution is concerned.

Prof. Bartlett—The second part of what you said is important, too, in terms of the queries to us. The distinctions between training and education are important. In very crude terms it is the difference between the automatic view of school development and a reflective view—a view of independence of thought and the capacity of people on their feet to conceptualise. That notion towards education is one that I think parallels the growth from teachers colleges through CAEs to university faculties. There have been some costs of this. It gets back to the question that Sharon put before. Another impediment to full-time attention to the work of teaching and the integration of professional practice is the concern that universities have for research and that individuals within universities have for making sure their own research profile does not leave them behind the eight ball in terms of placement and promotions and things of that type.

Mr SAWFORD—Does that work in reverse, Brendan, in the sense that you can have a teaching shortfall, too—that balance between the research base and teaching?

Prof. Bartlett—Indeed it can.

Mr SAWFORD—You said 80 per cent research based staff, Neil.

Prof. Dempster—Some have PhDs. That is an imperative placed on teacher education faculties in universities. If you are going to survive and be competitive within that university environment you have to have research active staff. That is particularly true in our university with our strategic mission; it might be different in some regional institutions perhaps. Our university, from the chancellor all the way through, sees itself as being a research active university that has its research informing its teaching.

Mr SAWFORD—There was some contrary information given to us yesterday but I will not go into that at the moment.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I draw your attention back to some statements you made with regard to entry requirements for students. I would have to say well done for your honesty, at least, but you would not be feeling very satisfied with that situation where you are changing the entry requirements depending on the level of demand for other courses. Would that be a fair comment?

Prof. Dempster—Of course. We would not be happy with that.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—So why are you doing it?

Prof. Dempster—We get the results of it.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—What are your views on the way that impacts on two things: the work force itself and the demand for teachers with specific skill areas or specialisations—say, maths and science? What would be the impacts, in your view, on the outcome at the end of the course of study, on the quality of that teacher graduate?

Prof. Dempster—I might ask Cheryl to say something about it. The bigger response is that where in universities you can fill the enrolment target load without dropping the entry bar too low, university administrations will use faculties to top up. There has been very high demand in primary and we have been able to be quite selective with students to keep the entry level high. So you will find at present in Queensland a pool of unplaced primary teachers out there that you have probably had reports on from others who have written to you. That is one of the macro effects of that.

This year, in arguing internally within the university, we will try to redress that imbalance a little by placing more of the target load we are given into the secondary domain with a search for graduates who already have degrees in areas where we know there are shortfalls in employment—maths, science and technology. We will be competing with everybody else for them but hopefully we will get a reasonable share. They are the bigger picture issues. Cheryl,

would you like to add anything to that from the point of what it does to the choice of study programs and the number of people we get into different courses?

Dr Sim—You have covered that fairly well. In the secondary area we also have the double degrees. Quite often the entry points there vary also because of the choice of the degree they are doing with us. The reality is whether or not these students intend on staying with us. I think there is a reality there also. The places are opened up because we do have that integral profession experience element within it. That acts as a filtering process as they progress through the degree. Certainly there is a starting point at which we worry if our entry points do have to be lowered. But the standards that we have within our program and within each course are demanding. In many cases, and I do not know whether this is good or bad but it is a strong point, we have to ensure that they come in at that entry point, but we do not in any way struggle with the issue of making sure they get through the practicum, for example, so they move on to the next and the next. It is not in any way an undemanding program, and that is a really important issue when we do know that we might be pressured to change those entry points. But we are not necessarily pressured to change the quality or standards of the courses.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—As a follow-up to that, what do you think this committee should think, recommend or consider in terms of trying to massage student interest such that it actually does match up with what the work force shortages are? You have already touched on it with that great excess of primary school teachers that are being trained in Australia, and it is a pretty disappointing future for those people. Again, you have highlighted the decline in interest in maths and science teaching, so what do you think we should be doing or recommending to the government?

Prof. Dempster—Howard would probably be able to talk a little bit more about this because he is integrally involved in a couple of Commonwealth initiatives. We have had the Smart State focus on science issues here, and in Griffith University both science and educational science people have been taking an active role in that. We are in the throes of trying to establish a science centre, a science education or science learning centre, within the university that brings together both scientists and educators to work, principally, with students in the senior area of schooling who have an interest in this area, but with teachers as well. They are the small kinds of contributions we can make. Larger and different contributions, I would expect, would have to come from government. I know that government is thinking about how to get people into science and maths teaching particularly, and also how to retain people who do degrees in which computing technology figures prominently and how to keep them in the schooling system, because they go out at a great rate of knots as well.

Dr Middleton—I coordinate the university's involvement in the Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project, which is trying to link up university academics and others with schools to improve the teaching of maths, science and technology, but also to recruit good students into those programs. It is still early days now, but that is one project that I think has potential in it. One of the problems is that schools do not seem terribly well equipped to give good guidance advice, because guidance officers in schools usually spend most of their time dealing with personal problems with students, not with career guidance. It is the sort of thing they do on the seventh Tuesday if they get around to it.

Mr SAWFORD—It is selected by the short-straw method.

Dr Middleton—Yes. And it is often incorrect; it is usually out of date. In fact, I have actually tested this. I have gone to guidance officers in schools and asked them about particular programs, and they have been completely wrong in terms of employment opportunities, what the course involves and so on. That is one thing in schools that would really help.

Ms BIRD—And teachers not saying to all the students in schools, 'Don't go into teaching.'

Prof. Dempster—Yes, there is that.

Mr HENRY—In the context of reducing your entry requirements, does that increase attrition rates in students? Does it have any impact?

Prof. Dempster—Again, the figures on attrition and retention are put out in front of us every year because targets are critical for measures of university performance, so we watch those. We have introduced a number of things that give us the ability to work with a wider spread of student entry characteristics. For example, we now have first-year advisers to complement the work of our program convenors and our course convenors, and those first-year advisers do things now that probably a decade ago you would not have found being provided in first-year opportunities for students.

In fact, I had a couple students talking with me the other day who said, 'I think we get too much support here.' That is unusual, isn't it? That is really on the back of the work of our course convenors, program convenors and first-year advisers. We do have small projects that try to identify with first-year students in particular, because first- to second-year retention is the big one—if you are over that hump, you are on the way to good quality retention figures. We do a number of things across different programs to try to ensure that students (a) know what they are there for, what the expectations are and what the demands on them will be; and (b) know what the supports are. I think our first-year advisers exercise has been bearing fruit since its inception.

Dr Middleton—Can I follow up on that. One thing that is worth while saying about that first-year advice is that it is a more complicated issue than it first appears. It is not a case of necessarily the ones with the lower OPs or the lower cut-off scores needing more support. It is a funny instance but, certainly with some of the students I have come across, the ones who will talk about dropping out are the ones who actually do not have a problem, whereas some of the ones whom you think it would be nice if they dropped out keep—

Mr HENRY—Some of those who get in with a lower entry level probably perform better in some instances.

Dr Middleton—I think it is complex and those first-year advisors really do help in dealing with those individual issues.

Mr HENRY—Thanks for that. The Board of Teacher Registration requires 100 days in a school setting. How do you see that and what value is it to the students? I am interested in your perspectives on that.

Prof. Dempster—The Queensland forum of deans of education is basically saying that there is a little anomaly because the Board of Teacher Registration has moved to what is called a

standards based approach to the preparation of teachers. In other words, they say: ‘Here’s the standard that we would expect a graduate to be able to demonstrate upon entry into the profession. Show us that they can demonstrate these or that they meet these standards and they should be in.’ If you operate an outcomes or standards based approach, then it should be independent of time, shouldn’t it? Somebody might come to you who has had quite a lot of experience in teaching arenas of a different kind, whom you could clearly see, after having had, say, six weeks exposure in classrooms, was actually performing at a level that another might take 10 or 20 weeks to get to. There is no flexibility in the Board of Teacher Registration to accommodate the different entry qualities or abilities that individuals bring at the present time. Our forum of deans of education is arguing that, while we might have to accept a minimum and that may be important from a public perception point of view, the focus should be on the standards and how you actually produce the graduate to meet those standards. I am not sure that that has exactly answered your question.

