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Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING

**Reference: Teacher education**

THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2005

CANBERRA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**  
**Thursday, 8 September 2005**

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

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

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

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

Specifically, the Inquiry should:

1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses.
2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
3. Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition.
4. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting and rewarding education faculty members.
5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses (including the teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation) and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.
6. Examine the interaction and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines.
7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:
  - (i) teach literacy and numeracy;
  - (ii) teach vocational education courses;
  - (iii) effectively manage classrooms;
  - (iv) successfully use information technology;
  - (v) deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families;
  - (vi) deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities;
  - (vii) achieve accreditation; and
  - (viii) deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments.
8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers.
9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training.
10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.
11. Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administrations.

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

**WITNESSES**

**ARNOLD, Dr Stephen, Head, School of Education (ACT), Australian Catholic University ..... 1**

**BEATTIE, Mr Sam, President, Signadou Student Association, Australian Catholic University ..... 1**

**CARROL, Ms Janet, Student, Bachelor of Education (Primary) Graduate Entry, Australian Catholic University..... 1**

**DANIELS, Ms Rita, Principal, St Clares College, Canberra, and Representative, Australian Catholic University..... 1**

**EDWARDS, Ms Fiona, Student, Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary), Australian Catholic University..... 1**

**EMMITT, Professor Marie Therese, Dean, Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University ..... 1**

**GAFFNEY, Dr Michael, Head, Education Services, Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn, and Representative, Australian Catholic University ..... 1**



[9.41 am]

**ARNOLD, Dr Stephen, Head, School of Education (ACT), Australian Catholic University**

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**EMMITT, Professor Marie Therese, Dean, Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University**

**GAFFNEY, Dr Michael, Head, Education Services, Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn, and Representative, Australian Catholic University**

**CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)**—I declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training into teacher education. I now call representatives of the Australian Catholic University to give evidence. Welcome. May I remind you that public hearings are recorded by Hansard and that the record is made available to the public through the parliament's web site. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mr Beattie**—I also represent the Bachelor of Education as a student.

**Dr Gaffney**—The Education Services Division of our local Catholic education system has a very close working relationship with the local campus of ACU.

**Ms Carrol**—My original degree was in economics and psychology and, until going to university, I worked in business and marketing.

**Ms Edwards**—Before changing my career, I was a journalist.

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

**Prof. Emmitt**—No. I have left in a few extra papers in case they are of interest to the panel.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. I now invite you to make some introductory remarks and I understand that you would like to make a presentation.

**Prof. Emmitt**—If it is relevant, I can show some overheads of our primary course, which I suppose is our major course. But it depends on what your questions and issues are.

**CHAIR**—Please make your presentation.

**Prof. Emmitt**—Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before the panel. As I said, I do not want to make changes to our submission. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to affirm our commitment to excellence in teacher education—in particular, in teacher education for schools of the future. I believe that we are working towards what we need to do for the future. Our graduates are well received and well acknowledged in Australia and internationally. Our students across Australia can get jobs very easily overseas. But it is a new world and we need to be working towards that.

As we have students from three of our preservice programs here today, I think it would be best to focus on preservice teacher education. In many ways that seems to be the area of most interest. Today you can see the diversity of our students. Sam has come from an early childhood course at the Canberra Institute of Technology into primary teacher education, which is our basic four-year program. Fiona is in Dip Ed secondary, which is our new program. We particularly wanted to have Mike and Rita here because of a very strong collaborative model we are working towards; I believe that we need to expand that model across teacher education. Janet is in our graduate entry primary program. These students cover our three major preservice programs.

We have people here from Canberra, but I am really speaking from a national perspective. Our submission indicates that the university works across six campuses; the faculty of education is on five of them. We cover a diverse range of campuses: Ballarat, which is a very small regional area; Canberra, which is a small base for us; Strathfield in Sydney, which, as far as education goes, is a very large campus for us; Melbourne; and Brisbane.

Our university is a little different from others; in fact, it is unique. Established in 1991, it is a new university that has a very strong history in teacher education from its antecedent institutions. It is Catholic and it is public, which represents an interesting challenge. It is open to all. We prepare teachers for all sectors: Catholic, independent and government. The university's catholicity drives its mission. It has a particular perspective on a strong sense of social justice and responsibility as well as concern for others. That can be seen coming through our courses. Our courses have strong ethical and values dimensions. I do not want to say that other faculties of education do not have those dimensions, because I think a hallmark of faculties of education is that they are about making a difference, particularly around those who are marginalised.

As for our success as educators, we still have a long way to go. To some extent, we are failing to achieve the educational outcomes that are necessary for children who are marginalised and Indigenous. One of the benefits of the Australian Catholic University's faculty of education is that the values it holds are held by the rest of the university, so it is much easier for us to push ahead in that direction. On the Australian scene, we are a very large faculty of education—probably the second or third largest. We have over 5,000 students enrolled in education, with the large majority of them in our preservice courses. We expect over 1,200 to graduate from



preservice courses at the end of this year—and, to my mind, it is a huge responsibility for us in ensuring that we are preparing excellent graduates.

Today I want to share examples of practices on different campuses that I think are consistent with a collaborative model of teacher education—collaborative with the school systems and the schools—that have a balanced focus and a wide coverage. At the moment, one of our challenges seems to be that teacher education is meant to cover everything that schools need to cover in preparing people for everything. In present times that is an impossibility, so the issue is how to come up with a balanced program.

I will go back and share a little about our primary program. Over the last 18 months we have been reviewing all our preservice programs, so very much in our thinking is how best to cope with today's challenges—to cover the discipline knowledge that we believe teachers need to have; the pedagogical knowledge they need to have around curriculum, assessment and classroom management; and how to teach things in the broader areas of professional practice. The university works as a place that does some of those things well, but some things it cannot do well. That is why we need the collaborative model. In particular, they need to be in schools to get a broader view of how they operate in total, not just how to take lessons. In one sense, our previous programs focused on classroom practice as in the taking of lessons rather than on the broader role of what a school has to do.

One of the models I will share is what we call the 'teaching-learning consortium', where our students spend a significant amount of time working in schools on school based projects—that is, projects negotiated with the schools. Five or six students are allocated to a school and they work with the school on particular topics. They get the time to do this work by integrating three subjects and covering different areas. That has been a strong model on the Strathfield campus. This video segment gives you examples of teachers and students talking about that program. That model will be expanded into every campus that has our preservice program. There has been much success with that.

Another very strong collaborative model is our graduate diploma secondary for both Canberra and Shepparton. Both programs began only this year, so they are very fresh in our minds. Neither of them would have been able to commence or be maintained without the support of the Catholic Education Office—in other words, without the support of the system. At Shepparton, this program is taught at a secondary college. Staff from that school and the region are involved in teaching in the program as well as staff from Ballarat and Melbourne campuses. That has been a very strong collaborative base. It is a community owned program and that has worked well.

Here in Canberra—I can get Stephen, Mike and Rita to say something about this later—it is mostly a different model. Most of it is taught on campus, but students spend a lot of time in schools. Staff in those schools act as mentors and work through the different specialist curriculum areas. Rita is the principal of one of our key schools where that happens. Fiona is part of that program and has been working out in the school. They can share more information about how that has worked.

Another key program we are expanding is what we call our 'community engagement program'. In our third year, the students—again this has been at Strathfield but is expanding across all programs—spend three weeks working in a community agency. The major reason for

that is to allow students to experience a totally different environment. They get to understand diversity in a much broader way and they have their values and attitudes challenged. Our classrooms these days are very diverse. The challenge for our teachers is to cater for that diversity. That again is a highly successful and challenging program.

Another area of challenge for us—and we do not have all the answers—is our commitment to teacher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. At Strathfield and in Brisbane, we have courses that are based on our programs but taught in a different mode for the primary and secondary diplomas, which articulate to the Bachelor of Education. Their being financially viable is a huge problem and, if we have the opportunity, I will share some of those issues. Currently we have over 200 students doing these courses but in an intensive mode.

That probably covers the key issue I wanted to speak about. I could go through our concerns and issues. I suppose a key issue would be getting the resources to do what we want to do—for the universities and for the schools. If we want to work in a collaborative partnership, the schools must be resourced to take on an expanded teacher education role. You would know that the workload for teachers has intensified incredibly; the complexities and demands have increased as much as they have for universities. They need to be resourced if we want more out in the schools.

With our resources, there is another big issue. In teacher education, we should be modelling best practice. In many cases, I do not believe that we are. With the current financial structures it tends to be pushed towards the lecture mode, which is not the most effective way of modelling the range of teaching pedagogies we should be using. A conference in the middle of the year was addressed by a researcher from Stanford University, who talked about the actual practice skills—the real skills—of teaching and how we best teach those. She said that in the university sector we have not done a lot of that. You really need to be working with small groups, unpacking the different aspects of a teaching practice and then getting people to practise it in a supportive environment. You need small groups for that.

That researcher presented an interesting study of what other professions that deal with people around human growth and transformation where it depends on relationships do in their training. She looked at professions different from those we normally compare teaching with—for example, training for the clergy and for clinical psychologists. It was quite interesting to see the sorts of things she was able to show and the sorts of pedagogies being used to train different clergy to read the gospels or to speak in certain ways. In our programs we do not give our students that sort of opportunity to have in-depth understanding of certain practices. It ends up as trial and error, and in many cases out in the classroom. I think that is probably all I need to say at the moment. If you want me to talk to a program, I can, but it is open to you at this stage.

**CHAIR**—We will move to questions. You have talked about resources. Do you want to quantify that in a financial sense? You are obviously saying that there is a shortfall in resources. Where do the dollars need to go?

**Prof. Emmitt**—One of the biggest concerns has been with the way the clustered models or the weighting for different types of units does not acknowledge the expense, particularly of our professional experience programs for teaching. With the way most universities work—particularly ours, at any rate—previously education units were qualified with a 1.3 weighting

and the funding was distributed that way. With the extra funds that came in supposedly for the practicum, that weighting was raised to 1.4 for us. You look at nursing as 1.6 and so on. So the pie is carved up in different ways. Going to 1.4 does not cover the costs we have for the way we teach now, let alone teaching the way we want to teach. It goes towards covering the payments for schools. Payment for teachers for a day is minimal—around the low 20s—and there are certainly moves to raise that. We are struggling to pay what we are paying now. I do not want to say that teachers do not deserve everything they get. It is just that, when you look at engineering, there is a much higher weighting. I think I might have said to Rod one day that there is a higher weighting for labs and things like that—fair enough. Our labs are the schools and we are not being weighted appropriately for that. If we want a better job done, the weighting for teacher education has to change.

**CHAIR**—You talk about your 1.4 weighting. What do you think it should be in an ideal world?

**Prof. Emmitt**—To me, it should be the same as engineering or whatever. That would be one way of equating it. We are never going to get that ideal world because the cake is never going to be big enough for all of us. It depends on priorities there. One bit would be that the universities do not get all of that when we look at how schools are funded for teacher education. That is another way of looking at it. One of the reasons we have had minimal changes with any of our inquiries into teacher education, I think, is because of the tensions between federal and state jurisdictions and responsibilities.

**CHAIR**—As far as the dollars going to teachers to remunerate them, we have seen models in evidence previously where the students go and become part of the school community and actually assist the school. Do you see some non-cash way we could help teachers? Perhaps we could remunerate them more but also provide for the students to provide assistance to the teacher in a practical sense and help them with their duties so that the student is of assistance rather than being seen as a burden as perhaps some may see them?