Ms BIRD—It may please you to know that the committee raised the point with the board as well; that it stood out to us as well that if they are going to talk about outcomes, then you cannot then measure on inputs.

Prof. Dempster—That is our point.

Mr HENRY—In that context, we have heard today that there is an increasing number of mature age people with other workplace experience coming into teaching. In that sort of case, it may well be that you do not need that 100 days of school placement.

Prof. Dempster—We would have to respond in quite flexible ways to accommodate the different pace that might accompany a real focus on the standards. At the moment it is easy—everybody has to do 100—so you say: ‘You’ll do it in these blocks. There it is. Just get on with it.’ Whereas, if there were greater flexibility, we would actually have to look at each learner and say, ‘You’re a person who fits into this kind of structural process, away you go.’

Mr HENRY—We also heard earlier today that—and I am not sure where it sits in your program—perhaps the practicum should be included earlier in the learning process. That was on the basis of exposing people in the first semester and in year 1. Would you like to comment on that?

Prof. Dempster—I am smiling because there is an ongoing debate about this. You could have this debate about where it should be. Should it be early to frighten them out of their wits to either make up their mind to get in or to get out or should you give them some time, particularly school leavers? I think there should be a variation between school leavers and mature age people. We have about 50 per cent mature age people in our programs now. I would probably have a variation between the two and I would not fix myself on one answer. But you could well argue that, for a school leaver, it is not a bad idea to have a bit of distance from school for a while, and then get back into it when you have had room to reflect upon it and have perhaps gone out and experienced something in an educational environment that is nonschool. There are plenty of those who can engage people and field experience outside their personal school experience. Maybe my colleagues would want to add something here.

Dr Middleton—No, that is fine.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you if we need further information. You undertook to give the committee some figures which we would appreciate receiving as quickly as possible. The secretariat will send you a proof copy of the transcript of today's proceedings and a copy of that will be posted on the web site. Thank you for your attendance.

[2.30 pm]

ASPLAND, Professor Tania, Director of Education Programs, Faculty of Science, Health and Education, University of the Sunshine Coast

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 will be regarded as a contempt of parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments that you would like to make to your submission?

Prof. Aspland—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Prof. Aspland—First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting me to have a say in this inquiry. It is great to be here. I have been in teacher education since 1980 and I have worked with some of the opposition whose representatives you have interviewed today. I was at QUT for 23 years. I worked in Perth for a couple of years at ECU—no doubt you will be going there. It has the second-largest faculty of teacher education. Now I am working in the smallest teacher education faculty in Australia. We have a staff of two and 200 students.

By way of introduction, I would like to state that I have had a long history in teacher education and that, although my views today do represent those of the University of the Sunshine Coast, they are based on my experience in the second-largest and in the smallest teacher education faculties. My paper was really a paper that was not based on research but was very much based on my experiences within teacher education. In that sense I hope you do not think it was nonacademic. I knew that you would get plenty of papers based on current research and I wanted to do something a little bit different.

What I want to suggest today, by way of my opening remarks, is that we are all very cognisant that the context of education has changed and that the nature of society has changed. I am sure you are very familiar with the changing nature of families and childhood and even of the nature of work, particularly the nature of teachers' work. While we can be cognisant of all that and can talk about the global economy and multicultural societies and so on and so forth, one of the things that I would like to bring to people's attention—and I did so in a keynote address on Monday to 200 teachers—is that the role of teachers in society has not kept pace with the changes in society. On Monday I reminded teachers that the classroom in which they teach, which I now call the learning space, was invented a very long time ago—

Ms BIRD—During the Industrial Revolution.

Prof. Aspland—Yes, as was chronological age grouping. We have carried on with that model for whatever reason, maybe because we are comfortable in that role. I suggested to teachers in the primary and secondary sectors that they need to differentiate or die—I mean not personally but as a profession. One of the challenges before all of us who have an interest in teacher

education is to look at the work of teachers and ask teachers to reinvent themselves as knowledge workers. Consequently we in teacher education have to lead that change. In this very small and new university I am very well placed to say, 'Let's do education differently.' In fact, I am starting to write as a tab on the bottom of all our cards 'Education with a difference'.

You would have met the people from the board of teacher registration. Given that the registration authority has been in place for a very long period of time, although it is being reconstituted as a college of teachers, it is very hard to develop new, exciting and innovative teacher education courses that challenge the traditional role of the teacher because its boundaries are so fixed. We can do innovative things around the edges—and the middle years of schooling is a prime example of that—but when you put a course up—as I am doing at the moment—to be accredited you really do hit a brick wall because the people in authority do have very traditional conceptions of what a teacher should be and has been, and they are very limited in their thinking and in their ability to risk take—and that is not a personal criticism—and to look differently at the way in which teachers can work. So, by way of introduction, I think that is a key thing that we have to consider. It is a challenge for the school sector and it is very much a challenge for the teacher education sector, and I am hoping to put some seeds of growth in place to do that.

Ms CORCORAN—Did I hear you correctly as saying that you have two staff and 200 students?

Prof. Aspland—Yes. Education as a subject has only begun at the University of the Sunshine Coast this year. We have desk places for 120 and we received about 300 applications, so we have stretched the boundaries a little bit to 200—but do not tell the minister that as we might get fined.

Ms CORCORAN—I was simply intrigued as to how you managed 200 students with two of you.

Prof. Aspland—We only have two permanent staff at the moment, but dealing with that is part of my job. I was appointed in January to build a school of education. Interestingly, it is placed within a faculty of science, health and education. That is tremendously exciting in terms of the challenges that we have in teacher education. I am sitting beside microbiologists and microtechnicians and, while they seem to do the most boring work, it is fantastic to be able to talk to them about the very issue that is of key importance to us—maths and science teachers. So I am learning a lot more about science and a lot more about mathematics and they are learning a lot more about education, so it is a really harmonious team.

Ms CORCORAN—My second question is about selecting students for teacher training. You make the point that engagement with a rigorous university program is a better indication for success than the pre-university scores. But that is after the event, isn't it? How do you select your students to engage? I think it is a chicken-or-egg situation.

Prof. Aspland—It is a difficult one. I have been in education for a long time, and there is one story that I always think of. A young man wanted to do a graduate diploma in primary education at QUT and he had grade point average of 3.9 from his previous degree. He drove down from Currimundi and he was on his knees pleading, 'This is all I have ever wanted to do.' I took a risk with him and let him come into the course. I said, 'I am going to watch you carefully.' He is now

one of the best teachers in the Queensland education department. He found his forte and he worked hard. He just did not enjoy his undergraduate work. It is a chicken-or-egg argument, but I would like to see entry into first year teacher education completely open. At the University of the Sunshine Coast, we went down to 18. In the first semester of working with those people, we have counselled four students out of the program. That is four out of 200. The remaining group—196 of them—are not doing too badly. They are doing three discipline subjects and one education subject.

We have another subject in education next semester called Learning about Learning. The two of us are working very arduously, with a couple of tutors, in getting to know all the students and looking at their skills in literacy, their skills in numeracy, their skills in personal communication, and their ability to take on and learn new concepts about the world. I think education can be rigorous at the university level and cancel people out.