**Prof. Emmitt**—We are doing that in many ways. The TLC, the Teaching Learning Consortium, we operate has the students out there working with the teachers and it is not a paid type of practicum. At all our different campuses our students go out as literacy helpers or numeracy helpers. So they are out in the schools having more experience and we do not pay for that. For the internship in the final years teachers are not being paid but we still have to pay for 80-odd days at any rate. So yes, we are trying to help.

But I believe that for a collaborative model or the best program we still need the experts out in the schools to be seen and acknowledged and have the resources to mentor in a rich way how to do things better in teacher education. It is not always about money. I do not know that it is necessarily about money—Rita and Mike might want to say something different from that—but, rather, the time, and the schools need the rooms. Ideally, we would need a room where you could have small groups or a mini group of five, 10, 15 or whatever students working with expert teachers in the schools. Also, you need the time afterwards. So I think it is more about time and those sorts of resources than straight cash. By the time this money is taxed, the teachers get a pittance. It is more about the acknowledgment and the resources to do the job.

**CHAIR**—Do you see the amount of interface being achieved through those measures you have just mentioned as optimal? Do you think it should be greater?

**Prof. Emmitt**—I think that with the time we are spending the balance is not a bad one. I still believe that we need to do many things in the university to set up a bigger framework and give time for critical reflection on the input in lots of ways. It is about the resourcing of it, and the nature of it need to be changed. The times are all okay, but it is the nature of it.

**Mr SAWFORD**—You mentioned the many inquiries there have been. Someone has told us that there have been 89.

**Prof. Emmitt**—There would have been. I have been in teacher education for a long time.

**Mr SAWFORD**—That says something.

**Prof. Emmitt**—It does.

**Mr SAWFORD**—It means that no-one has been able to spell out what needs to be done or that it has been spelt out in such a way that no-one understands it or that it has been spelt out in such a way that state or federal governments refuse to act upon it. Maybe it is a combination of all three.

**Prof. Emmitt**—Yes, but certainly the last!

**Mr SAWFORD**—From our experience thus far on this committee it is certainly the first two as well. We will have a look at all of those recommendations all put together as a committee. Our secretariat will do that and we will have a couple of days here in Canberra, because I think we need to get a drift of where they all are and see them in one place. But in terms of anything educational, if you cannot answer the ‘why’ question first, I always get a little sceptical about what the next part is. When I read your submission I get a little confused in the sense that you have an inquiry based approach—that is what it says in here. I would have thought you would have had a belief system that would have directed what you were doing. I am a bit confused about that.

The other part—and this is in a reference to inservice teacher education—is that there is a sentence that states:

Through study, teachers have the opportunity to reflect on and be more analytical about the relationship between theory and practice and move beyond the functional/technician stage.

My experience is that if a teacher cannot get to the functional technician stage, they do not get to any other stage. Also, with teacher education—and there is a reference to it on page 2, which I do not disagree with; I think it is correct—there is the ‘reconceptualisation of the relationship between universities and schools’. Then it goes on to talk about teachers being everything. I have never seen a teacher able to do that in my life. I think it is impossible. If you put those expectations on teachers to be everything and all things to all people, you will never get anywhere.

The fourth point I want to make is that there are a lot of excuses—or they come across to me as excuses—as to why teacher education is not working. But prior to that, there was an implication that there is resentment, as I understand it, of the continuing criticism of teacher education and of teachers in general. That is the perception I think teachers are getting. They feel as though they are being unfairly attacked. Yet in the same way you bag teacher education in here as well by saying that there are a lot of failings.

I have four questions. The first goes to belief. Shouldn't that be driving teacher education courses, particularly in a Catholic university? Second, don't you have to reach the functional technician stage before you can do anything else, and doesn't that have an impact on the way you structure teacher education? Third, teachers cannot do all that is expected in a curriculum. I am talking particularly about primary—the expectations on primary teachers are just ridiculous. We talk about collaboration, yet we have one teacher operating with 30 kids. The fourth is that the teaching profession is so critical of itself and that is partly the reason for it being perceived so badly in the community.

**Prof. Emmitt**—Where do I start?

**Mr SAWFORD**—Start with 'why'. Why have we gone away from a rationale based or a philosophical based or a belief based beginning to teacher education? Why have we done that?

**Prof. Emmitt**—Do you think we have?

**Mr SAWFORD**—Yes.

**Prof. Emmitt**—Okay, you think we have gone away from that.

**Mr SAWFORD**—You have said it in your submission and so have many other people.

**Prof. Emmitt**—If I say that we want to go to working on an inquiry base, that does not mean there is not a belief system. That is my point. One of my overheads, which I have left in the folder, refers to the belief systems that we see underpinning our preservice courses—so that fits there. Any course is framed by a whole range of things and has a pedagogy, so the pedagogy is inquiry based. I want our students to own what they need to be learning. That is not to say we do not have strong parameters for where we are going. There is certainly a very strong belief system underpinning our program, much of it around teaching being about relationships. Teaching is about having knowledge about things. Teaching is about believing that you can make a difference, that all students can learn and that it is your responsibility to ensure that that happens. So it is a whole lot of things.

As for your comment around the functionality bit—this would be a belief system too—yes, but it is not an either/or situation. We want our students to have this bigger framework of lifelong learning as a teacher and then also to develop certain skills so they can function as a beginning teacher. One of the problems within the sector is the point you made about too much being expected of everyone. We have many different groups saying what has to be achieved by the time someone starts. If we are going to have a truly collaborative model, we need to have a shared understanding of what it is that we want for a beginning teacher. As a dean of a faculty that goes across four different jurisdictions, it is very obvious to me that we have different

pressures in each state and more things are getting pushed into teacher education. We do not get teacher education registration or accreditation unless we can show we have a unit on special ed here and something else there. That ends up making it more bitsy and not perhaps as in-depth as it should be.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Should we say no to some of those things?