At Edith Cowan, we wrote a unit called Becoming Multiliterate. Minister Nelson would be interested in this, but I do not want to make it too public—although it is going on the *Hansard* record. We tested the 200 students who came into Edith Cowan on five levels of basic literacy, numeracy, oracy, science concepts and ICT. A very small percentage—I am not going to quote the figure—got through the first round of benchmark testing. But then we ran workshops, three times. Everybody who did not pass had to go through the workshop and were re-tested and re-tested again. All bar six passed after we took the strategy of saying: 'This is where you are at. This is what you do not know, this is what you do need to know, and here are the workshops.' We were able, in that rigorous program, to lift the majority of those students—this was year 9 benchmarking at those levels—from being failures to being successful. I think one of the greatest things I have done as a teacher educator was to think about that and do that with a team and to see that the students could be successful with the right instruction and the right motivation.

So I really have got empirical evidence now to say that, if we let them in, we can either counsel them on, if they are inappropriate or unsuitable intellectually, and we can support them and move them on if they are really committed to the teaching profession. I think if we did more of that in the first year program we would be graduating more successful teachers. I do have a commitment to teachers having an in-depth knowledge—and I wrote that in my paper—in their specialist area to graduate as a teacher. You cannot teach maths unless you really understand maths. Superficial understanding of mathematics is not good for the teaching profession. At the moment I think we have got a little bit of that.

Ms CORCORAN—You make the point that the status of teaching remains low. We have heard a little bit today about professionalism or the lack thereof—or perceptions about that, at least. Do you think teachers are held in low regard by the community? Do you think teachers feel that they are treated as less than professionals? If so, what do we do about it?

Prof. Aspland—I have done a little bit of work in the East, and in the East there is a congruity about the expectations of a teacher. People at home and people in the school all expect teachers to be leaders of knowledge building.

Ms CORCORAN—Do you want to define 'the East'?

Prof. Aspland—I have done some work in Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. When kids come home and complain about their teacher, the parents will say, 'Your teacher is really on your side.' There is much more harmony between the two. I think in the current societal context that we are working with, that harmony is missing in a large number of cases. We actually have families working against teachers.

That is the point where we can reinvent the work of teachers and parents. When I gave my talk on Monday, a lot of teachers came up to me and said, 'That's all very well, but you've got to get the parents on side.' I agree that it is a public responsibility to do that. So building a higher level of congruence between schools, homes and families is one of the first challenges—with that, the morale of both would be enhanced. People in homes—parents, guardians and carers—would think more highly of teachers and that would be reciprocated, with teachers thinking more highly of parents. That level of congruence would build a better community in which to work.

Ms BIRD—I find what you have to say really interesting, particularly because part of what we are tackling is an ongoing debate about whether we should put pedagogy back as the prime focus of teacher education and that perhaps we went too content based. I have some sympathy for that. What I found interesting in the slightly contradictory position that you just put to us—and some of us on this panel are former teachers so we are the worst people to talk about it—is that some of the very best teachers I have ever seen would not necessarily have been the most academically gifted students who came out of high school. You also made the point about having an in-depth knowledge in your subject area. Do you think that the balance changes as you move from preschool and infant school age groups through to senior school? Is there an increasing need for a focus on content as you move through? Where is the balance?

Prof. Aspland—If we work within the existing model, whereby teachers are conveyed as the transmitters of knowledge, and it is a censored and culturally biased knowledge that allows certain students to open certain doors—to go to university or TAFE or whatever—then it suggests that earlier childhood and primary teachers love children and secondary teachers love content. The third part is that teacher educators love themselves. You have no doubt heard that! There is certainly a continuum, or a wedge, where the content is low in the preschool, early childhood and primary areas, and it increases up until year 11 and year 12. That is because of the nature of the system. So the teachers who teach in the senior school should, and usually do, have deep subject knowledge—except in maths and science, because a lot of the people teaching maths and science at the moment do not have a deep knowledge in that area. That is particularly problematic.

I think that is wrong. My argument is that, if we are going to reconstitute the notion of teachers' work and teacher education, all teachers must have some deep subject knowledge in at least one, if not two, areas, even at the P to 3 and 3 to 7 levels. I do not like to use the words 'specialist teachers', because to me it is a contradiction. In terms of the global nature of knowledge, who really does have deep knowledge any longer? Knowledge is just so complex. But, if we remain within the existing system, one of the things we have to do is reinvent the primary school teacher away from being a generalist to becoming a 'specialist'—and I do not like that word; I wish I could think of another word. As knowledge workers, I think they have to change in the primary sector.

Unfortunately, the whole notion of children having a childhood has been reconstituted. For generation X and generation Y, adulthood is setting in much earlier and they are very much intent on what career they are going to pursue. So the days of the primary school teacher as a nurturer looking after the wellbeing of children to the detriment of literacy and numeracy in particular have to be over. These kids need to be ICT literate—in fact, to save time here, I will say that they need to be multiliterate. We need every single primary school teacher to be able to teach language and numeracy as an in-depth specialist area.

If we want people to care and nurture children because families may no longer be doing that, we need to have those people in the primary sector. I need to have kids in front of me and be able to teach them to read, write and be numerate. I need someone else to support me in caring for their nutritional needs or their need to be loved—whatever it is. I am strongly advocating this. I find it very difficult to design courses to do this because it gets blocked at the Board of Teacher Registration level. I want specialists in the primary sector. I believe that the employing authorities are looking at it because that is what the private schools are doing. The private schools can draw more clientele than they should necessarily be able to because they have strong specialists in the lower end of the educational continuum.

That does not mean I teach literature and I cannot nurture the love of learning, but I have an in-depth knowledge. My son is graduating from another university as a primary teacher and unfortunately he does not know how to teach kids to read. He has missed the boat somewhere. Whether it is his fault or the university's fault, I do not know. But there are many, many teachers in the lower part of the school who do not fully know how to teach kids to read or to write or to be numerate. Thus the whole traditional system of the early childhood, primary and secondary sector must go and we must start looking at teams of people working across sectors collaboratively as part of a learning community.

Ms BIRD—You talked about the congruence between school and home or teacher and parent and so forth. I was interested to hear you say that because I am secondary teacher trained, but I am also a parent of teenage boys who is very disappointed with his schooling experience. I think that would be a common thing that you would hear. I am strongly of the view that we are creating a self-fulfilling situation where maths and science in particular are taught badly in school and, therefore, kids who go home and look up science things on the internet and watch the National Geographic Channel for as many hours as they can hate science at school. You have hit on some really interesting challenges for us with those issues. Where are you picking up the young people that you talk about? How do we actually attract them to it? They are coming to you with the lower marks or whatever, and you are finding that, if you provide the correct support et cetera, they will get through, but how are you accessing them? I would have thought they would be so turned off by their schooling experience that there is not a potential pool of people there.

Prof. Aspland—One of the beauties of a regional university is that you can actually get into the schools early and do the talking and the selling, if you like, that you need to do. We have got 200 or 300 schools that are in our feeder area and the two of us—and we have done quite a bit of it already—have moved into schools and we are going to start working with year 9 and year 10 students to try and up the ante. We will try to work with them and their parents to say that teaching is a fine profession. As I said in my paper, when I was in Ireland recently I saw that it is very competitive to get into primary education over there. It is the equivalent of OPs 1 to 5,

because of the salary—I could make more money over there as a primary school teacher than I can as a professor in Australia. I do not do this for money. That is part of the problem. I am hoping that these kids in years 9 and 10 will take up the challenge of moving into education, particularly the young men—but all types, actually. I do not think that men make better teachers or that we need more men teachers; we need more quality teachers, some of whom are male, some of whom are Indigenous, some of whom are a new migrants to Australia. That reflects the broader society, so we are trying to attract all sorts of different people into education.

Once they arrive with us we engage them with what we called enabling courses, so we put them through some sort of benchmarking, and they identify that they are weak in mathematics or weak in something else. We scaffold them—and ‘scaffolding’ is a word that we use at USC—into the program with as much support as we can in the first year. By midway through second year, they have got to be autonomous, freethinking university students. I do not want to be a high school teacher for the four years or whatever that they are at university, but that transition from high school into the university begins at about year 9 or 10 and it continues until the end of their first year. Being small, we can do that.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Some of what you have said, I am sure even you would acknowledge, is very revolutionary.

Prof. Aspland—It is controversial, I think.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I must admit to not feeling as though I really understand where you are coming from all together. Perhaps you have written papers or discussion pieces that we might be able to have access to.

Prof. Aspland—Yes, I can send you some papers.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—You would probably disagree, but it seems to me to be a contradiction. You talk about deconstructing the way that education is provided and yet, at the same time, you talk about reinforcing teachers in—I know you do not like the word—specialisations and being specialist teachers. How can you sustain both of those views?

Prof. Aspland—My view of change is iterative. If we take the middle years as an example, when we first started talking about teams of teachers working across 120 students in a cross-disciplinary way, everybody thought we were watering down the curriculum.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—A lot of people still think that.

Prof. Aspland—Yes. I can talk about the work at Maroochydore State High School where there was an Irish physics teacher who did not want anything to do with years 8, 9 and 10. The principal said to him: ‘You have to teach in here. We want you in here. We need the strengths that you have in science.’ He would not do anything else now because his perception was that he had to water down what he was teaching. What he realises now is that he works with others in engaging students in a love of learning and in that love, if he does it correctly, they will get a love of science as well. So he has made a big shift, and those sorts of stories have not been documented.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Could you appreciate that, at least with the model we presently have in mainstream education with all of its deficiencies, at least it provides a curriculum that has some quality controls to it? At least you know that, at the end of a particular level of education, based on what the child and his parents have chosen, they know the curriculum has been met. Whereas, when you move away from that and you have specialist teachers, if you like, all over the place and doing topical studies rather than subject based ones, you may well get to the end of year 6 or year 10 knowing all about Antarctica or dinosaurs but not knowing your times tables or how to do a simultaneous equation.

Prof. Aspland—There needs to be some clarification there. Firstly, I think the curriculum that we have and the fact that we have standards and outcomes is a way of guaranteeing outcomes, but it is for the privileged few. There are many students who do not make it through that curriculum and experience failure, and they tend to be the marginalised students from low socioeconomic groups, Indigenous kids or non-English-speaking kids. So, whilst the curriculum is fantastic and written by experts for experts, there is a large proportion of Australian kids who do not achieve those outcomes and thus it is not successful for them.

Secondly, my view of deep knowledge and specialist teaching needs to be embedded within the context of transdisciplinary teaching. I do not want specialists floating around all over the place doing a bit of this and a bit of that. If you go and have your teeth out you experience that first hand. You get the GP and then the anaesthetist. There is the oral surgeon, then this and that and you think, ‘Thank God this is only teeth; it is not my mind.’ There are specialists everywhere, poking and prodding at you and, finally, you get your teeth out.

I do not want people to experience education as being poked and prodded by a number of specialists. I am talking about transdisciplinary teaching, not integrated teaching. Integrated teaching—doing themes on water—leads us nowhere. But if we have a group of 120 students and four teachers who have deep specialist knowledge and ‘Pedagogical Expertise’, that team works together to assess the clientele that they have and where they are taking them in terms of the outcomes—they could be multilevel outcomes of level 4, level 5, level 6—and then they look at themselves and at their own expertise and work out who is going to do what in the best ways to advance those students forward to the levels that they want to go. It is not an either/or argument for me; it is both. I am not in favour of the music specialist flying in for 20 minutes doing this whoopee lesson on something then disappearing for the rest of the week. It is more a team approach where a team of specialists work with a cohort of students, assess where they are at and move them forward. So if I am a specialist in physics and the work that we decide to do—it may well be transdisciplinary, so there may be some focusing on, say, political reform—has a physics or a science dimension, a person with that expertise takes on the responsibility for leading that teaching.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—But you are really relying on that team of teachers having that breadth of ability or deep knowledge and I think that you would be playing a game of Lotto, wouldn’t you, in the real world?

Prof. Aspland—In the current context I think you are, yes, but I would like to move towards that.

Mr SAWFORD—I was interested in your response to the terms of reference before when you said, 'Just as the teaching force is demoralised so too are education academics.' It is a pretty sad statement in many ways but maybe a true statement.

Prof. Aspland—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—I come from an education background too. I have worked in demonstration schools. I have been a school principal and consultant and have done all those sorts of things before this life, and I have never met a primary school teacher in my life that was expert across the curriculum—not one.

Prof. Aspland—No.

Mr SAWFORD—There are four basic areas in primary schools which you can slot everything into. I use this example not as a definitive model, but you often find that people who have a strong language base might have some environmental studies and maybe expressive arts areas that they are not so bad at, but they have a great deficiency in mathematics. You might find a few people who are strong in the area of mathematics who are also strong in some of the expressive arts or physical education, dance and that sort of thing, but they are never strong across the board.

We have had this model of one teacher and 30 kids since mass education began, I suppose. I agree with you but I think the model does not work anymore. We have a society that is very aggro. You only have to go around to any shopping centre in Australia or Brisbane and walk around to see all the kids who have not been at school that day. We are not talking in tens; we are talking in hundreds and thousands. They have voted with their feet. They are saying, 'This ain't for me.' There have to be some valid reasons as to why that is happening. Part of it is a rejection of the traditional school system and the traditional way in which many people teach school.

Yesterday we were at the University of Central Queensland. They seem to have a very commonsense, practical approach. They gave a lucid exposition of what they were doing. You did not have to be teacher to understand what they were on about; you could easily identify the rationale and the content of what they were doing and the way they deliver it. At the end of the day, we met some graduating teachers and I have to say they were pretty impressive. They seem to have a model that may be working. That does not overcome the issue you raised that maybe we ought to be looking for different models. It seems to go in cycles. People are saying in some of these submissions that we ought to be outcomes focused or process focused. No-one has said we ought to be ideas focused. That was about 25 years ago. Can't we simply say that in teacher education we need all three of those things?

Prof. Aspland—I was about to say that. I do not think it is an either/or situation; it is an 'and' and an 'and'.

Mr SAWFORD—Why do people always write one or the other?

Prof. Aspland—I do not know. There is an approach I took at QUT and at ECU and which I am now trying to implement at Sunny Coast—I am getting better at it. I think the concept of an

attributes based curriculum in teacher education is what we are looking for. In a way, that is what Central Queensland—

Mr SAWFORD—That is an interesting concept: an attributes based curriculum. What do you mean by that?

Prof. Aspland—It is an approach that asks: what is it that we want in teachers at the end of this course? The way we are working at the moment is to say: 'You must have some sociology and psychology. If you are going into primary, you must have these eight learning areas. If you are going into secondary, you must have two. We'd better throw in a bit of prac. One hundred days sounds like a good idea.' I heard you talking to Griffith about that figure. Someone thought of that while sitting around a table. I know who thought of it and I know who said it—I was present at the meeting. The conversation went something like this: 'Eighty sounds good.' 'We'd better add 20 for field experience—let's go for 100.' That is the rationale behind 100 days of practicum. That is how courses are built up: a bit of this, a bit of that and then mix it all together and hope like hell you produce some good teachers. On some occasions you do, but on many occasions you do not. And once they get out there they think: 'What did I learn that sociology for? I didn't need that.' Some teachers even say: 'What is psychology about? We don't need that.'

I am saying: let's work at the other end. What are the attributes we want? We want people who have good ideas. We want people who can engage kids in learning in the most eventful way, in different ways for different kids. We want teachers who have deep knowledge of eight areas, two areas or one area—I do not know, but whatever we decide on. We want people who can relate to parents et cetera. They are the qualities that we are heading for.