**Prof. Emmitt**—We try at different times but, if you want your course accredited and your students registered to be able to get a job, you try to jump hurdles.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Maybe—not just now—someone else might raise the question of accreditation and we will come to that a bit later. But perhaps you might have some recommendations as to what we ought to be thinking about in terms of accreditation.

**Prof. Emmitt**—I would be very supportive of a national registration and—

**Mr SAWFORD**—All that.

**Prof. Emmitt**—All that being very much there. The other comment was about excuses and criticisms of teacher education.

**Mr SAWFORD**—That is right, yes.

**Prof. Emmitt**—I was very conscious of writing and even thinking today of not coming across too negatively because our staff across all our faculties in education are committed and passionate. But it is a difficult sector. Tertiary ed, full stop, is a very tough area at the moment and faculties of education are probably suffering the hardest. That is the reality. I do not want you to see it as an excuse. I would still say that our students are going out as well prepared, or better prepared, than they ever have been before. When I talk to heads of systems—the Catholic Education Office, principals and others—they are happy with the graduates coming out, and I think Mike and Rita can say something about that.

**Mr SAWFORD**—We can confirm that as well.

**Prof. Emmitt**—That is right, yes. I think we are frustrated in that we know there are better ways of doing it, and we have known that for many years, but we are doing it only in pockets and not as a mainstream.

**Mr SAWFORD**—We are about a quarter of the way through the submissions and we get the impression that there are people who have broken the nexus, have jumped the next part, are clearly stating rationale and pedagogy and are clearly moving to a new paradigm. There are other people who seem to be struggling in the current situation. Then there are people who seem to put out just a confused message; the stuff you read about them is not coherent. What they are on about should jump off the page at you. That is my view as an educator. I think it should be very coherent. Much of the information we read is not coherent. There is confusion between the belief system, the pedagogy, the use of resources and technology and how you assess and evaluate. Is part of the problem that they do not fit together? I see that Janet is nodding. Janet, would you like to make a comment on that?

**Ms Carrol**—I do not have a faculty perspective; I have a student's perspective. We do courses where we can clearly see something that will make us a good teacher and we are being well prepared—theoretical courses as well as practical courses. Then there are other courses that we suffer through, to be honest. But just to pick up on what Marie was saying, nine times out of 10 there are 100 students in our classes and the only effective way to deliver the message is by the lecturer standing up and talking at us. There is no time for discussion. There is no time for small groups. There is no time for debate. Yet we come, especially the postgraduates, with a huge range of skills and experience to share and opportunities that we have learned from other areas of our lives. Take, for example, the business world. If we took some of the skills that people in business have and put them into schools or the way we teach children, how much better would our citizens be when they come out at the other end?

**Mr SAWFORD**—Can you tell us some of the characteristics of the good courses? How would you describe the characteristics of the good courses?

**Ms Carrol**—Lecturers who can link the theory to the practice very clearly so that they are seasoned teachers themselves and do not just—

**Mr SAWFORD**—So they are teachers.

**Ms Carrol**—They are teachers, yes. Courses that give us the opportunity to have small group discussions and to teach others in our tutorials, and courses that bring into the university experts in the field with cutting-edge experiences that we can be exposed to.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Which all good teacher education lecturers have done for yonks.

**Ms Carrol**—Good ones—that is right.

**Mr SAWFORD**—What are the characteristics of the bad ones?

**Ms Carrol**—The bad ones are those who talk at a theoretical level, who do not understand their audience, who do not recognise that we bring skills with us, and those who live in ivory towers and talk through their research and do not link it to anything practical.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I was trying to lead you to another word, but I will not. One of my colleagues will.

**Ms CORCORAN**—I want to ask about two separate things. The first is the selection of students into courses. I am interested in kids coming out of schools and how you choose and whether there is room for improvement. We also have people coming in from other areas into teaching. There has been some sort of implied criticism of the fact that teachers leave teaching and go elsewhere—that somehow that is a problem. I am interested in your reaction. If we are taking people from other professions, surely the circle should go around. I am interested in how we are choosing people to go into teaching.

**Prof. Emmitt**—I will do the quick one. For ones coming straight out of school, it is similar to most places in that it is on their final year scores.

**Ms CORCORAN**—Is that the appropriate way?

**Prof. Emmitt**—I think that today when you look at the numbers that apply for teaching it is the only realistic way. Since it is for a preservice course, an undergraduate program of four years, that gives time for people to grow and develop. I am sceptical of interviews because often they just reproduce the same sort of pattern, so I do not believe that is the way. People who do teaching or education go into all sorts of fields, not just into teaching. To me, it is a very good program for all sorts of things and it develops all sorts of skills.

I think we could do better in the area of articulating the skills, competencies, values and attitudes required for teaching and in ensuring that they have been monitored very carefully while our students are out in professional experience programs. That would become the screening device rather than when they first come in as a 17- or 18-year-old. Then there is the actual selection and appointment to schools, which is another very discriminating time. For a teacher, of fundamental importance is that whole area of interpersonal skills, and that can be best assessed out in schools. The other issue is all the antidiscrimination laws we have. As a university we are working at the academic level and not at a lot of the other levels. Again, we can sort out a lot of that at the school level, couching our criteria and competencies around those interpersonal things that are significant.

**Ms CORCORAN**—The other part of that question was where I was inviting you to comment on the implication that people leaving teaching is a bad thing, perhaps.

**Prof. Emmitt**—It may not be. Some people decide that it is not for them. Teaching is the worst possible job if it is not for you. So I think people make that decision there and they do go on to have all sorts of other experiences and that is wonderful. The other thing—and I think it is changing; it has certainly changed markedly in Victoria—is that learning to be a teacher is seen as lifelong and that whole time of induction and mentoring that goes on when people start teaching is critical. There is nothing more exhausting than when you first start to teach. I do not know whether that and the support that goes on there is always acknowledged sufficiently. In our preparation—the best preparation in the world—we prepare for a generic world. The student or teacher lands in a particular environment and there needs to be critical induction going on for that environment.