If 200 students came to me, traditionally I would say, 'You all have to do the same thing,' for them to get to a particular point. But I say, 'Have a look at where you are going. Here is the program; where do you need to go? What pathways do you need to choose in conjunction with your professional mentors, which CQU does very well, to get to that point?' Some of them who have had world experiences do not need much of that. If we worked out what they were good at and where they were at, we could move them on much more quickly. In a grad dip one-year program, you kind of do that. They come with in-depth knowledge. You are in the privileged position of saying: 'Yes, they've got maths. They've got science. They've got ICT. We want them.' We say to them, 'In one year not two, as Minister Bligh has dictated, this is where you have to be. There are four or five pathways you can choose; which one do you want to take?' They say, 'I'm brilliant at ICT. I don't need any ICT.' 'But do you need ICT for classroom practice?' 'Yes; maybe I'd better do a bit of that,' and so on and so forth.

With 200 students, I can do that. I can talk to every one of them and map out a pathway for them. When I worked at QUT, 1,500 came in every year. I would meet someone in the shoe shop, for example, and they would say, 'G'day Tania.' I would say, 'Who are you?' and they would say, 'I am in your psych class,' or whatever. So it is not the bits and pieces that are still being mandated by the Board of Teacher Registration that are important; it is where we want to take them. So CQU wants to make them look like this, Griffith is having them look like that and QUT wants them to look like this. In this way we have a diversified set of graduates, which is healthy. We are all being forced to take on the global issues and produce graduates of a particular type, and the work force will determine who are the most successful.

Mr SAWFORD—Am I reading you right? That is not new. You seem to be putting forward—and I am sympathetic because I happen to agree with it, but that does not necessarily make it right—a far more analytical approach to teacher education, where you identify the attributes. You seem to be arguing that the current situation is a synthesis approach, in terms of a whole list of attributes, but whether they fit into the jigsaw puzzle or not is problematical. Is that what you are saying?

Prof. Aspland—I do not think the jigsaw puzzle and the attributes go together.

Mr SAWFORD—That is not I am arguing: they do not.

Prof. Aspland—The current model is a jigsaw where everyone says, ‘You must have this and that’ and you hope like hell that you have got graduates. I am advocating that, with an attributes model, you actually articulate on a regular basis every five years.

Mr SAWFORD—That is not new, though.

Prof. Aspland—It is not new, but it does not happen.

Mr SAWFORD—I know. I understand that.

Prof. Aspland—All the work that Alan Luke does is not new. It is all a reinvention of very traditional thinking about teaching.

Mr SAWFORD—Why is it that in teacher education in particular we swing from one little frond to another little frond? Going back 40 years: some of those old CAEs actually taught analytical frameworks. That is what they called them; they did not call them some magic name. Some people were fortunate enough to be trained in that way. People are not trained that way these days.

Prof. Aspland—No. Hopefully they are educated not trained.

Mr SAWFORD—With the possible exception of Victoria University, which seems to have—

Prof. Aspland—Victoria?

Mr SAWFORD—Is it Victoria University? They seem to have very a strong partnerships model, not the same as CQU’s but similar.

Prof. Aspland—Victoria University has a fantastic model. CQU comes under a lot of flak from teacher educators saying that it is not rigorous enough. Probably the one thing that is dangerous in their model is that students can be inculcated or acculturated into an existing teaching profession ethos, whereas I would like to see them critique that ethos and decide how they position themselves in it. That is my only criticism of CQU. I think they have got it wrapped up. I think it is a great model. I think the teachers are happy with it, the students are happy with it and the teacher educators are happy with it. They are a triangulation; they are all working together towards the same goals. That is what I think an attributes based model can do. Your colleagues in the schools can say, ‘At USC we’re going to bring teaching profession people

into the university. We are going to give them an in-service course so that they can actually take up their label of accredited university tutors.' We do not want to call them supervisors, mentor teachers, workplace learners or prac supervisors. We want them to consider themselves our colleagues, as accredited university tutors, so that we are working from a shared language. They are teachers from nine to three or whatever it is and, when they come onto our campus or our students go into their schools, they will have university status as well as teaching status.

Mr SAWFORD—I want to swing over to something completely different. So many universities are doing teacher education or seem to be. Teacher education is seen by some as a bit of a cash cow. Is that true?

Prof. Aspland—I would never call it is cash cow, no. I think we are doing it hard compared to some other disciplines, if you are comparing us to other university disciplines. The only 'cash cowness' about it is the international market, but we are doing it hard.

Ms BIRD—I think the comment was that you bring a lot of cash in for the universities, but then it does not necessarily go to the faculty.

Prof. Aspland—Sorry; I misinterpreted what you said. At Edith Cowan University, in the superfaculties, that is true. Education brings in the cash.

Mr SAWFORD—It brings in a lot of money and a lot of it subsidises other things.

Prof. Aspland—We see about 25 per cent of the federal funding we get for workplace learning for prac. It goes into the university coffers first.

Mr SAWFORD—What is your view about that?

Prof. Aspland—I think it is wrong. I heard you ask Griffith about prac, and I do not want to be eavesdropping, but the sooner we get rid of prac the better. I am a strong union person, I am a member of a union, but prac is killing us. At QUT they pay three million bucks for prac. At USC, we are not privy to that agreement because we are brand new. We are trying to work around a memorandum of understanding where there is a win-win situation: they take our students, we give them some PD. It is very simple. But if we are forced to take up that prac supervision model—prac is a redundant concept. This is a paper that I will send you. Let us stop talking about prac; it is about practice teaching. Let us move into the discourse of workplace learning. Every other industry does it, and every other industry takes on young people and mentors them into the industry because that is the collegial thing to do. It is a win-win situation.

If you get a few duds, sure, it is bad news. But if the university is rigorous and keeps the duds out of the school sector and out of the learning sector, we have to say that practicum—learning to teach is certainly important, but students go out one day a week. They have embedded practices: they do community practice, they do community service, they work in learning communities before they finally get to a one-on-one situation where they are working with a teacher in a classroom as instructors. That is important, but it is only one small part of taking a person from being a preservice student and turning them into a professional teacher. Viv Eyers' paper on practicum is a killer; it should not have been released. It is just a regurgitation of what we have done for the last however many years and it is not looking forward at all. We really

need to talk about workplace learning and teachers and teacher education students and teacher educators working together under the guise of the principles of the CQU model. Partnership in a learning community is a win-win situation. I have got really strong views about practicum—

Mr SAWFORD—We understand that, Tania!

Prof. Aspland—We should not use the word.

Mr HENRY—I appreciate your passion in your presentation today. Whilst I found some elements of it a little contradictory, it is certainly very interesting. I particularly want to pick up on the issue of student teachers developing individual learning pathways. One of the criticisms I have of our education system is that we do not create individual learning pathways for our schoolchildren. To some extent you have addressed that in primary school, but it is even more important in secondary school, where the learning requirements of the individuals are quite significantly different. The standard classroom environment does not create a learning environment for many of these kids, in my view. If we can come up with a process that allows that to be addressed, then we will be starting to move forward beyond the 19th century in our educational processes. I do not mean to be critical of people in the system, but we have too many people in the system who are not thinking outside of the square. The square is their comfort zone and we need to do more about addressing that. One of the contradictory points I found difficult to understand was how you have got a son who is a qualified teacher and cannot teach reading and you have not investigated that.

Prof. Aspland—I have investigated it; don't worry! He is sick of me being in the university. I want to address a couple of things that you have raised. I do not like to personalise, but there are a couple of graduates from QUT who I have seen working in Woolies. I have asked them, 'Why aren't you out teaching?' They said, 'We can't stand teachers.' That is where I get this notion of a demoralised work force.

Mr HENRY—That comes through in your submission.

Prof. Aspland—I also want to talk about flexibility. The grad dip I am trying to get through the Board of Teacher Registration is a flexible pathway. You can do two, three or four semesters. You can start off by doing a straight secondary DipEd or a straight middle years DipEd. If you opt to, you can choose a third semester in either VET or early phase of learning. I am hoping that the secondary people will choose a third semester and do what I am calling the VET semester, which we are co-teaching with TAFE. Then you can do a fourth semester, if you choose, and you can stay on and do an internship and an action research project—so you spend a whole semester in a school.

Some will choose the two semesters—get in, get out—and, if they are physics or science or maths people, we will probably encourage them to get out after two semesters. But some will stay on, if they have had industry experience, and do this VET or this early phase semester and others will think, 'That'd be fantastic, spending a whole semester in a school.' It is a win-win situation. That is a flexible model; it is attributes based, with different pathways for different students. Do you think I can get that through the Board of Teacher Registration? They keep saying: 'But who's going to make the decision? What are you going to give them when they finish? How do you know?' It is just nearly impossible; I am at my wits' end, trying to say, 'For

goodness sake, let go of all that modernist thinking and get into the postmodern age.' These people who are coming in are global thinkers. They are learning 24/7 anyway without us. They are on the internet—

Ms BIRD—Which the students are doing in schools.

Prof. Aspland—Yes, which the students are doing. On Monday I said to these teachers that maybe these kids do not need to come to school, maybe all their learning happens outside the school classroom and they only come to school because they have to come to school, and they are very unhappy at school. That was a real downer for me, but I do not care because it really prompted a bit of thinking. So the notion of flexible pathways and the concept of contradiction I make absolutely no apology for. These are new ideas and I am trying to think them through. I like to say, 'never either/or but and.' You have to be individual and collaborative. You have to be flexible but have some core. You have to be different, but in a way you have to conform. I know that what I am saying is contradictory, but I make no apology for that because we are living in a postmodern time, so it is full of contradictions. I think we have to take up those contradictions and work them through. My thinking is not 100 per cent clear, but I know that when I put all these things into operation in an iterative way we will work through the challenges of the contradictions. So I am complimented by the fact that you said it was contradictory.

Mr HENRY—Part of that contradiction gets back to having a registration board and being opposed to that but also wanting to have a mandatory educational specification, if you like, for teachers in subject knowledge.

Prof. Aspland—I am not opposed to the BTR. I think a registration board in today's times is absolutely essential for quality.

Mr HENRY—You just argue that it should be flexible and responsive.

Prof. Aspland—Yes.

Mr HENRY—Unfortunately, by their nature registration boards do not tend to be that.

Prof. Aspland—No.

Ms BIRD—I would like to clarify something. The registration board has been here for 15 years; how do they deal with DipEd students from other states? Have they never accepted them?

Prof. Aspland—In the previous system they came in with provisional registration, and they are given five years to upgrade to a two-year program.

Ms BIRD—I am glad that I never wanted to work up here.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today, Professor Aspland. We will contact you if we need further information. If you would provide those materials that you have undertaken to give us as quickly as possible we would appreciate it. The secretariat will give you a proof copy of your evidence as it appears in the *Hansard*, and a copy of that will be posted on our web site.

Proceedings suspended from 3.12 pm to 3.26 pm

BROWN, Mr Bill, Chair, Queensland Consortium for Professional Learning in Education

COLE, Ms Marilyn, Member, Executive Committee Secretariat, Queensland Consortium for Professional Learning in Education

McFARLANE, Ms Lesley, Member representing the Queensland Teachers Union, Executive Committee, Queensland Consortium for Professional Learning in Education

CHAIR—Good afternoon. I welcome the Queensland Consortium for Professional Learning in Education. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I advise you that the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Mr Brown—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make an opening address.

Mr Brown—I would like to start with who we are, because I think we are a rather unique group of people. It is the only place that I have seen that actually draws together parents, professional associations, practising teachers, university deans and the employers, who sit around the table with the common purpose of improving professional learning for teachers. We are under the auspices of the Board of Teacher Registration but stay separate from it. Our only purpose for being is to work collaboratively around improving the quality of professional learning for teachers and other educators in the school system. That is who we are.

Over the last couple of years, we have deliberately taken the track of trying to work bottom up rather than top down because we have so many real teachers sitting around with us. We believe it is really important to listen to the story that they have and then make sure that the dean of education actually hears that and that the employers actually hear that. Irrespective of what the intention was, the reality is that this is what happens on the ground. Bringing those things together is pretty interesting. We have written a number of reports, and we have made you aware of those. The reports and the research we have done really seem to suggest to us that, no matter what we have learnt and what we write, when it comes to on-the-ground experience of teachers in professional learning, we do more of the same. So we plan for the short term. We do not have sustainable professional learning practices. What we have are initiatives which have new directions every time we come. So there is not much residual. It is what is new, what is different, and on we go. We do not really see that we have got sustainable learning practices as an agenda item anywhere.

The harder we get, the easier it is to focus on the individual teacher, so the research that talks about teachers making 40 per cent of the difference still leaves 60 per cent somewhere else. That compliance driven stuff, which looks at the individual impact, seems to be there. We are finding, with our research with the professional associations, that new knowledge is actually delivered and developed in the classroom with real people doing real stuff. In fact, other people and

researchers frequently codify that and can disseminate it, but there is a whole wealth of new knowledge being developed by teachers in classrooms as society changes and as the requirements change.

What we are seeing is that the forward-looking associations have changed the way they operate to actually provide that social learning support for teachers. Some have not. Some maintain an old guard, back door 'protect what we used to have' approach and operate in a way which I do not believe is any longer sustainable. Some of those drop off. The other thing is that we have a whole range of new types of organisations that come and go. You might call them 'communities of practice'. They have a lifespan. They have their ascendancy for a year or so—or whatever it is—and then they move on. That is not to say that they are not useful. But they are different. Trying to plug those into official strategies and structures is a bit difficult.

They believe that they make a significant contribution to the ongoing learning and knowledge base of teachers. They feel that they are not recognised and rewarded for that. Some of the research suggests that as we devolve funds to schools individually then organisations which go across schools find it very difficult. The person who is the president of the maths teachers association and who sits in a particular school finds it pretty hard to convince the principal that he ought to be altruistic enough to fund them. Having associations that go state wide and having funds increasingly going directly to schools is interesting. There is a bit of a tension there.

One of the things we are talking about as well is leadership. When we talk about leadership these days we tend to focus on the principal. We are of the opinion that these professional associations provide a multilayered level of leadership and that in actual fact they are struggling. Nobody gives those organisations time to train people so that they can be put in charge of and made responsible for quite a large organisation. That training is not particularly well focused at the moment. We have people my age still leading things and bringing through the succession planning. Bringing through the leadership is very difficult. There is a need to look at the leadership capabilities, which are not what they used to be. We are talking about communities of practice and networking organisations—things that operate out of heart rather than head. They require a voluntary organisational leadership rather than a bureaucratic one. That is what our research would say if we looked at that.

In terms of our position, because of who we are we would like to suggest that professional learning is a right and a responsibility; it is not something that teachers sit back and get. If we are going to change the way we do things, sure we need some help and resources to do that. But it is the teacher's responsibility, as well. If that is a responsibility then those new organisations need to be encouraged and supported, and over an extended period of time, not on an ad hoc basis for whatever is the flavour of the month activity. That seems to me to be unsustainable. If you are the CDEI association, there is not a lot of time when you are the highest priority in the nation for funding. However, there might be some real leadership that you need to exert around learning for kids and professional knowledge for kids as well. That is what we are saying. In short, we are not changing teacher behaviour by this ad hoc, one-off stuff. We are not doing that.

Ms BIRD—It is short term.

Mr Brown—It is short term. It is not sustainable. It has no fabric across the whole thing. In order for us to go down a pathway and build a culture that provides support for taking

responsibility for your own learning, that has to change. So what do we suggest needs to be done? I will ask Lesley to talk you through that.

Ms McFarlane—One of the things would be to look at the real funding needs of teacher professional associations. They have for the last 30 years been responsible for the majority of professional development in Australia. They keep on keeping on, no matter what the flavour of the month is. The science teachers association keeps offering professional development opportunities for teachers to teach science. It might not be the priority of the teacher employers but they keep on keeping on.