**Ms CORCORAN**—My second question is about students moving out of classrooms and the practicums. I am interested in your comments about the problems that you are having for a whole stack of reasons, including the ageing profile of teachers.

**Prof. Emmitt**—And staff in teacher education. I think it is a big problem too.

**Ms CORCORAN**—I would have thought there would be an advantage in older teachers being able to take on students because they have lifelong experiences and all that sort of stuff. You talk about age being a problem as well. Further down you make a point which makes me wonder whether there is capacity or benefit in educators moving between schools and universities on a constant basis—being a schoolteacher this year and an education—

**Prof. Emmitt**—Absolutely.



**Ms CORCORAN**—What is the best way of doing all of that? The second part of that question is: when your students go out to schools, do you have any say in who will be their mentors? Do you choose or do you take whomever you are given? Is there a comment you would like to make about that?

**Prof. Emmitt**—I can comment, but I will let Stephen and some of the others answer some too. I will go for the last one first. Normally we invite principals to nominate teachers—and Rita will be able to say what happens in her school. Ideally, the principals would select them, and they do make decisions about who is and is not appropriate. That does not mean that we always get the most appropriate teachers, and students would testify to that—sometimes we do not. That is an issue. Teachers are busy. Some teachers, I think, get worn out from having students. That is a part of that.

As for the other one aspect, yes, we do want that cycling around. On different campuses we have teachers coming in. In Melbourne I have a teacher coming from the school point. The school has let the person stay and work with us for one day a week—fantastic. He is learning. Having to teach others is tremendous, so he is learning more about his field and teacher education. Our students are getting someone who is four days a week out in the schools. I would like to be able to do a lot more and so would others.

The salary differential is quite marked. You get better salaries basically out in schools than you do coming in. At the moment most faculties—certainly faculties like mine—cannot afford that on a wide scale. We try to have people on contracts to allow for that. We used to do more of that at one time. People who might have been on leave from the schools came in. Then it happens that people get to want to stay. So people might have come in on a contract and then keep staying, so you are losing that cycle. But I think it is essential that we have that with new ideas coming in from the school sector all the time. I might have missed some other questions there.

**Ms Daniels**—For the normal pracs we would certainly ask our staff for people who wanted to be involved in that. Generally we would get a reasonable range people. As for your comment about the older staff, sometimes they are not the best people. Some of those people have been in schools for a long time and they might not necessarily have changed or adapted. They may not be quite as innovative as we would hope in order to inspire new starting teachers. We are looking for a range people who are both skilled and enthusiastic. Many of those people are widely committed to a lot of other things too and at times we have to approach people we would identify as having something to offer as a prac teacher—even people who are not willing to put themselves forward initially. It is quite important that their experiences in schools are really positive.

**Ms CORCORAN**—Do you get or do you look for feedback from the student teacher?

**Ms Daniels**—We do not from the students, I must confess. I have not asked for feedback from them about what their experiences have been, but the university would certainly be doing that.

**Ms CORCORAN**—So it would come back to you—

**Ms Daniels**—If there were an issue it would come back to us, I am certain.

**Ms BIRD**—One of the interesting things we have noted from the very beginning of this inquiry is the fact that sometimes the most successful teachers are people who come with life experience, not straight out of school—so I will call you mature age students. I note some of the commentary that you have made already and I have to say, sadly, that when I did training I felt that often you were put with the person you would least want to be with in schools. The mature age lady that I was attached to almost turned me off teaching. That prac component is significantly important. I would like a bit more feedback on how you find that practicum experience.

Secondly, perhaps you could give us some insight into some of the challenges. You would have left, I imagine, reasonably well-paid careers. There is a bit of a push from some of the universities to discourage the two-year diploma in education module and go entirely to a four-year course. I am a bit concerned that that will discourage people in career change options. I am interested in some of your feedback on how you find it—the good sides and the barriers for you.

**Ms Edwards**—From my perspective, it was a complete and utter change. I came from a relatively successful media background over 15 years. When I decided to become a teacher the instant reaction from everyone was: ‘Why? What on earth do you think you are doing and how long do you think you will last?’ I have to say now that I love it, and probably did from the first day that I walked into it. I believe that what I have learned over 15 years of being in the media and as a mature age student means that I have a lot to offer my students.

The course that I do at ACU is a one-year course. That provides two practicum areas to go to. From my perspective, with regard to salary cuts and things like that, if it were a four-year course to get me into a classroom environment, it would not be viable. I have bills to pay, as we all do. It could not be any shorter than it is either. Combining the practicum areas and the mentoring and then having the theoretical background has been incredibly positive. However, I would state that it does not matter how long you spend at university, you will not learn anything until you walk into a classroom. Every classroom and every day is different. I have taught at CIT in journalism and that is a completely different perspective again. While you need the theoretical background to understand sometimes why the students may be behaving in the way they are, or to understand why sometimes if you are doing something they have got a blank look on their faces, or why we are having behavioural issues in the classroom, you need to have a solid background and there is no other time to do it but in a preservice environment.

Once you are in the classroom it is all systems go. There is a lot to do and limited time and you may never have the time to go back to the fundamentals. So you need a basis. However, I cannot stress enough that you need to be in schools and you need to be in schools consistently. Teachers who are there for 20 or 30 years can often have bad days as well. I concur with you about the situation you had when your prac teacher had been there for 20 years and nearly put you off teaching. I had an interesting experience when it was just a case of someone near retirement handing over to the prac teacher. It was a great learning curve for me—though pity the students. From my perspective, it does not matter how long I am going to be at university, being in the classroom is the best learning environment I could ever have.

**Ms Carrol**—I agree with Fiona. Talking to some other postgrads in preparation for this meeting, I realised that a lot of us come from very diverse backgrounds where much bigger dollars have been earned than we are ever going to earn in teaching. We certainly do not go into

it for the money. They wanted me to make a couple of points. Firstly, if teachers are considered to be professionals, why is the TER, the university entrance score, so low? We need to attract people with higher scores. Secondly, if we want to be treated as professionals, why are we not paid as professionals? That is an issue that all postgrads, especially the men, really struggle with. Their heart may want to be a teacher, because it is a vocation, but there is always that issue: how am I going to support my family? If you want to professionalise teaching, those two issues need to be addressed. The other thing is that in terms of the postgrads, more are looking to teaching as an apprenticeship start—having the theory but being in the classroom for a day a week, putting what they learn into practice. Yes, we do need the theory and we need the bigger picture, but unless you can practise that you cannot cut your teeth.

In terms of barriers, there is the issue of time. I am a mum with three children. I have two full-time jobs. I am full-time mother of three young children—my youngest is six—and I have a full-time university course. I have chosen to do my course in two years because I am committed to it—I love it. But it is difficult. For primary teaching, given the scope of what we are required to teach—we teach everything, unless you get into a private school where they have specialist teachers—I do not think that you could do the course in less than two years full time. But if it had been four years, I would not have done it. My husband would not have put up with it.

**Mr Beattie**—I agree with what both of you have said. In terms of pracs and that sort of thing, as an undergraduate student I think that maybe more time is needed. It comes down to being taught what is good practice and what is bad practice—if you do have a bad prac teacher as your mentor, being able to say, ‘That’s bad and I am not going to do that.’ Being able to apply yourself to change and teach differently in another setting is better. I went through the CIT program before going to university. I had a different background in that I knew that I wanted to become a teacher and work with children. I knew how to relate to children; whereas I think some people say that they want to be teachers but they do not necessarily know how to relate to children. I think that is often the case with postgrad mature age people. They have aspirations of becoming teachers but they do not know how to relate to the children of today. I think that is a problem and it is something that should be focused on. We are dealing with the children of today. Instead of preparing children for the future, I think we should be dealing with the children of today, and I guess it is knowing that through your teaching.

**Prof. Emmitt**—You have just had a successful teaching round, haven’t you?

**Mr Beattie**—Yes, I have just finished down the coast at Eden. That is another thing I should point out—it would be good to have the opportunity, throughout university, to be able to travel and go away. I went down the coast but I did it all off my own bat—I had to save up before I went, I had to find accommodation while I was there and I had to adapt to a coast environment and a coast community which is a lot different from what I am used to, living in Canberra and working in Canberra schools. Maybe there could be more funding for people to be able to go and teach out in the country, because it is the country schools that matter. It is also a case of being taught to adapt to an environment that is completely different, but which is still teaching.

**Ms BIRD**—Thanks for that.

**Ms CORCORAN**—I want to follow up, Janet, on the point you made that your postgraduate colleagues asked you to bring up, and that is this idea of professionalism and the cry to be treated as professionals. How do they define ‘profession’ or ‘professionalism’?

**Ms Carol**—I think one definition is your status or your standing in the community. Rod said before that there is this tension, even within the universities, as to where is our status and how important is this teaching role in society? Are we too negative within our own garden and the way we see ourselves? As to status in the community, if you are a professional—a lawyer, a pharmacist or a doctor—you earn a lot more. In our society, whether we like it or not, that is the way we reward those people whom we hold in high esteem.

Also, I think there is the opportunity to say that we are lifelong learners, that we do not go to university for two years and then we know everything. In every profession there is professional development; in every profession you need to keep up with the trends. We need to have the funds to allow teachers to do that, and not to feel guilty or not to have to do it in their holidays. I know we get a lot of holidays—but that is another issue and there is a particular perception. I was on a reporting committee the other night at one of the local schools and a parent said to me: ‘I don’t know what the teachers do. They only work six hours a day.’ I was very restrained, but there is a perception that professionals work 12 hours a day, as my husband does, but teachers only work from 9 to 3. You ask anyone sitting here when we stop work and they will say that it is usually only in the holidays.

**CHAIR**—You will be pleased to know that teachers are held in far higher esteem than parliamentarians. You are a long way ahead of us.

**Mrs MARKUS**—We identify very much with the criticism you receive: ‘What do you do in that place?’ I want to focus on getting some clarification about the structure of the practicum, and certainly you have already highlighted the importance of linking theory to practice; I think that is significant for many professions. You have mentioned the issue of time. In the school setting, how many hours and what resources are needed to ensure that the student, the teacher and the school structures all support the learning process, as well as what is going on in the school? How would you see that looking in an ideal world? What resources would you see are required to have an additional person from the university coming out to the school, being more accessible and having more focus? Would you see it as having somebody that could be available across a number of schools? What sorts of ideas or thoughts do you have on that?

**Prof. Emmitt**—There are a range of models. My ideal model is a collaborative model of teacher education. It is broader than just the practicum and going out and practising, so that the students and teachers of both places are working together a lot more around the focus of: how do we enhance student learning? We are there to help our students to become teachers who can enhance student learning—and particularly for those who are going to have the most difficulties in learning, because that is the area where we have missed out badly. Lots of kids learn in spite of the teachers, and there are others who need the complete skills of a professional. It is complex and we need to be working together, so it has to be a collaborative model. I will ask Steve to say a bit about the dip ed model that is trying to do something in a one-year program. Different programs have different challenges.