They need to be part of the equation when there is any program for professional development across Australia. I know that, when we had the NPDP program back in the mid-nineties, there was a requirement that certain people be on the state committees for the management of the federal funding of those programs, and professional associations got a couple of the spots in that. It meant that there was real collaboration in the way that those programs were managed. I think you get a better outcome when you have the range of providers and stakeholders represented at that level rather than when it is just the employers that get a bucket of money and give it out as they see fit. What you do not need to do is ignore a big part of the profession when you are conceptualising the management of large amounts of funding that come from the federal government in particular.

One of our criticisms arises from large-scale change or attempts at large-scale change within the education department. For instance, when there is a new syllabus that is to be implemented, there is a big flurry of activity around making teachers aware of the new program to be delivered. When there is a new syllabus, there is a bit of in-service that goes on to make teachers aware that there is a new syllabus, the structure of it, the strands and that sort of thing, but often that is as far as it goes. We see that the awareness of an innovation is just step one. Being aware of something and giving someone a book and saying, 'This is the new program to teach,' does not guarantee that change happens. Teachers make an attempt to do it but, if you really want to effect change, we see that there are four stages. The first is the awareness of the innovation, the new syllabus or whatever. The second is professional development to develop the teachers' knowledge base in that area, so, if there is a new science syllabus, for instance, and there are new concepts in it, there needs to be a concerted attempt to help teachers learn that new knowledge base that has to be dealt with in the classroom. The third stage is the translation of that new knowledge into practice. What is the pedagogy? What is successful? What are the ways to teach that? It is no good for the teacher to just know it; there has to be experimentation with the sorts of pedagogy that is effective in the classroom. The fourth is the provision in the school for planning to fully implement that. Those four stages are not necessarily linear; some of those things can be done at the same time, but we see them as four definite stages. As I said before, often the awareness of the new syllabus or the awareness of the innovation is what happens most and the rest is sort of left up to the schools.

In Queensland, for instance, the education department has one person in each of the subject areas for the whole state who has to try to manage something or other. You need consultants to help schools and teachers and to provide in-service or you can draw upon your professional associations, who have lots of expertise in their membership.

In Queensland those people cannot be paid for doing this professional development work in their own time. There is something in one of the acts of parliament that says they cannot be on the payroll twice. If they are on the payroll as a teacher, they cannot be paid again with money provided by the education department to provide in-service. People get tired of doing things on weekends, weekend after weekend. There is a difficulty there. I know some people who have resigned in order to take up their own consultancies because there are so many schools looking for people to assist them. That one is a bit of a hitch. Anyway, the main point I was making was that making people aware of an innovation or a new syllabus does not go very far toward changing their practice.

Mr Brown—To sum up, from our point of view most of the innovation these days is driven by broad principle and idea. The practicality of doing that on Monday with 35 little darlings sitting in front of you is left up to the profession. That is fine, but really what we do need is that workplace focus on implementation, because that is where the rubber hits the road. That is where things happen. That is where the adjustments have to be made between the kid, what I know and what the research might say. Some triumvirate of thinking around those three things needs to occur.

Really, the informal systems of the professional associations and the new forms of networks that are arriving are, I believe, a rich source that we are not tapping into. There is no way of actually mining those to get quick feedback loops into policy decisions about intended and unintended outcomes of what we all thought was a good idea at the time. That capacity to actually utilise those, harness them and farm them, if I might be so bold as to say that, is a trick that some professional associations have learned to do internally but they have not learned to do it back to policy makers in a significant, quick and effective way. I do not think we are overstating the case to say that, if the profession is to look after itself, give them some help and use what they know rather than waiting for some expert advice which is all well intended but really has to be contextualised on a local level. I think that is where the future of continuing professional learning lies—in the local context and with support but with the capacity to learn in social groups provided by such things as the professional associations and networks. It is a very strong thing in business and I do not think we have learned to play it in the educational sector.

Ms CORCORAN—I have two questions. They might actually be the same question so I will ask them both at once and you can deal with them. Firstly, apart from Lesley’s comment about teachers being somehow prevented from being paid twice out of the same bucket, which is a practical thing that needs to be overcome perhaps, are there other practical steps that we need to be aware of that can be taken to use the professional associations in the role in which you have described? Where do we go from here? We hear the problem. Do you have suggestions? Also, we have heard a number of times today and leading up to today about perceptions of teachers as professionals. I think it may be amongst teachers themselves—they think they are not seen to be professionals, whatever ‘professionals’ means, and this is a problem. I guess my question is: do you think that is the case? Are teachers seen by society as professionals, in your view? Does it matter? If it does, what do we do? Those two questions might be linked, I think.

Mr Brown—Pragmatically, first, I think the leadership issue of professional associations needs to be seriously addressed. If we are going to train leaders, we train these people and we engage them in that training process. But we do not train them in ways to make them better bureaucrats; we train them in the soft skills of getting people socially engaged in their learning.

Underneath that, though, there are some pragmatics. The pragmatics are around voluntary organisations trying to maintain standards of probity around funds and actually managing their dollars. In actual fact, people who provide funding for professional associations require high levels of compliance and financial accountability. But these are voluntary organisations where people do things—for example, act as treasurer—on a voluntary basis. Personally, I cannot understand why we do not have one treasurer and seven associations and outsource the thing, for goodness sake. However, that is a little hard for some of these people at the moment.

It is that sort of thing that is needed in the mechanics of leadership and I think it is a really important level of leadership to have if we are going to take the profession forward. These people do not necessarily want to be principals; they want to be where they are. They do need leadership skills. They do need some pragmatics around the hard-nosed issues and they do need high-level accountability around financial accounting, which they seem to do on a voluntary basis. The other question—

Ms McFarlane—Can I answer that?

Mr Brown—Yes.

Ms McFarlane—You are saying, ‘Where to from here?’ I have had experience with a professional association or two, but one of them in particular is eligible for federal funding from the Office for Women. We have been funded a couple of times for capacity building projects. That has been really effective. That is the sort of leadership stuff that Bill was talking about. The other thing that that particular association has done effectively has been to enter into a partnership with the major employer here, Education Queensland, to deliver projects in partnership. Often it means we do projects in our own time and the education department provides some funding—but that is good. If you have to fly to various places in Queensland you cannot do it without some funding support because the registration costs for teachers who are out of Brisbane, in particular, become too expensive. They are a couple of practical things that I have personal experience of seeing work very well.

Mr Brown—On the topic of professionalism, I think that what has driven me in my career has been the attitude: ‘Yes, we should be,’ and ‘No, we are not.’ The percentages I have always used are 20, 60 and 20. Twenty per cent of teachers are so good you should just get out of their road because they will do anything, anywhere and anyhow to look after kids. Sixty per cent need practical examples. They say, ‘Show me. Show me it works. Help me. Give me some reasons.’ The final 20 per cent should perhaps be mechanics. I am serious about that. In sorting those out, it is interesting to go to a particular setting and find that those percentages shift with leadership. When we move the 60 per cent up to the top 20 per cent we have a vibrant, alive school where the local community believes that teachers are professionals. When we have the bottom 20 per cent dragging the 60 per cent down we end up with the perception that teachers are technicians who do whatever they say.

Looking to the future, I have no doubt in my mind that we do not need technicians. We do not need people who have the book in their left hand and say, ‘This is how it works.’ What we do know is that—looking to the medical profession for evidence based practice and some of those things there—we need better access to quality research in understandable ways for people to use in the local context. They are smart enough to use it but they do not have the time to go and sift

through the competing sets of evidence around educational issues and say, ‘If you prove A, I will prove B—just give me a long enough.’ If you look at medical research, it talks about the impact of decisions A, B and C. I think it is about time that we had access to that level of sophistication of evidence at a local level, because that is where it has to make a difference. It has to be about these kids, in these contexts, with these resources and not about some broad generalisation that says, ‘Phonics is a better way of teaching reading than something else.’