**Dr Arnold**—We were faced with the exciting prospect of setting up a new program this year for secondary. It was limited to a one-year program. We recognise the inadequacy of the program, but the constraints are decided by others. The amount of time spent in practicum is determined by the accrediting authorities. The traditional model involved university experience and practicum experience. In a sense, never the twain met—they were certainly linked, but they were quite distinct programs. The model we have trialled this year has both of those components. What we have done is to take the academic component and link that closely with the schools, as well. They still get their prac, they still work with supervising teachers—or associate teachers, as we call them here—but within the academic program, in their curriculum areas, the academic responsibility is shared between the university lecturer and a school mentor.

This was quite an exciting prospect. It was made possible only because of support from the Catholic Education Office, who were willing to pick up the tab for the school based mentors for us. The university did not have the funds to do that. As a model, it is working fabulously well. The students, teachers and schools invariably reported extremely positively on the mentor side of the program. Again, because of the size of the program, we were able to hand-pick our mentors. It is a size issue: if you are placing 200 students you cannot hand-pick your supervisors; but we were placing 25 students, so we could and did hand-pick our supervisors. We went to the schools and personally invited teachers to put in applications to be mentors. It becomes a teacher professional development component which is really very powerful.

The real challenge for us next year will be whether we reuse some of these mentors—who have been simply superb and absolutely fantastic—or spread the joy and bring others in on the program. It is going to be a real problem for us, because it has been such a fabulous program. So there is that model—and it is a more expensive model. If you want more time in schools, there are ways around that. Another aspect of our program with primary involves our students working in ‘Count Me in Too’ classes for early numeracy. They go in as an extra pair of hands and support the teachers; they make resources. They are experiencing the classroom environment all the time. They are getting something out of that, and they come back and write about it. The whole idea of it is to put theory into practice. Having studied some of the theories of learning, they spend three weeks in the classroom and then come back and report on how they saw those theories in practice. That costs nothing, but it builds goodwill. So there are various levels—from the traditional model of the academic and school components being quite separate to the model we are trying to establish, which involves a lot more interchange between the two. It is a collaborative model, such as Marie has been pushing.

There is a point I feel needs to be made. Are we preparing students for a reproductive or a transformative model of schooling? I think there are tendencies to trivialise the issues here. The knee-jerk reaction of, ‘Students need more time in schools,’ is fine, but they need time out of school as well. They need time to get the big picture; to study the theories and, ideally, see them in practice. We need to prepare students who are not simply going to reproduce the status quo but are going to have insights and be able to see over the fence. Once you hit the classroom, it is very hard to see over the fence.

I say to students that my dream for them is that we plant the seeds in our one-year or four-year program and they will go out and learn most of what they need about classroom teaching in their first two or three years of teaching. Having mastered that, having learnt their craft, if the seeds have been well planted they will remember that there is more than just the day to day, that there

are other ways of doing it. That is our dream. That is not done by simply putting kids into schools for more of their program. It is also not done by simply bringing teachers into the universities, because teachers are great practitioners but they are generally not as up to date and aware of current issues, worldwide and nationally, and of the latest developments in theory, which is developing and changing constantly. The knee-jerk reaction is to say, 'Here's our solution: let's bring teachers in to teach the students; let's get them out into schools for most of their time.' Those are great things but they need to be balanced against the bigger picture. I just needed to say that.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—My question might have been covered a bit by Stephen's answer then. I was curious when you said there was a review that led to the creation or establishment of these new models in courses. What prompted that review? Had you identified issues, were you getting feedback from schools? What led you to undertake that review?

**Prof. Emmitt**—Part of our quality assurance program is that all our courses are reviewed every five years, and this was the five years. I was new as dean—I have only been there since January last year—so I came in with different insights, if you like, coming from different models. I suppose I had some concerns looking at it and I felt in many ways our program could be more coherent and stronger in certain focuses and I was certainly wanting to work to a much stronger collaborative model across all our campuses. I had different things happening on different campuses. We were also trying to make a stronger national program, which I suppose we did have but each campus was doing things quite differently in many ways. I wanted to bring all the expertise together so that we had the best program that we could have.

There are always comments being made along the lines of: 'How can we do things better?' If you look at the priorities in the schools, they are changing. So for primary we have strengthened the literacy, numeracy and science areas, so all of our students have to do two units in those discipline areas before they do the curriculum areas—that sort of thing. There is a whole range there. In ICT we previously had separate units but we have now embedded them into a whole range of units. We have been making the whole values bit stronger. There have been a lot of things.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—That leads me to another question. We had some evidence on this at our last public hearing from the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute. Do you have any minimum requirements for students for subjects they have studied up to year 12 before coming into your course?

**Prof. Emmitt**—Yes. I am most au fait with Victoria, where they have to have year 11 maths. I think that should be the requirement in all states, but different states have different things, like having to do English in year 12. It is probably a recommendation that we have higher maths as a requirement too. So there is a minimum that they have to have and then they do two units of maths.

**Ms LIVERMORE**—Did you want to say any more about accreditation and, particularly, the role accreditation is playing in that crowded curriculum dilemma that we hear about?

**Prof. Emmitt**—It is not just accreditation; it is also the systems demanding certain things. In New South Wales, I know, the education department has been quite prescriptive about what

needs to be done there. I think there is an issue that, traditionally, they have been pushing the numbers of hours and numbers of units—that sort of thing—rather than looking at outcomes and competencies. When you listen to Janet and Fiona, you can hear that we have got students coming to us with such rich backgrounds that to put them through so many hours of things could be a great waste of their time and energy. But that has been the tendency. They want to see how many hours you are doing something, rather than asking, ‘What competencies are you achieving?’ When you are restricted to that then your course gets a lot more restricted. Some students would learn much more out of school than sitting in classes. So we need a shared understanding of what competencies we want, and to be allowed a lot more flexibility to get there.