Ms McFarlane—Professional associations have a real role in translating that research into practice and sifting through the research, as Bill said. Academics tend to do research and write for each other in their academic journals, whereas professional association journals tend to translate that research into what it means in the classroom for classroom teachers and schools.

Ms BIRD—Thank you. I found that really interesting. I spent a bit of time teaching at TAFE in New South Wales and I was devastated that they changed the system we had during the time I was there—the old ‘school system’. You had your faculty and campus based managers who were administrators but you also had the statewide school. For me it was for communications teaching. It filled that role that you are talking about, but then they changed the model, disbanded schools and went to local management based things. For a bit of time I was a history teacher. That was a long time ago. I remember the History Teachers Association with a lot of affection. It is really interesting to have your perspective. I appreciate tremendously that you saw the opportunity to contact us. This is a little bit to the heart of the issue of professionals: do people now pay a fee to be a member of the association?

Ms McFarlane—They certainly do. That is the main source of funding for associations to operate.

Ms BIRD—Is there resistance to that?

Mr Brown—What we are finding is that the professional associations that have lasted have been secondary based and subject specific. Once you try to translate that down to a primary teacher who needs to understand eight key learning areas, theoretically—it is a bit of a tall ask, for me—they actually need to access that information, yet they do not through the professional associations. Some of our research indicates some pretty hot issues around the primary teacher in terms of providing access to specialist knowledge in ways that are accessible to the school as opposed to just the individual. In my view, the professional associations have not quite learned to link across. I believe there is a new skill required in networking across. We have protected our own—that is, the maths teachers have done things for maths teachers and so forth.

Some of our members have tried to set up new organisations around the network community of practice model as opposed to a bureaucratic thing. That is interesting but difficult for them. I think the logic in some of our research for associations is more members, more dollars in paid fees, more opportunity to do things and more power as an advocate on the basis of numbers. I guess where we are coming from is to say, ‘The person sitting on my right is pretty good at this.’ Networked organisations do not need to work that way. If one can leverage up those strategies then perhaps the influence can be greater than just numbers. There is a skill base around that which I do not believe people have understood or harnessed. That would be my observation.

Ms McFarlane—I suppose Bill is referring to some of the associations that are not subject based in the communities of practice such as the Middle Years of Schooling Association. I am involved with both the Australian Curriculum Studies Association and the Association of Women Educators. They are cross-curricula things and not just focused on one subject area.

Ms BIRD—You highlighted the issue of IT in one of your reports. Have we moved beyond the need to train most teachers in using IT as opposed to utilising IT? Should I be hopeful? Are we a fair way down that track or we still mainly just using IT?

Ms McFarlane—It is a difficult question. I would say that most teachers do not have their own computer at work. There is an NIQTSL project going on at the moment about leadership and ICT, so it will be interesting to see what that comes up with. I think what teachers need are good models of practice assisting kids to use ICTs in the classroom. It is only in this financial year's budget that the department here is going to trial giving 1,500 teachers their own laptops. Up until this point, that has not happened. When you are not even using it yourself it is hard to feel comfortable experimenting with things—

Mr Brown—Let alone using it for my own professional learning.

Mr SAWFORD—Who does the professional learning? If you put out 1,500 laptops—big deal—that is going to guarantee absolute zilch. Is there a consultancy here in Queensland? Was there one and there is no longer one? Who assumes the prime responsibility for professional development? Does that come from an individual teacher, a principal or a teacher education institution? If, as a science teacher, I found a spectacular way to get a science program across, what would I do?

Mr Brown—Resign and sell it commercially!

Mr SAWFORD—So you do not have a consultancy within the department?

Mr Brown—I think we are in a delightful—

Mr SAWFORD—Have you ever had one?

Mr Brown—Over the last three or four years, things have moved concerning consultants in districts and regions. I think they have just been withdrawn—in the EQ system, anyhow.

Ms McFarlane—The department has five people in central office in different areas.

Mr SAWFORD—What are they doing?

Ms McFarlane—I do not know really. They are responsible for the whole state.

Mr SAWFORD—So you do not have a consultancy?

Ms McFarlane—No.

Mr SAWFORD—Thank you.

Mr Brown—I think the other thing is that, here, QSA has taken some responsibility for the dissemination and first-phase implementation of syllabus documentation, so that remains a little debate between—

Mr SAWFORD—The question is serious. How would that teacher go on and do that?

Mr Brown—In the best of all possible worlds, that teacher would be a member of an association. That association would then probably use it to provide a service to the members, and they would probably charge for that, to make money so they can produce the materials and engage the people. That is probably where it would go. That is in the best of all possible worlds. From there it may jump the fence to the official in-service curriculum but I honestly cannot recall an example of that.

Ms McFarlane—And that teacher and that school might apply for some funding backup—that is provided mostly by the federal government. But it is all very ad hoc. You have to keep your antenna out—

Mr SAWFORD—It is almost as if it misses the placement of student teachers and teachers doing teacher education in schools, isn't it?

Ms McFarlane—Yes.

Mr Brown—I think my passion and my experience is that that is where teachers really listen. They listen to that example, particularly where the teacher has taken the trouble to do that for a couple of years and get some results on the board, and is not just saying, 'This is a good idea.' It is, 'This is how it worked in my school with my kids doing my stuff.' I have to say teachers listen to that. The way they change their practice depends on the credibility of the person telling them. And credibility does not come because you happen to be called the chairman of the consortium. That is a waste of space in terms of credibility for teachers.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—You might be interested to know that in my home state of Tasmania—it may also be the case in other states—there is a mandated requirement for teachers under the state award. A wage rise was linked to a requirement in the award that there would be either three or six full days—I forget which; it could be six half-days—of professional learning. Probably your paper and your research would back up the notion that that mandating and linking it to a wage rise have almost guaranteed its mediocrity. I have had feedback from teachers and I know from when I was a teacher that the disappointing thing about it was that it was run in the very way that the worst classrooms are.

Mr Brown—That is right: 'We have done it. Tick it.'

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—It is quite insulting to teachers, to be forced to sit through that. I reckon we should move away from that. By the way, do you know if it is mandated in other states?

Mr Brown—What is happening in Queensland with the change to the legislation is that teachers will have to provide evidence of continuing professional learning to maintain their registration. That will occur here.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Yes, but you would not think that it should be part of an award, would you?

Mr Brown—If we are not careful, it will become a procedural tick-and-flick in the box to say, 'Yes, we attended the five hours. We did not do anything and we did not change our practice. But, boy, did we do the five hours.' I am sorry, but the debate then runs to how we count it and how we look at it—all of that silly business—as opposed to saying, 'Really did we change people's behaviour?' That is what we are after.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Do you think that if we change the approach to professional learning teachers themselves, perhaps with their professional associations, will have the capacity to develop, follow up and take advantage of learning opportunities?

Mr Brown—I will go back to my 20-60-20. I think the days of one size fits all are gone. Why are we using the same strategy for the bottom 20 per cent of people who are not going to do anything unless required to—and we do have them—as we do for the 20 per cent who, when you use that strategy with them, get very angry and then withdraw? I am not sure why we are using the same strategy across the spectrum.

Ms McFarlane—There are great examples in the schools. The schools are jumping out of their socks because they have good leadership, they access funding from wherever they can get it and they give teachers choice and time to plan together. It is because of good leadership.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We may contact you, if we need further information. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of the proceedings and a copy of that transcript will be posted on the web site. Is it the wish of the committee that the submission from the Queensland Consortium for Professional Learning in Education, together with any attachments, be accepted as evidence and authorised for publication? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Hartsuyker**, seconded by **Mr Henry**):

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

Committee adjourned at 4.01 pm