I would certainly like to see a national body, rather than having one in each state and having to jump through different hoops. For the size of Australia it is sort of ridiculous, and ties up education resources. I suppose I would be very happy if we went to a more general curriculum, like a year 12 bit, too, for the same reason—when you look at the amount of money we tie up in education in different sectors and different ways, I am sure there are other ways of spending that money.

**CHAIR**—Janet raised the interesting point, in relation to elements of the course that she found less to her liking, that the lecturers talked through their research. It was interesting to look at the point, in teacher training, of the focus on having a research base versus the focus on the communication of information to trainee teachers. I would be interested in your thoughts on research versus the training side.

**Prof. Emmitt**—I do not know what Janet’s particular examples are—and I do not want to know at the moment! Our focus, from my perspective, is very much on the students becoming teachers—being able to facilitate student learning; that is our big bit—and then the research informing what we are doing. The other key perspective that we want to have, because teachers are seen as researchers of their own practice these days, is providing that practice framework. I do not see that we are up there talking about our research. That is not what I see.

I do acknowledge that some staff no doubt are not as effective as others in communicating and working on their pedagogy. I am certainly not happy with the transmission model of the lecturer-student relationship. I do not think that that is the most appropriate model for teacher education, but I acknowledge that, in some places, that is where it is being pushed to. My ideal would be that you would do some of that, because it could be effective for looking at the big picture, to stimulate interest in an area, but I would have groups of students working as consortiums around inquiry based issues. Staff are working more as facilitators in that situation.

**Mrs MARKUS**—Following on from that, I have a question about how you would see research moving—say, within the context of your university. How would you develop or move in that direction of incorporating research into your goals?

**Prof. Emmitt**—Our staff are expected to be active researchers or, if they are not doing active research, at least to be consumers of research at a high level so that their courses are informed by research. A key bit is that we research our own practice, and a lot more needs to be done about that, so that we are researching how effective we are as teacher educators in helping our students to become better teachers. That has got to be there. The other bit is of course, as I said, working

with our students so that they are becoming researchers of their own practice—that is a key point. I would like, if we have a chance, for Mike Gaffney to comment about the collaborative program.

**Dr Gaffney**—Thank you for the opportunity to be involved. The Catholic Education Office—and much of what I say could apply to Catholic Education Office and school offices or to education authorities generally perhaps—comes to this discussion both as a client and as a partner, with an obvious vested interest in both the preservice and inservice graduate/postgraduate areas of endeavour, plus the research and consultancy. So it is a fairly broad potential form of partnership.

Our position, obviously, is that we want the best graduates we can have and that when we have staffing needs in areas such as maths and science or, in the case of Catholic education, in religious education in, say, secondary areas, those are the sorts of issues where we need to be able to work directly with the education faculties that are closest to us. Coming to it as a client and as a partner in the context of this review, there are four points I would like to make. The first is that the faculties of education cannot do it by themselves. It has to be part of a networked structure or a cooperative arrangement with the employing authorities. As I said at the opening, we have quite a productive relationship with our local school of teacher education. That is important but, from the review's point of view, the question is about how sustainable those relationships can be, because, from an employing authority's situation, the money we put in to, say, scholarships or into releasing staff to teach is based on choices that we make, that next year we may have other demands. So the question of sustainability in those networks is something that needs to be considered very carefully.

The second area is that, when the networks are operating, we have very effective and significant opportunities for program redesign and delivery. To some extent, we have seen that with the graduate secondary program with the mentors. But it does open up the possibilities for on-site models—that is, basically school based, but not apprenticeship type, models, which go beyond—as well as online and various other forms of delivery. The third area has to do with the quality of the teacher educators themselves. Much has been made about the work environment, the promotional structure that they have, which in some cases may place more value on esoteric publications than on practical knowledge, and communication with schools. From our point of view, ideally you would want that theoretical base but you want a communicator.

**CHAIR**—Much as Janet was saying.

**Dr Gaffney**—The quality of the teacher educators is absolutely crucial, so the promotional structures in faculties of education have to take cognisance of that and, in some ways, get into the real world in terms of what is required by schools and by education authorities in areas of consultancy and research.

The fourth area I think picks up Rod's first point about why so many reviews have been done and have been ignored, basically. I think that, up to this point, nationally we have not had the context where a review like this could actually make a difference. The fourth area has to do with carrying forward the recommendations through other policy levers that are apparent. I am referring particularly to the work that is happening on standards nationally through the national institute and through the state and territory institutes, which are becoming more and more



explicit about graduate competence, professional competence and so forth, and, in the case of the New South Wales Institute of Teachers, exploring issues about professional leadership and accomplishment, which can tie back into ensuring that when a student teacher goes out to a school they will land in the right place and with someone who is professionally accomplished. The question is how we build in the integration between the recommendations of this review, the work that is happening and the incentives that the standards agenda might hold for teachers in schools and people in systems to be engaged.

It is not only just that policy lever in terms of the standards agenda through the institutes and through the national institute; it also targeted incentive funding and looking more closely at areas of scholarships and studentships in areas of national shortage. I was in the reference group of Professor Kwong Lee Dow's review of teaching and teacher education. Very much was made of maths, science and technology, for example, in those areas and how the possibilities for incentive funding could be explored. The other area of incentive funding at a system level to get to the sustainability question for us as authorities, and needing to work as clients and as partners, is to explore ideas that have been called professional development schools or 'dem' schools—those sorts of ideas. They are not new but, again, they are opportunities for us to explore.

So the four areas are: the networks, and sustaining those networks; the flow-through in innovative program design; what the committee has to say about the ways in which the promotional structures, the career structures, happen in teacher ed; and, finally, what are the related policy levers to do with standards on the one hand and incentive programs on the other hand that can work to embed, to make an impact, where previous reviews have failed. That is it from an employing authority perspective.

**CHAIR**—We will have to wrap it up there; time has got away from us. Thank you for appearing before the committee today.

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

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

**Committee adjourned at 10.56 am**